

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS
536 EAST AVENUE, LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS**

JULY 14, 2025

President Opyd called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners Weber, Posey, Vear, Opyd

ABSENT: Commissioner Carter

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold
Director of Finance & HR Jamie Hollock
Director of Recreation Kevin Miller
GM of Parks Maintenance Larry Buckley
GM of Facilities and Operations Mike Hay
HR & Administration Coordinator Madonna Giampietro

OTHERS PRESENT: Alice Woodson, John Pluto, Steve Guggenheim,
Tony Clarke, Martin Calik, Marylou Kalmus,
Tish Bernhardt, Virginia Delaney, Marge Sipla,
Ray Sipla, Laura Seliga, Bernadine Sims, Rose Naseef
Charles Gethito, Gerald Carlson, Becky Lorentzen,
Chrissy Helmsdorfer, Jonah Podrid, Rose Szafranski,
Marian Honel Wilson, Steve Roessler, Teddy Roessler,
Shane Conneely, Nancy Bramson, Danielle

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda. Executive Director Bechtold stated that there was one change to the minutes from the June 9, 2025, meeting. Changing one sentence attributed to Rose Naseef in the second comments section. President Opyd reminded guests that for the public comments section of the meeting, to please state your name and address and limit your comments to 3 minutes.

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

Public Comments

Martin Calik, 616 Selborne Road Riverside, representing AYSO 300 Region, thanked the Park District for working with them to bring soccer to the kids in the area.

Tony Clark, 230 S. Edgewood Ave. La Grange, representing the La Grange Handball Club, stated that the handball camp and class held in conjunction with the Park District this summer were successful with over 18 kids enrolled

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in the program. He also mentioned that the World Professional Handball Players recently held a tournament at Gordon Park where over 100 players from all over the country came to participate. He said they were looking forward to hearing a response about some suggestions for the handball courts area at Gordon.

Bernadine Sims, 117 Washington Ave. La Grange, commented on the renaming of the park adjacent to the community center and the community center. She expressed her opinion that they should be named something recognizable to the members of the community who live around the center.

Alice Woodson, 112 Sawyer Ave. La Grange, commented on the renaming of the community center at 200 S. Washington. Her thoughts are that the name should remain as the La Grange Community Center to represent everyone and not just one person.

John Pluto, 718 East Ave. La Grange, apologized for being out of order at the last meeting. He expressed his concerns about the core samples taken from the periphery of Sedgwick Park. He would like to see additional testing completed.

Marylou Kalmus, 543 S. Park Road, La Grange, discussed her thoughts on the popularity of pickleball and wanting more outdoor courts. Executive Director Bechtold added that with the referendum projects we will have 4 pickleball courts added to Sedgwick.

Consent Agenda

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of June 9, 2025; Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated June 30, 2025; and Item 3.3 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for July dated July 14, 2025. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear, seconded by Commissioner Posey, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES:	Commissioners Vear, Posey, Weber, Opyd
NAYES:	None
ABSENT:	Commissioner Carter

Staff Reports

Executive Director Jennifer Bechtold

- Executive Director Bechtold announced that July is Nation Parks and Recreation month. She then presented her report. There were a few recent items discussed which were not included in her report. She added that TSC was out at Sedgwick this week doing more testing including monitoring wells. She shared that the remediation for the contaminated area will be covered by insurance. As such, we will be adding some alternatives back into the referendum projects.

Executive Director Bechtold thanked the representatives of the La Grange Handball Club for attending the meeting. She explained to the board that before the club gets into plans to be presented for a one-wall court (paid for by the Handball Club) they would want consensus on the board's thoughts on adding it to Gordon Park. There has been some community feedback on hardscapes and adding more concrete to our parks. She added that she would like the board to be aware that the current projects at Gordon Park keep the impermeable surfaces total area under half an acre; if it goes over half an acre, by adding the concrete wall, detention and retention would have to be added to the park.

The board discussed the one wall court option and determined that they would like more information including if the addition of this concrete wall would put Gordon Park over the impermeable surface threshold of half an acre.

Commissioner Posey stated that although she is very supportive of enthusiastic groups she struggles with our limited physical resources. She wants to encourage use of our parks, but feels we have a responsibility to maximize the uses that we have while balancing against the fact that we have a limited amount of funds. With that, she would have concerns that there could be a big hole in our budget if the concrete wall tips us over the half acre.

Commissioner Weber asked if the Handball organization would fund the proposal. If they are willing to fund the study of whether the project would tip us over half an acre, then the board can decide with knowing that information.

Commissioner Vear said he would like to see what they have.

President Opyd would like to know more information on the impact adding the wall would have on the half an acre threshold and if it tips it over, how much retention/detention would have to be added to the park plans.

Finance & Human Resources Jamie Hollock

- Director Hollock presented her report.

Director of Recreation Kevin Miller

- Director Miller presented his report. Commissioner Posey expressed her thoughts on staffing for summer camp. She suggested that staff keep in mind that being a camp counselor is often someone's first job. With the staffing challenges, she would like to see the Park District take this into

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consideration and would love the Park District to be a positive beacon of employment for new/first-time workers.

GM of Operations and Facilities Mike Hay

- General Manager Hay presented his report.

GM of Parks & Maintenance Larry Buckley

- General Manager Buckley presented his report.

Action Items

Discussion and/or Approval of Board Policy Manual Updates, Section 300, Section 210, Section 286, and Section 830.

Executive Director Bechtold explained that staff have been working on updating the policy manual as many of the policies have not been updated since the early 2000's. She presented the updated Section 300-Finance Policies which reflect current financial practices, legal requirements, and operational needs of the district. Along with the financial policies, she presented updates to section 210, Section 286, and Section 830.

Commissioner Vear thanked staff for the work put into updating all the policies.

President Opyd added that many of the updates are things the staff are already doing and acknowledged that it was a lot of work updating these policies.

Commissioner Weber moved that the Board of Commissioners approve the revised Section 300-Fiance Policies as presented, including the addition of the Staff Travel Reimbursement Policy (Section 286), the removal of Accounting Procedures and Truth in Taxations policies under Section 830, and the updates to section 210-Nepotism Policy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Weber, Posey, Vear, Opyd
NAYES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Carter

Discussion and/or Approval of Professional Service Proposal with Wight and Company for the 2026 OSLAD Grant.

Executive Director Bechtold presented the proposal to work with Wight and Company for the OSLAD grant application process for improvements to Sedgwick Park in the amount of \$14,500. She explained that if we do not receive the OSLAD grant the plans will still move forward as is as part of the referendum projects. The plans, which we would pay for regardless, would account for \$8000 of the \$14,500 fee.

Commissioner Posey asked if the chances are lower of receiving the grant since

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this would be our third application with the first two being successful. Executive Director Bechtold replied that there have been other districts which received the grant three and even some four years in a row. She added that it is important to have a strong application which she feels with including our first dedicated Pickleball courts and background of our referendum projects now with the added issue of the contamination, will help us with the narrative on why Sedgwick Park would be a good use of the OSLAD funding.

Commissioner Posey also expressed her concern regarding the funding from the state. She explained that since the application process costs us money, before applying, we will first want to make sure there are funds which will be provided, and secondly that we think our application will be successful in receiving the OSLAD Grant.

Commissioner Vear asked about the location of the pollinator garden and expressed his thoughts that what is proposed might not be the best location. He also asked about the quote for the color coat for the pickleball court and why it is twice the amount of the multi-purpose court. Executive Director Bechtold said she would check with Wight and Company for an explanation of the costs.

Commissioner Weber moved that the Board of Commissioners approve the 2026 OSLAD Grant application process for Sedgwick Park in the amount of \$14,500. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioner Weber, Vear, Posey, Opyd
NAYES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Carter

Discussion and/or Approval of Sedgwick Park Clubhouse Structure.

Executive Director Bechtold explained that as part of the Sedgwick Park redevelopment, the senior baseball field is being relocated due to the environmental conditions at the original site. A new club house is needed to replace the existing structure, which cannot be used. She presented the plans and that staff recommend approval of the purchase of a new clubhouse and associated site improvements, including fencing and gated access, at a cost not to exceed \$275,00 to support the relocated senior field at Sedgwick Park.

Commissioner Weber suggested looking into possibly having a similar structure at the little league fields at Sedgwick. He also asked about the feedback from Babe Ruth regarding the plans of losing one field. Executive Director Bechtold explained that currently the numbers have been on a decline, with the current numbers, one field will be sufficient. She mentioned that the Park District has been transparent with Babe Ruth regarding the transition to one field.

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Commissioner Vear asked about the external stairs and the fencing around the structure to deter climbing on the structure. He expressed his concern that if the fencing is chain link, that can be climb over as well. Executive Director Bechtold said she will see if there are any other options.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the purchase of a new clubhouse for the relocated senior field at Sedgwick Park, not to exceed \$275,000. It was so moved by Commissioner Posey, seconded by Commissioner Weber and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioner Posey, Weber, Vear, Opyd

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Carter

Board Business

Old Business

New Business

Committee Reports

Administration Committee

No report at this time.

Parks and Facilities Committee

No report at this time.

Recreation & Cultural Programming Committee/Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

No report at this time.

Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)

Bernadine Sims, 117 Washington La Grange, asked when the decision will be made on the renaming of the park and building at 200 S. Washington.

Executive Director Bechtold answered that it was approved at the June 9th board meeting and the signs are in production.

Danielle, 12th Ave. La Grange, stated that she would love to help with the pollinator garden as she is a certified pollinator steward. She also asked if staff have investigated EPA funds or super funds for the environmental issues at Sedgwick Park. She asked if the water will be tested at Sedgwick Park.

Executive Director Bechtold explained that we are in an agreement with TSC to enter into the site remediation program through the EPA, and that they will do all the testing required by the EPA. She added that staff have looked at several funding sources which we did not qualify for or were rejected.

Marion Honel Wilson 950 8th Ave La Grange, representing the Community Diversity Group, mentioned that their annual Race Unity Rally coming up on

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Sunday, September 14th at La Grange Village Hall. She added that they will also have a screening of the documentary A Binding Truth at the La Grange Library the Friday before the rally.

Board Comments

Commissioner Posey read an article related to venture capital's increasing interest in youth sports. While she understands the place of club sports for our youth, she really supports rec. sports where kids can play for the joy of playing. She felt sad reading the article thinking how the youth was being taken out of youth sports and commercialized it in a way that is not healthy for our communities. With that, she gave a shout-out to the Park District staff and Director Miller and his team for helping create new opportunities like putting together volunteer lead new programs like flag football and to new groups, like the Handball Club that are really trying to do things to keep youth sports enjoyable for all. She added that in the end, we are all here to support our community and she really believes in the recreational part of the Park District. She went on to say how during the pandemic she realized how important it is to have public open spaces available to our communities and how she truly believes in what we do as a Park District.

Commissioner Weber said that being part of the flag football program was cool this past weekend. He said that Liam (Sise) is doing a great job with that program and the Lions Travel basketball program.

Commissioner Vear said that he is thankful to be seeing things happening in our parks. There are a lot of things done behind the scenes but now we are getting to see progress in the parks.


President Opyd congratulated the Community Park District of La Grange Park for their efforts in keeping the YMCA site as an available fitness resource for their community. He also thanked Commissioner Weber for being a volunteer coach for flag football.

President Opyd announced that there would be no executive session tonight and asked for a motion to adjourn.


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Adjournment

President Opyd moved for adjournment at 7:21 P.M. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey, seconded by Commissioner Weber, and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Brian Opyd, President



Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary
Approved September 8, 2025