

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS  
536 EAST AVENUE, LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS  
HELD AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER  
200 S. WASHINGTON AVE, LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS**

**APRIL 15, 2024**

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Vear, Posey\*, Chvatal, Opyd

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold  
Director of Recreation Kevin Miller  
Director of Parks Maintenance Eric Krueger  
Recording Secretary Natalie Fakelmann

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Eugene Bolotnikov  
Marian Honel-Wilson, Rose Naseef, John Pluto

\*Commissioner Posey arrived at 6:04pm

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda. Executive Director Bechtold informed him of one change, moving New Business Action Item 8.2 Discussion and/or Approval of Tax Rate Objection Settlement Letter to a closed Executive Session.

*Appointment of Recording Secretary and Deputy Recording Secretary*

President Opyd discussed the appointment of Recording Secretary to Natalie Fakelmann, and the appointment of Linda Muth as Deputy Recording Secretary. The motion was so moved my Commissioner Chvatal, seconded by Commissioner Vear, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follow:

AYES: Commissioners Chvatal, Vear, Posey, Opyd

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

***Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)***

John Pluto, 718 East Avenue, La Grange, stated that he has had a problem for

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the last 5 or 6 years with the district's turf management and usage of herbicides around fences and under bleachers. He understands the state law only requires one flag to be put out for one day but thinks the district could be doing better. He recommends at least 12 flags around entrances to path and parking area to stay out for a few rains. He also recommends notifying the parents at the preschool center by cell phone and notifying residents who are next to the parks of herbicide applications.

Rose Naseef, 911 S Stone, La Grange, stated that she agrees with John. She can smell the application of herbicide for at least 24 hours, though she was informed it is non-toxic, she doesn't let her dog walk on parkways this time of year. She stated the park district wasn't using this many herbicides and pesticides in the past. She also recommends residents put up flags when they apply chemicals to their property. She stated she has a conservation-oriented mindset when it comes to the parks. She is afraid of toxic turf or of artificial turf that could cause heat zones and asked for more native plants and trees to be planted. Additionally, she stated she loves the fitness center and has become a member there.

### **Consent Agenda**

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of March 11, 2024; Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated March 11, 2024; Item 3.3 Approval of Consolidated Vouchers for April dated April 15, 2024.

Commissioner Vear inquired about the negative fund balances on page 10 of Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated March 11, 2024, and Director Bechtold stated they would amend that sentence in the minutes.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of March 11, 2024, as amended; Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated March 11, 2024; Item 3.3 Approval of Consolidated Vouchers for April dated April 15, 2024, as amended. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear, seconded by Commissioner Chvatal, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Vear, Chvatal, Posey, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Executive Director Jenny Bechtold**

- Director Bechtold announced that Commissioner Chvatal will be running for a Circuit Court Judge position, and his last day as a District Commissioner will be April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. She thanked him for his service.
- Director Bechtold also thanked Director Kreuger for his hard work on the

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district's fields, and that AYSO called Director Miller to comment on how great the fields have been. She wanted to thank Director Miller and Director Kreuger for working together as a team and working so hard on the fields.

- Director Bechtold announced the hiring of a new Director of Finance, Jamie Hollock, who will start on April 22, 2024.
- Director Bechtold discussed the 2024 Park Plan Proposal, upcoming meeting dates, information about mailers, as well as meetings that have been hosted. She also shared some of the feedback regarding the plans which includes, residents' concerns regarding full court basketball courts, especially at Denning and Elm, feedback about the proposed new bathrooms being taken out of the plans at Sedgwick, paving the walking path at Sedgwick, concerns with safety and the parking lot exit at Gilbert Park onto 41<sup>st</sup> and the size of both parking lots at Sedgwick and Gilbert. The feedback will be compiled and shared with the Task Force.

President Opyd questioned if the Park Plan Proposal mailer would be sent to every resident. Director Bechtold responded that it would be sent to every voting resident and that it would be mailed at the end of April or early May.

- Jenny requested direction from the Board regarding the termination of the IGA with Countryside and if they should receive Neighborhood Network affiliation or Non-Resident affiliation.

Commissioner Posey inquired on the criteria for being included in the neighborhood network and determined that Countryside should be included in the neighborhood network. The board discussed in detail different scenarios to consider regarding programming that Countryside residents are signed up for currently and potential fees for future programming. The board came to a consensus to have the district's counsel, Ancel Glink, draft a resolution to approve at the next meeting, detailing different fee agreements as Neighborhood Network status.

- Director Bechtold discussed the Men's League request for affiliate status. With the transitions for Babe Ruth and Men's League the Board gave consensus to allow Men's League to receive affiliate rates, but to continue to evaluate affiliate status.

### **Director of Recreation Kevin Miller**

- Director Miller discussed the Country Jam as outlined in his staff report.

President Opyd inquired if the music would always be country music. He was informed by Director Miller that yes, but the music could also be country-rock. Commissioner Vear stated he was not very familiar with country music but stated line dancing events are popular and thinks that could be a good opportunity to bring a vendor in to do that and that it would engage the public,

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particularly children.

- Kevin thanked Brandon Diaz for all his work on the Country Jam.

### **Director of Parks Maintenance Eric Krueger**

- Director Krueger discussed his updates as outlined in his staff report.
- President Opyd noted that members of the community have commented on Eric's hard work in the fields and thanked him.
- Commissioner Vear asked Director Krueger if he was worried about cicadas this summer, given new plantings.
- Director Krueger stated they are looking into covers for young trees to protect them, and that spraying is an option, but they do not want to do that.

### **Attorney Report**

Attorney Price had no report at this time.

### **Treasurer Report**

Director Bechtold stated that there were no updates.

### **Action Items**

*Discussion and/or Approval of Ordinance 024-01, the Combined Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Park District of La Grange, Fiscal Year 2024-2025*

Director Bechtold stated that the budget was discussed in detail at the previous board meeting, and any changes are detailed in Memorandum M24-013. She stated the district is trying to fill two-full time positions and she did look at salaries overall, which is what the bulk of increases in expenses stem from. She also discussed increased enrollment at camp which will increase total revenue as well as expenses but will have a positive bottom-line impact. She discussed all other changes found in the memo. She stated an overview of the appropriation ordinance and stated she is looking for board approval for the ordinance.

President Opyd inquired if there were any questions or discussion on the appropriation ordinance. Given no discussion, he asked for a motion to approve Ordinance O24-01, The Combined Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Park District of La Grange, Fiscal Year 2024-2025. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear and seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Vear, Posey, Chvatal, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

*Discussion and/or Approval of 2024-2025 Capital Budget*

Director Bechtold discussed the changes to the capital budget found in

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Memorandum M24-014. She stated the only change is the allocation for the 2025 OSLAD Grant Application Process for Gilbert Park (\$10,000).

President Opyd inquired if there was cost savings given, we have been working with Wight & Company on the 2024 Park Plan Proposal. He was informed by Director Bechtold that yes, because we already have the Gilbert Plans developed, the cost is only \$10,000.

Commissioner Vear inquired if the odds of receiving the OSLAD grant decrease the second year in applying if a grant was awarded the previous year. Director Bechtold informed him that this is the last year the award will be \$600,000 instead of the more typical amount of \$400,000 and many other districts have received awards consecutive years.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the 2024-2025 Capital Budget. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey and seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed by Roll Call as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Chvatal, Vear, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Policy Section 820, Employee Classification and Compensation Plan*

Director Bechtold discussed this is a policy approved every two years. Jenny stated there were some adjustments made based on increased wages and she was advised to remove Grade 6, Executive Director because that is a contracted position.

President Opyd inquired if the adjustments were in response to cost-of-living changes and labor market conditions. Jenny responded yes.

Jenny also stated that a new position name is being added, Finance and Accounting Specialist, but it is there to give the district flexibility if they would like to change the title of an existing employee and is not a new position.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Policy Section 820, Employee Classification and Compensation Plan, it was so moved by Commissioner Posey and seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed by Roll Call as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Chvatal, Vear, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

### *Discussion and/or Approval of the Grant Agreement Between the State of Illinois, Department of Natural Resources and the Park District of La Grange, Agreement*

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*No. OS-24-2531*

Director Bechtold discussed the OSLAD Grant agreement and stated the districts counsel, Ancel Glink, advised them to enter the agreement as a part of standard grant process.

Commissioner Vear inquired on the timeline to complete the project and was informed the district has two years by Director Bechtold.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the Grant Agreement Between the State of Illinois, Department of Natural Resources and the Park District of La Grange, Agreement No. OS-24-2531, it was so moved by Commissioner Chvatal and seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed by Roll Call as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Chvatal, Posey, Vear, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

*Discussion and/or Approval of Wight & Co Waiola Park Final Design Services*

Director Bechtold discussed the fee for the final design services and stated the fee was included in the original budgeted OSLAD grant application.

Given no discussion questions, President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the Wight & Co Waiola Park Final Design Services, it was so moved by Commissioner Vear and seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed by Roll Call as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Vear, Chvatal, Posey, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

*Discussion and/or Approval of Temporary Construction License for La Grange Little League at Sedgwick*

Director Bechtold discussed the ratification of the temporary construction license and discussed that any time Little League is bringing in an outside contractor they need to inform the district, and that she has clarified that with Little League.

Commissioner Posey moved to ratify the Temporary Construction License for La Grange Little League at Sedgwick, it was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal, and passed by Roll Call as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Chvatal, Vear, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

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Commissioner Posey stated that she is pleased there is a continued effort to reinforce a friendly relationship between Little League and the District.

### **Board Business**

#### **Old Business**

*Discussion and/or Approval for La Grange Little League Naming Rights Request*  
Director Bechtold discussed the Susan Bonnevier naming request from Little League.

Director Chvatal stated there is a spot on the current scoreboard to add a named recognition, and that he is in favor of adding the name there. There was discussion regarding naming rights for the life of the scoreboard versus permanent naming rights and the timeline for changes to be made (a minimum of 60 days from the date of motion).

Commissioner Posey moved to approve the La Grange Little League Naming Rights Request for the life of the scoreboard, it was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed by Roll Call as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Chvatal, Vear, Opyd

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

President Opyd stated that another vote would be required in June, and at that point the board would need four votes to vote yes for it to be approved. Brian stated that he is glad the board came to that resolution and thinks it is a wonderful idea.

#### **New Business**

*Discussion and/or Approval of Gilbert Park OSLAD Grant Proposal*

Director Bechtold discussed proposed grant application for Gilbert Park. She stated this may be the last year a \$600,000 grant can be awarded. Jenny discussed different scenarios of what could happen if they apply for the grant and receive full referendum funding, a no-tax rate referendum funding, or if the referendum is not passed or doesn't go to vote. If no referendum funds are received but the OSLAD grant is accepted, the district would need to move up Gilbert Park on the capital plan and may utilize fund balances (and be under the fund balance policy), to move forward with the grant. This might result in a change in all capital projects, but the net result might only be a one-year delay for specific parks or projects.

Commissioner Posey questioned if receiving an OSLAD grant recently makes them less eligible to receive another grant. Director Bechtold stated that there have been many districts that have received the grant year after year, and prior to last year, the district did not receive one for 10 years. Jenny stated that she

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thinks the district will be in a good position if they can write a strong application and show that they are adding different and new amenities and states she has confidence in Wight & Co. writing the grant for the district as Wight has a high grant approval rate.

Commissioner Vear and Commissioner Posey questioned why the district would apply for Gilbert Park to receive the OSLAD grant. Director Bechtold responded Gilbert Park is the right size for the budget and could easily fit into a \$1.2 million project. She stated that the other parks would be a much bigger budget. There was a discussion about if parks can be combined in one application, Jenny responded that each park was a separate application, but you could submit more than one application.

President Opyd questioned the application timeline, stating an application must be submitted around August/September 2024. Jenny responded that a decision would be determined in January 2025, and then the district would have two years to complete the project. She stated that even if the district starts construction in the second year, they would still be able to do that. Jenny stated that even if they do receive the grant, but the board later decides not to go forward with the project, the district can withdraw from the OSLAD program, but then they will be blacklisted from applying for a number of years and this is not recommended by staff.

There was discussion about financing and the grant application cost and staff recommendation to apply. Commissioner Vear questioned if we would be able to defer the application for one year if in November the bond referendum does not pass. The board discussed what would be the considerations if they delayed application for one year, they were informed by Jenny that in the next year the amount awarded could be lower. President Opyd asked if the board would have the survey results by the next meeting, Jenny responded the results would not be available yet. The board asked for additional community input regarding if the community supports an OSLAD grant application for Gilbert Park.

Commissioner Posey discussed the capital projects timeline and addressed the board's commitment to all parks. She also requested feedback from residents if they would like the district to apply for the OSLAD grant.

Commissioner Vear reiterated that he would like information regarding if withdrawing the application in November is a possibility.

Director Bechtold stated that a decision would need to be made at the May board meeting if Wight were to start the application.

President Opyd noted that there were several areas the board wanted further information and asked if there was consensus to table this topic until the May

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meeting. The board agreed and the topic was tabled until the May meeting.

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Stone Park Plan Proposals*

Director Bechtold discussed the three park plans and stated the next step will be to get community feedback on the plans and will bring the responses to the next meeting for board approval on a selected park plan.

President Opyd discussed a swing design and stated that he likes the design. He also discussed ADA compliance and ramps to access play structures.

## **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*

Commissioner Posey reported that she spoke with the Director of the La Grange Art League regarding a yarn bombing project. She stated that Gordon Park is near a large senior community and suggested the district implement senior programming and multi-generational programming at the park for families who are visiting seniors at the residences near the park. She recommends a chess set at Gordon Park, especially on the end that is nearest the residences. There was general discussion regarding seniors using that park and multi-generational recreation options in general.

Director Miller states that multi-generational recreation is a big focus for Brandon Diaz, Recreation Supervisor, this fiscal year.

## **Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)**

Rose Naseef, 911 S. Stone, La Grange, stated that there used to be more trees at Gordon Park and places to sit in the shade, and that would have been a way to get more people to utilize the park. She also inquired if there is any consideration to have our events, like the Country Jam be zero-waste or have composting and recycling stations. She stated that food trucks generate a lot of waste and waste contributes to climate change. She also questioned who on the board or staff is the go-to person for sustainability. She recommends having plants indoors at the Recreation Center and stated that it is good for air quality and to create a welcoming environment. She also inquired about the plans for Gilbert Park and was informed that all the proposed park plans are on the District's website.

John Pluto, 718 East Ave, La Grange, spoke about the Gilbert Park parking lot and discussed flooding issues and storm sewers, and suggested the District

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work with the village to address flooding in that area. He suggested the District utilize permeable pavers in that parking lot and asked if the District explored that option.

Director Bechtold responded that the District did apply for two grants through the MWRD for permeable pavers and was denied. She thanked the public for their input and discussed the District's collaboration with the Village of La Grange on all of their plans, which at this point are preliminary.

Marian Honel-Wilson, 950 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, stated that she seconded being in favor of natural plantings and sustainable initiatives.

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Posey thanked the public for participating in the process and stated they are listening to their comments and thanked them for taking time out of their schedule to come. Stephanie also thanked the staff and Jenny and her administration for their work during a time of a lot of change.

Commissioner Vear thanked Commissioner Chvatal and congratulated him on his new post. He also thanked the public for their participation. He stated that the board is sustainably minded and does take that into consideration but sometimes we have limitations with our budget.

President Opyd thanked Commissioner Chvatal and wished him the best of luck in his new role. He announced the Park Plan Proposal meetings and encouraged the public and their peers to attend and provide input. He also reminded everyone to save the date for the Pet Parade. He stated he is looking forward to an upcoming diversity training.

Commissioner Chvatal thanked his fellow commissioners, staff, and Jenny. He stated he enjoyed his time as a commissioner.

### **Executive Session**

President Opyd stated that there would be an executive session to discuss the 12.1 Potential Claims and/or Litigation, 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) 11 as well as 12.7 The Selection of a Person to Fill a Public Office Vacancy, 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(3). The motion was so moved by Commissioner Chvatal at 7:36 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Chvatal, Vear, Posey, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

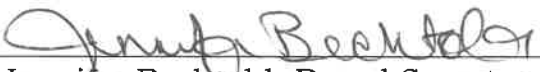
The Board resumed the regular meeting at 8:09pm.

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**Adjournment**

Commissioner Vear moved for an adjournment at 8:10pm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

  
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Brian Opyd, President

  
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Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary  
*Approved May 13, 2024*