

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

SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

Vice President Vear called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners Chvatal, Posey, Vear

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey, President Opyd

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold
Director of Parks, Planning & Maintenance Blake Ertmanis
Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej
Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller
Superintendent of BASE Leanna Hartung
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Megan Mack
Nancy Bramson, Becky Lorentzen
Harold Gibson, Marian Honel-Wilson

*President Opyd joined the meeting telephonically at 6:02 P.M.

*Commissioner Lacey joined the meeting at 6:15 P.M.

Vice President Vear welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Vice President Vear asked for a motion to allow President Opyd to participate in the meeting telephonically. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Chvatal, seconded by Commissioner Posey, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Chvatal, Posey, Vear

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

President Opyd joined the meeting telephonically at 6:02 P.M.

Vice President Vear asked if there were any announcements or changes to the agenda. Director Bechtold stated that Old Business Item 8.2 will be discussed prior to Item 8.1. It will be more productive to talk about the committees before the art policy.

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Public Hearing Meeting

Public hearing concerning the intent of the Board of Park Commissioners to sell not to exceed \$376,000 General Obligation Limited Tax Park Bonds for the payment of land condemned or purchased for parks, for the building, maintaining, improving, and protecting of the same and the existing land and facilities of the District and payment of the expenses incident thereto (BINA Hearing)

Vice President Vear opened the Public Hearing concerning the intent of the Park District to sell not to exceed \$376,000 General Obligation Limited Tax Park Bonds. There were no letters, communications, or public attending for comments, therefore Vice President Vear closed the BINA Hearing.

At 6:04 P.M. Commissioner Posey motioned to close the BINA Hearing. Commissioner Chvatal seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

Public Comments/Participation (Board Manual Section #152)

Becky Lorentzen, 103 E. Cossitt, La Grange, stated that she appreciates the Park District’s support of the unity rally and Jenny’s and Lynn’s presence at the event.

Consent Agenda

Vice President Vear asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Chvatal moved to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of August 15, 2022; Item 3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of August 15, 2022; Item 3.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of August 31, 2022; Item 3.4 Approval of the Financial Reports dated August 31, 2022; Item 3.5 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for September dated September 12, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Staff Reports

Executive Director Jenny Bechtold

- Director Bechtold stated that she heard back from the Village on Friday regarding 610 East Ave. There are a couple of items to tidy up, but they said we can move forward with applying for the MWRD permit. We should be out to bid for the project in October.

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- Jenny reported that she, Blake, and Zach met with Babe Ruth to review the agreement. During the process we realized that several items need to be updated with responsibilities corrected. The revised agreement will be presented to the Board for approval.
- She stated that at our last meeting the Board felt that Little League's proposal to charge an annual player fee with \$6,050 paid to PDLG for field use was not equitable. She spoke with their president the next day to set up a meeting for discussion and asked him for realistic updated field use hours. He has concerns with the number of hours in the memo that are based on what they reserved vs. the hours they use in addition to concerns regarding infrastructure maintenance. Jenny stated that Commissioner Posey had a meeting with the president of Little League.

Commissioner Posey stated that she knows Jeff Novak personally and she had a discussion with him this morning to try to get a sense of the sticking points. They had a positive conversation and it sounded like a deal could be made. She would like us to look at a course correction and regroup in terms of our approach. Attorney Mack asked Commissioner Posey if she reached out in the capacity of a board member. Commissioner Posey answered that she did not and that she made it clear she was speaking with him as a colleague and friend and had no authority to speak on behalf of the Board.

The Board and Director Bechtold discussed the Little League agreement. Commissioner Chvatal commented that this has been ongoing for months and taking a different tactic may be a good option to end the deadlock and suggested making a presentation to their board. Vice President Vear agreed it would be beneficial for their board to hear our story and get answers that do not come from their president. Commissioner Posey suggested that we could be less rigid and look at it as an investment in a long-term relationship which has been damaged; a different perspective is needed to put it to rest. President Opyd stated that Jenny has been diligent in taking direction from the Board but agreed we are hitting a wall and agreed with taking a new approach. Jenny stated that staff has been transparent with the Board on where they stand and follows Board consensus, but if the Board has a different direction, we can do that. However, it may affect our goal of improving the quality of the fields and making them more available to the public.

There was continued discussion of meeting with the Little League board, and it was agreed that two commissioners instead of our full Board would be the best option. It would not require a special meeting and would be less formal.

Commissioner Chvatal referred to the report on Endless Summerfest and asked what the savings would be to discontinue fireworks. Jenny stated that it was previously \$15,000 but this year's show was shorter and cost \$11,000, with increases expected in the future. We do not know if the fireworks or band bring people out, but if the Board is agreeable with no fireworks, we will take that direction.

Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej

- Superintendent Kuniej reported that she is waiting for a couple of small bills for the fest and then will close it out and distribute the proceeds. Her written report includes comparisons back to 2019.

Vice President Vear asked if the District gets half of the proceeds and how that works out considering staff's time. Leynette confirmed that we get half of net. Jenny stated that we have not run the numbers for full-time staff's time to plan, set-up and run the event, but we are doing it for the community; it is not a money maker. If staff shortages continue, we would have to look at it again, but the Board must be okay knowing the event does not make money. Supt. Miller added that the event is part of our mission.

Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller

- Superintendent Miller reported that La Grange Fitness held their 5-year anniversary event on Saturday and 27 new members signed up. There was a raffle for prizes including personal training sessions and a 1-year membership sponsored by Direct Fitness Solutions. The event exceeded expectations.
- Kevin stated that they have been busy with basketball season starting next month for the youth developmental league and La Grange Lions starting in November.
- He stated that he would love to see the Board come out to the Trunk or Treat event on October 15th at Sedgwick Park.

Vice President Vear referenced the success rates in Kevin's written report. Kevin reported that 70% is the threshold you want to hit, and we are right there with athletics and fitness trending up over the last five years. He added that figures for special events do not include the free events that do not require registration.

Superintendent of BASE Leanna Hartung

- Superintendent Hartung stated that she is continually working to open spots from the wait list for BASE and has offered spots to 30 kids. Forest Road and St. Francis no longer have wait lists, Congress is down to 12, Cossitt has 39, Barnsdale is at 24, and Ogden has 40.

Vice President Vear asked if BASE needed additional employees. Leanna reported that the issue at Ogden is that they are sharing lunchroom space with the Right at School program and the gym is under construction. We may not get the space to expand the program. There is also a space issue at Cossitt.

Director of Parks, Planning & Maintenance Blake Ertmanis

- Director Ertmanis reported that a contractor renovated the fields at Gordon Park and they look nice.
- Blake stated that his report includes a summary of vehicles and equipment with their life spans, and we will work within the budget for replacements.

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Vice President Vear inquired about the items in yellow. Blake stated they are surplus items that we hope to sell and use the proceeds for a new vehicle. Blake also discussed the replacement of two outdoor fitness pieces at Gordon Park. They are obsolete with no replacement parts available, and he is waiting for quotes. President Opyd suggested getting input from the fitness department on what machines to install to provide a total workout.

Attorney Report

Attorney Mack had no report at this time.

Treasurer Report

Supt. of Finance Kuniej had nothing to add to her staff report.

Action Items

None

Board Business

Old Business

Discussion and/or Approval of Committees and/or Committee Appointments

President Opyd stated that Jenny did some homework to see what others are doing and there seems to be three standard committees. He feels that with Christine improving our marketing we may not need to continue the marketing committee. Most districts have an administration committee which we currently have, a general programming committee which covers programs and arts/cultural events, and a parks committee. Jenny stated that we are intermingling committees vs. ad hoc and as we draw up the public art committee, we could consider having more than one commissioner on a committee. Finance and capital are already covered in the board meetings and may not require a committee. She added that some districts have an additional meeting with a recreation committee followed by the board meeting which allows the public to come. If there are two commissioners on the committee the rest of the Board would not have to attend. We will also need a tree advisory committee for our tree management plan to meet annually. It could fall under parks and Blake could be the liaison for it.

President Opyd stated that it is about streamlining what we do to get the job done and everybody does not have to run a committee. Commissioner Posey agreed and stated she is a committee of one and would find partnering with another board member helpful. The Board further discussed the option of scaling down to three committees and the committee names. The commissioners expressed interest in serving on the committees as follows:
Administration – Commissioners Vear and Lacey
Programming – Commissioners Chvatal and Posey
Parks & Facilities – President Opyd and Commissioner Vear

Commissioner Posey stressed the need to commit to arts and culture regardless of committee changes and its relation to the public art policy. There

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was discussion on a possible subcommittee or ad hoc committee for arts and culture and potential appointees. Jenny stated that arts and culture would not be eliminated but would fall under programming. Commissioner Posey suggested keeping it as an ad hoc committee on a temporary basis and then as-needed, staffing it when something major comes up so that we can implement the public art policy.

Vice President Vear asked for a motion for the Board to form three committees which will supersede prior committees, consisting of an Administration Committee, Recreation & Cultural Programming Committee, and Parks & Facilities Committee, with an ad hoc committee falling under Recreation & Cultural Programming called Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Chvatal, seconded by Commissioner Vear, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval of Park District of La Grange Art Policy

Commissioner Posey reported that she put this policy together and Jenny and Ancel/Glink made some revisions. Art policies from the Village of La Grange, other districts, and municipalities from around the country were reviewed. She explained that the idea is to create a broadly written policy that will get people to look at parks in different ways, which happened during the pandemic. The mission is to bring joy and surprise people by inviting the public to look at parks as not only a place for sports but an interesting place to explore as we move into the future and fulfill our mission as a public body. There are many people interested in creating sustainable public art, including Helping Hand. They opened a new facility where they transformed how they provide services to developmentally disabled adults by creating art for sale, and we could potentially partner with them.

Commissioner Chvatal asked who would approve the art, as some art could be shocking, or if it would be at the discretion of the Board. Director Bechtold stated that this is why a subcommittee, and its members, are important elements. The final decision is up to the Board, and it is important to have a process in place.

Supt. of Recreation Miller questioned whether art created in a program and displayed would fall under the policy. Attorney Mack stated that the policy applies to art that we own, lease, or borrow and that she would add that it does not apply to in-house programming to avoid confusion.

The Board discussed the District's responsibility in the event of damage to the displayed art. Director Bechtold stated that it would fall under the license

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agreement, which is separate from the policy. Commissioner Posey recommended that the policy be written broadly enough to encompass ways we could acquire and display art in different situations, and a license may not always be appropriate. We do not want the policy to turn people off, and as projects come to us, we may need to make updates. She added that we should not require art to be professional, as its definition is a difficult parameter, and we do not want to knock out any group collaborative art.

Commissioner Lacey suggested that the Board review the policy and bring it back for approval next month to be sure we are going in the right direction. Vice President Vear asked if there was an urgent need to approve the policy and Jenny stated that we have a group interested in doing public art and we want to keep the process moving with them.

After discussion on changes to the art policy as currently written Director Bechtold stated that the motion would be to approve the public art policy with a clause added that our in-house programming can display temporary art; under section D, Public Art Committee will be changed to Art & Cultural Affairs Subcommittee; under care and maintenance the letter should be H and removal should be I; the Recreation & Cultural Programming Committee will appoint members to the Art & Cultural Affairs Subcommittee with the Board retaining the power to veto.

Commissioner Chvatal motioned to approve the Public Art Policy with the changes named by Director Bechtold. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Committee Reports

Administration Committee

Commissioner Lacey had no report at this time.

Parks and Open Lands

Vacant

Finance & Capital Project Committee

Commissioner Vear had no report at this time.

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

Commissioner Posey reported that she has talked with Jan Regan from the La Grange Arts League regarding a proposal they submitted to do something fun in the parks that is sustainable, but it is not ready to present to the Board just yet. She and Jenny also have a meeting with a bigger group regarding a

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potential larger project. She is excited with the things that are happening.

Marketing/ Social Media Committee

President Opyd had no report at this time.

Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)

Marian Honel-Wilson, a member of the Community Diversity Group, stated that the public art plans are awesome. She was on vacation and saw interesting art displays and never thought about it until Stephanie pointed out that parks are for more than just running, and this is a great opportunity for art and sculptures.

Board Comments

Commissioner Posey thanked Leynette for staying on and keeping the books in order; it is a testament to her work ethic.

President Opyd thanked his fellow commissioners; there have been a lot of phone calls. He stated that the parks look fantastic and thanked the parks crew. He gave kudos to Kevin with the success numbers going in the right direction and the progress made.

Commissioner Vear thanked Stephanie, and everyone involved for their work on the art policy. He stated that numbers do not lie, and they look good with finances and programming, and it reflects well on what the staff is doing.

Vice President Vear announced that the Board will be going into executive session with no action to be taken afterwards.

Executive Session

At 7:37 P.M. Commissioner Posey motioned for the Board to convene to executive session pursuant to Item 12.1 Potential Claims and/or Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(11) and Item 12.4 Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

At 8:25 P.M. Commissioner Vear motioned the Board arise from Executive Session and Commissioner Chvatal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

The Board resumed the regular meeting at 8:25 P.M.

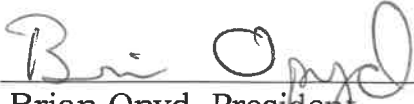
Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session

None


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Adjournment

Commissioner Posey moved for adjournment at 8:26 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Brian Opyd, President



Jenny Bechtold, Board Secretary
Approved October 10, 2022