

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

JUNE, 9 2025

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Vear, Weber, Carter, Opyd

ABSENT: Commissioner Posey

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: Wight & Company (Patty King and Gage Berger), John
Pluto, Steve Guggenheim, Brian Suchar, Kris LaRocco,
Nancy Bramson, Kevin Shield, and Rose Naseef

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda and there were none.

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

Public Comments

Kevin Shield, 45 Drexal Ave. La Grange, offered his recommendations for Gilbert Park, specifically the shelter at Gilbert Park. He explained that although the small shelter needs some updates/repairs, he would not want it to be torn down as it adds character to the park. He expressed his concerns that there will be too many amenities concentrated in the south end of the park which already has a lack of parking.

John Pluto, 718 East Ave. La Grange, expressed his concerns about the soil contamination findings at Sedwick Park. He had some questions, and Executive Director Bechtold answered that she would be happy to speak with him later and advised that Wight & Company would be providing an update on Sedgwick Park at tonight's meeting, which may answer some of his questions.

President Opyd included that this was the Public Comments portion of the meeting, and that an update on Sedwick was scheduled for later in the meeting. He explained that last month was the first time they were made aware of the issue and that information was documented and shared with the public

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since the May board meeting. John began to express his concerns about the water drainage issues and the Village of La Grange's response to him, and President Opyd reminded everyone that the Park District is not part of the Village flood planning, however, we meet the requirements set forth by the Village.

Rose Naseef, 911 S. Stone Ave. La Grange, she would like to hear from Wight & Company regarding the drainage issues at Sedgwick and how the new developments will impact drainage.

Kris LaRocco, 505 S. Waiola La Grange, stated that it is good to see progress at Waiola and wants to see more than 3 workers at a time working in the park. She also would like to see signage with the plans for the public to see as they stop by the park. Executive Director Bechtold explained that there is a substantial completion date of October, and we plan to have the project completed by then. She added that there are signs with a QR code which, if scanned, will bring the user to the Waiola Park plans online.

Presentation from Wight & Company.

Executive Director Bechtold thanked Patty and Gage from Wight & Company for joining us again for this month's meeting. She explained that the Park District has been working with Wight & Company to make changes to the Sedgwick Park plans to accommodate the remediation needed to meet the requirements for the EPA Voluntary Site Remediation Program. There is currently a one-foot barrier of clean soil above the contaminated area, however, to meet the requirements of the EPA, we will need a three-foot barrier.

Patty King, from Wight & Company, started with a recap of the findings at Sedgwick Park which were presented at the May board meeting. She explained that through soil testing, the northeast area of the park was found to have contaminated soil. As a result, there needs to be some adjustments to the overall design of Sedgwick Park. The remediation area is approximately 4.5 acres.

Executive Director Bechtold stated that the Park District was unaware of the contamination until recently, and now knowing this information, is working through new plans for the park to accommodate the modification needed to meet the EPA standards.

Patty King presented the new design plan. A discussion followed regarding drainage and grading of the contaminated area. President Opyd asked if the existing soccer field would be impacted by the elevation change to the contaminated area. Ms. King answered that the existing field's elevation would remain unchanged.

Gage Berger from Wight & Company explained the considerations of the costs

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involved in moving the soil, and that bringing the grade up for the contaminated area, from an economic standpoint, is a necessity at this point. He described further, the three-foot barrier and the process of taking off the current one foot of clean topsoil and adding two feet of clay fill and then putting the clean topsoil back on top of that to essentially add two feet to the current elevation.

Patty King continued to present the new design plan for Sedgwick Park. Commissioner Weber asked her if she had experience in dealing with this type of contamination issue. She answered that, while she is learning along the way, they are working with experts in this area and the civil engineers who work behind the scenes have experience in dealing with this scope of contamination, as well as TSC.

Executive Director Bechtold added that staff have explored several cost assistance programs for this modification with little luck. She said that they will continue to have discussions with MWRD for biosolids, but as of now all the avenues they have looked for financial assistance for this project have not panned out. She mentioned another option would be an OSLAD grant. With this, some projects could be taken out of the referendum costs and moved to the OSLAD grant (if awarded) which could mean up to \$600,000 of matching funds. To accommodate the cost associated with modification to meet the EPA standards for the contaminated area at Sedgwick Park, Executive Director Bechtold added that staff are trying to find ways to cut back on some of the enhanced parts of the overall referendum project, including removing the drainage that was added to the Gilbert Park soccer field.

Commissioner Weber expressed his thoughts about working with the village as a possible site to use for water retention. With this, another discussion ensued where members of the audience were providing commentary on the issue. Patty King from Wight and Company reiterated that the Park District does not have any control over the large storm water issues of the village but always complies with Village code and MWRD requirements.

Ms. King continued her presentation on the design plans for Sedgwick and indicated that Craig Polte from Wight & Company is looking at ways to procure clean fill for the two feet needed, for free, through other projects which might need clean fill to be taken away. She added that there would be proper documentation and testing to ensure it was clean fill.

President Opyd asked about the plan to scale back on the drainage and grading at Gilbert Park as a cost saving and what that means for the original plans for Gilbert. Ms. King explained that the drainage was going to be added for more playability after rain, however it was not part of the original referendum plans for Gilbert, it was added after seeing where the budget was prior to knowing about the issues at Sedgwick. She mentioned that the tradeoff is that there will

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now be another soccer field at Sedgwick.

Consent Agenda

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of May 12, 2025; Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated May 31, 2025; and Item 3.3 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for June dated June 9, 2025. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear, seconded by Commissioner Carter, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Staff Reports

Executive Director Jennifer Bechtold

- Director Bechtold presented her report. She added that there was an update on Senate Bill 1612 raising the competitive bid threshold. The bill was amended to increase the threshold for materials and supplies to \$60,000.

Finance & Human Resources Jamie Hollock

- Director Hollock presented her report.

Director of Recreation Kevin Miller

- Director Miller presented his report.

GM of Operations and Facilities Mike Hay

- General Manager Mike Hay presented his report.

GM of Parks & Maintenance Larry Buckley

- General Manager Buckley presented his report. Commissioner Vear asked about the closure of the splash pad, asking why it is running but not open to the public. General Manager Buckley explained that it is running to get the licensing for next year. It is running so we can maintain usage and maintain chemical balance, however there are parts we are waiting for maintenance of the splashpad.

Action Items

Discussion and/or Approval of Updated Sedgwick Site Plans.

Commissioner Weber expressed his concerns about Wight & Company dealing with sites with contamination like Sedgwick.

Executive Director Bechtold addressed Commissioner Weber's concerns reminding him that is why they approved hiring TSC at the May board meeting

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to help with entering the voluntary EPA program. They have the expertise in this area and will work closely with Wight & Company.

Commissioner Weber stated that he questions the diligence of the work of TSC based on the brief history of the land they presented at the May board meeting not corresponding with the history of the land presented by La Grange resident John Pluto earlier in the meeting. He also felt like Wight & Company had not dealt with this type of issue previously.

President Opyd explained that regardless of the history of the property, the contamination is there, and the remediation is needed. While he appreciates Mr. Pluto providing the history of the land, it still seems the three-foot barrier with no further remediation from the EPA offers the solution to move forward.

Executive Director Bechtold agreed with President Opyd, that regardless of the historical data for the land, it is contaminated and needs to be remediated. She explained that the Park District has a contract with Wight & Company for the referendum projects and the board approved an agreement with TSC at the May board meeting. She also expressed that while Patty and Gage from Wight have not handled a site of this size with contamination, the engineers at the company have, and are skilled and qualified to provide solutions to this issue. She added that it can get expensive to start pulling out of contract which the board has already approved.

Commissioner Weber restated his concerns, stating that he is feeling steered toward the solution of the 3 foot, non-contaminated, fill and topsoil. Executive Director Bechtold explained that the other option, of hauling away contaminated soil and putting in a barrier, could cost between \$7 and \$10 million, which the Park District cannot afford.

Commissioner Carter expressed his concerns with the contamination issue and how it will be determined to be clean when building up the land to ensure the added fill and topsoil is not contaminated. Executive Director Bechtold answered that there would be extensive testing throughout the process to ensure that the soil which is added is clean and will meet the EPA standards for no further remediation.

Commissioner Vear added that he believes the proposed remediation is the way to go and acknowledged that there are probably other companies which deal with this type of situation, but the board already approved entering into an agreement with TSC.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the revised Sedgwick Park site plan as presented. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Carter, Vear, Opyd

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NAYES: Commissioner Weber
ABSENT: Commissioner Posey

Discussion and/or Ratification of the Naming of the Community Center as “Lacey Community Center” and the Adjacent Park “Penicook Park”, and Approval of the Proposed Signs.

Commissioner Weber moved to ratify the name of the Community Center and Community Center Park and to approve the proposed signs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Review of Bid #2 Results for 2024 Referendum Group A (Parks)

Executive Director Bechtold presented the results from the bid opening for nine trade packages for park improvements. The bid opening was held on May 21, 2025, with seventeen contractors submitting proposals across the packages. No Board action is required at this time.

Discussion and/or Approval of Crisis Management Response Plan and Updated Policy.

Executive Director Bechtold explained that to enhance clarity, accessibility and consistency across internal documents, staff have developed a comprehensive Crisis Management Response Plan as a standalone operational document. This plan reflects the current best practices and provides clear guidance to staff and the Board during emergency situations. She added that staff recommend the removal of the outdated Crisis Management section from the Safety Manual and replace it with an updated policy which would be a brief directive acknowledging the existence, authority, and review process for the standalone plan.

President Opyd asked staff to review the plan yearly and update it accordingly.

Commissioner Vear moved to approve the *Crisis Management Response Plan*, removing the corresponding section from the Safety Manual, and relocating Policy 718 to the Personnel Policies Manual Section 270, and adopting the revised language. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Weber and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution R25-02 Authorizing the Release and Continued Retention, Respectively, of Certain Executive Session Minutes and Authorizing the Destruction of Verbatim Recordings.

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Executive Director Bechtold explained that in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, a review of closed executive session minutes and verbatim audio recordings is required every six months. Through this process, a Resolution permits closed session minutes to be released and the destruction of verbatim audio recordings. She stated that staff looked back eighteen months and one day and there was only one executive session to be released, dated June 12, 2023, for medical accommodation for the executive director pertaining to her ruptured Achilles tendon.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Resolution R25-02 authorizing the release and continued retention of certain executive session minutes and authorizing the destruction of verbatim recordings of certain Board executive sessions. It was so moved by Commissioner Weber and seconded by Commissioner Carter and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Board Business

Old Business

New Business

Election/Appointment of Officers

President Opyd announced that this is the annual meeting where officers are elected and committees are assigned.

Commissioner Weber moved to nominate Commissioner Opyd to President, seconded by Commissioner Carter.

Commissioner Weber moved to nominate Commissioner Vear to Vice President, seconded by Commissioner Carter.

Commissioner Weber moved to nominate Commissioner Posey to Second Vice President, seconded by Commissioner Carter.

Commissioner Weber moved to nominate Executive Director Bechtold to Board Secretary, seconded by Commissioner Vear.

Commissioner Weber moved to nominate Jamie Hollock, Director of Finance to Board Treasurer, seconded by Commissioner Vear.

President Opyd asked for an omnibus motion to approve Brian Opyd as Board President, Bob Vear as Vice President, Stephanie Posey as Second Vice President, Jennifer Bechtold as Board Secretary and Jamie Hollock as Board

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Treasurer. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear and seconded by Commissioner Carter and was passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion & Appointment of Commissioners to Committees.

President Opyd asked for an omnibus motion to approve Commissioner Vear on Administrative Committee, Commissioner Opyd and Commissioner Carter on Parks and Facilities Committee and Commissioner Posey and Commissioner Weber on Recreation & Cultural Affairs Committee. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Weber and seconded by Commissioner Vear and was passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

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)

Rose Naseef, 911 S. Stone, La Grange, thanked the board for the discussion about the contamination at Sedgwick Park. She felt it would be worthwhile for Executive Director Bechtold to bring up the concerns presented by John Pluto earlier in the meeting. She added that she hopes some green infrastructure can be added to the park accordingly. She stated that anytime the Park District can work with the Village it is valuable.

Board Comments

Commissioner Vear thought the Pet Parade was great and loved being in front, which made it fast and enjoyable.


Commissioner Weber added that he liked the chalk give away at the Pet Parade. He thanked residents for coming and sharing their thoughts and opinions at the board meetings.

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

Adjournment

President Opyd moved for adjournment at 7:35 P.M. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Vear, and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Brian Opyd, President



Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary
Approved July 14, 2025