

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

**MAY 9, 2022**

**President Vear called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Opyd, Lawrence, Vear

ABSENT: Commissioners Lacey, Posey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold  
Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej  
Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn  
Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller  
Park Foreman Claudia Galla  
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Derke Price  
Lesia Moskowitz, Charles Gilbert, Marian Honel-Wilson

\*Commissioner Lacey joined the meeting at 6:08 P.M.

President Vear welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda.

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

AYES: Commissioners Opyd, Lawrence, Vear  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

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

None

**Consent Agenda**

President Vear asked for a motion to approve consent agenda Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Public Hearing of April 11, 2022; Item 3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 11, 2022; Item 3.3 Approval of

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the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of April 11, 2022; Item 3.4 Approval of the Financial Reports dated April 30, 2022; Item 3.5 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for May dated May 9, 2022. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Opyd, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **Staff Reports**

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

- Director Bechtold was excited to report that we received the ComEd grant providing \$222,000 in incentives for ballfield lights at Gordon and the Babe Ruth field at Sedgwick.
- Jenny stated that Park Pride is May 21<sup>st</sup>, and the Pet Parade is June 4<sup>th</sup>. The Board is welcome to participate in these events.
- The edits and feedback for the CMP have been turned in to PRI, and we hope to have it back for approval at the June meeting.
- There has been some movement within departments. The new marketing person started today, which will ease the load for the recreation department. Summer camps will transition to BASE which will also free up rec staff. Andrea left us so we looked at where we can be more efficient. We also moved the rec department's fitness programming to the fitness supervisor, who will now report to Supt. of Recreation Kevin Miller. We are streamlining operations to do the best for the District and community. Kevin's report will be formatted differently and will now include fitness.
- The Phase 1 for the community center looks good with no further recommendations. We will continue to move forward to acquire the center from the Village.
- Natural gas is volatile right now and our agreement ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. Jenny had approval for a market watch of .42 which has come and gone. Prices have increased and Nicor was .53 in May, .68 in April, and jumped to 1.11 currently. Traditionally May, June and July are the lowest months to lock in, but prices have been affected by what is going on in the world. Nania is also struggling, and there are more delineations between the term lengths. We are considering a shorter term to get by and will continue to watch the market. We budgeted for .60 so we will be over budget. If we do not lock in, we will pay market rate.
- Our IPRA license agreement is coming up and both parties have agreed to rollover for three years.
- Our agreement with the White Sox expires on October 31<sup>st</sup> and will automatically rollover for three years. The Sox have not reached out yet, but we have some concerns that Kevin pointed out. During prime months, designated as December through April, they pay rent plus 25%

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of their revenue. During the non-prime months of May through November they pay 25% of revenue from their camps and programs but no rent. During non-prime months they get Mondays plus one day and are allowed to request additional time. Over the years they have requested more and more time. They requested four days per week last year for May and June, as well as this May. This makes it challenging for us to use the space and difficult to program. Their equipment is there, and we must move our items in and out as we have no storage there. This is a premium space, and we want to reach out to them to approach non-prime a bit different.

Kevin stated that when this agreement came into place it was with the Bulls/Sox Academy. Their president at the time said they did not make revenue in non-prime months. This has changed significantly starting in 2017. The parameters in the agreement do not allow us to do much or run baseball programming as it says we cannot use professional coaches. There is no benefit for us as the agreement stands.

The Board and staff discussed the agreement further. Jenny stated that the current rent is approximately \$2,100 and their revenue varies from a low of \$5,000 with last month at \$15,500. Their program fees and rent come to \$5.64 per sq. ft. and our leases with IPRA and the LeaderShop are \$15.09 and \$11.63 per sq. ft. They are a good partner, and we would like them to stay but we need to consider redefining the prime months and whether we can store our equipment in the space to utilize it best.

The Board agreed that they are good partners, and we would like to keep them, but it is time to have a conversation. There was consensus from the Board for Director Bechtold to discuss the agreement with the Sox and terminate it if necessary. We have 120 days to give notice of nonrenewal which would be the end of June.

- Jenny stated she had hoped to have the Little League affiliate agreement for this meeting, but they are still working on it. Little League continues to ask for modifications, but we want to keep it consistent with the other affiliate agreements. They would like credits for other fields for the money they put in at Sedgwick and would like to remove their responsibility for the dugouts and fencing, which staff do not feel would be best for the District. The Board agreed with moving forward and keeping the affiliate agreements consistent.

### ***Staff Comments***

#### **Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej**

- Superintendent Kuniej reported that she spent time listening to the Cook County board meeting. Due to a new software transition, tax bills will be delayed, and tax money will be late coming in. It could be 2023 before the second installment comes out. We have enough cash now for the

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current budget and capital projects, but it will likely be an ongoing problem and we need to stay aware and have our eyes on it. We have options and Wintrust will make loans available if we need them in the future.

Commissioner Opyd asked if capital projects, other than the parking lot, are on hold and whether it would be a six-month delay or will compound. Leynette stated she would like to make sure funds are available before spending big dollars. The first tax installment is based on a percentage, but the second installment will be late, followed quickly by next year's first installment, however, the second installment could be delayed a year or more.

- Leynette announced that she is retiring this year and has set a date for the end of October which will get us through the audit. There is a transition plan for her replacement.

### **Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller**

- Superintendent Miller stated that Jenny hit on his main point with Christine Banks coming on board for marketing.

Commissioner Opyd thanked Kevin for the numbers on success rates for programming. He is pleased to see the numbers going up, and it is a great opportunity to prune and make sure we are offering what residents want. President Vear asked about the new marketing person. Kevin stated that Christine is a La Grange resident who is a children's author and the former executive director of the La Grange Art League. She is very talented and has worked for LGBA and done restaurant logos. There is a lot to accomplish, and he is formulating a plan to get her acclimated.

### **BASE Report**

- Director Bechtold reported on behalf of Supt. of BASE Leanna Hartung. We are moving forward with offering BASE at St. Francis next year and are waiting for the contract for use of their space, which will be similar to last year, and Leanna is confident with staffing.
- Leanna is collaborating with the recreation department on the transition of summer camp.

### **Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn**

- Superintendent Finn reported that soccer and baseball groups have been able to use the fields with the better weather. They are making up a lot of rainouts.
- Chris stated that he is working on projects at the recreation center and outdoors.

President Vear asked if there were issues with demand for fields and scheduling. Chris stated that he has had a lot of communication with the

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soccer groups. He trusts them not to use the fields at night and on the weekends when it rains.

### **Park Operation Supervisor Claudia Galla**

- Park Operation Supervisor Galla reported that tree planting is completed for the season. Over the years, sixty-four commemorative trees have been planted.
- Claudia stated that she contacted MWRD regarding biosolids. They said it is too wet for application, but we are back on their radar.
- The June butterfly and pollinator event has 31 people signed up.
- The rain barrel sale is now online on our website.
- She is wrapping up the tree management plan. The deadline to submit the paperwork for the final report is July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- She has received the signs for the Adopt-a-Park program.

### **Attorney Report**

Attorney Price stated he will save his report for executive session.

### **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 the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) By and Between the School Board of Education, District 105 and the Park District of La Grange Regarding Open Space*

Director Bechtold stated that she, President Vear, and Commissioner Opyd met with the school on Friday and talked about the current IGA. They discussed the language in the IGA, the District's responsibility for maintenance, and that we are currently at a capital lifecycle replacement. If our Board does not act tonight the IGA will automatically roll over to a new 10-year term. We could benefit from use of their indoor space, but the outdoor space has been given to other affiliate groups. We would like to continue a partnership, but the agreement should be beneficial to both parties. We have committed to mowing their lawn for the remainder of the year and will leave the portalets in place, so the school district is not put out this year.

The Board and staff discussed the IGA further. Commissioner Posey asked if District 105 had any suggestions for a new IGA or preferred the status quo, and whether we use the tennis courts for programming. She suggested we may be paying for a visual that we are not using. Director Bechtold stated that her impression was that until there is a conclusion with the current IGA and tennis

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courts, the school will hold off discussing anything new. They want the courts to stay, but our staff has concerns since our CMP includes over six million dollars in repairs to our facilities and parks. If we invest tax money to outside facilities our deferred maintenance will suffer further. We also will have new infrastructure to maintain at 610 East Ave. The school tennis courts are used strictly for open recreation. Kevin added that we program tennis at Gilbert and Sedgwick. Our revenue stream for tennis programming is small, and in the last five years was \$22,545 gross, and we only get 30%, which is approximately \$6,500 over five years.

Commissioner Opyd agreed that District 105 is not thinking beyond the current IGA. He stated that we asked them what would be best for the school, and they had no solid response. They do not use the courts for school curriculum because they do not have the equipment. He is concerned that we have so much in disrepair now and other surfaces in just as bad a shape as the school's courts, and it is not our land. The IGA was done in 1992 when we did not have a recreation center, fitness center, or splash pad to maintain. Jenny added that the courts were removed from our CMP because it is not our property.

The Board agreed that it is not in the Park District's best interest to continue the current IGA, and the tennis courts would remain in their as-is condition. President Vear stated that we are open to providing professional assistance. Director Bechtold stated she will inform them of the decision by June 1<sup>st</sup> and the IGA will end on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Opyd motioned to provide notice of nonrenewal of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with District 105. Commissioner Lacey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **New Business**

#### *Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution 22-01, a Resolution Adopting the Park District of La Grange Urban Forestry Management Plan 2022*

Director Bechtold stated that Claudia has been working very hard on this. It is a great plan and very in-depth. It talks about how to care for trees, pruning cycles, plating cycles, tree preservation, and more. It is a robust plan to lead the District into the future.

Commissioner Lawrence stated the plan has good content, and she would like to see scientific names included on the list of trees so there is no confusion on the species. She asked whether we would work with the environmental commission. Jenny answered that the commission is appointed so we must go through the Village, who will give us permission to work with the EQC if they

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would like us to.

Commissioner Opyd motioned to approve Resolution No. 22-01 a Resolution Adopting the Park District of La Grange Urban Forestry Management Plan 2022. President Vear seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution 22-02, Declaration of Surplus*

Director Bechtold reported that we have been going through surplus and we have a lengthy list of items to sell, dispose of, or trade in. Most are very old and not working, and Board approval is required to move forward.

After brief discussion, President Vear asked for a motion to approve Resolution 22-02, Declaration of Surplus. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Opyd, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Access One Agreement*

Supt. of Finance Leynette Kuniej stated that we have a dedicated telephone line called a PRI which is owned by AT&T and rented to Access One. AT&T is discontinuing them so Access One will move us to a VOIP system in this building. A back-up system for our internet is included in the price since our service is not the best. We also have nine POTS lines for items such as faxing, the elevator, and fire alarm. Many of those systems are now radio transmitted so we cancelled them and brought our cost down. This change will offer the best technology for this building going forward.

After brief discussion, Commissioner Opyd motioned for Approval of the Access One Agreement. Commissioner Lacey seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Director of Parks, Planning and Maintenance (New Position)*

Director Bechtold stated that we are making structural changes within departments, and this is a position that has been vacant for at least 15 years

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and is a crucial part of the team and our CMP. This person would have planning knowledge, construction and landscape architect experience and would be qualified to train staff, enabling us to save money by avoiding contracting out work and paying prevailing wages. This position will put us \$35,000 over budget in the salary line item, but we are confident we will be under budget for part-time positions due to staffing challenges. It should even out, but we will evaluate in October and do a budget amendment if needed. Our goal is to post the position tomorrow and have someone in place in early July. We will not just hire to hire; we will only hire the right person.

After brief discussion, Commissioner Lacey moved for approval of the new position of Director of Parks, Planning and Maintenance. Commissioner Lawrence seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

*Discussion and Nominations for Board President, Board Vice President, Board 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Board Secretary, and Treasurer (vote to be at the June board meeting)*

President – President Vear nominated Commissioner Opyd and Commissioner Lawrence seconded the nomination, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

Board Vice President – Commissioner Lacey nominated President Vear and Commissioner Opyd seconded the nomination, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

Board 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – President Vear nominated Commissioner Lacey and Commissioner Lawrence seconded the nomination, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

Board Secretary – Commissioner Opyd nominated Jenny Bechtold and Commissioner Lacey seconded the nomination, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

Treasurer – President Vear nominated Leynette Kuniej and Commissioner Lacey seconded the nomination, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

### **Committee Reports**

#### *Administration Committee*

Commissioner Lacey had no report at this time.

#### *Parks and Open Lands*

Commissioner Lawrence had no report at this time.



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### *Finance & Capital Project Committee*

President Vear had no report at this time.

### *Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee*

Commissioner Posey had no report at this time.

### *Marketing/ Social Media Committee*

Commissioner Opyd reported that they are resetting their calendar now that Christine has joined them.

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

A member of the public commented that it was difficult to hear the meeting without microphones and the air conditioning running.

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Opyd thanked the Arboretum for their support with the tree plan and thanked staff for the great goals and objectives that the Board can follow throughout the year. He welcomed Christine and is excited to have her on board. He is sad to hear Leynette's announcement; she has been a great asset to the District.

Commissioner Lacey thanked staff for all the work they do. It was an educational meeting.

Commissioner Lawrence stated she is excited about the ComEd grant and thanked staff for the good work.

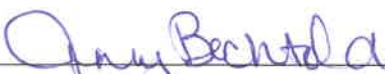
President Vear stated that the Arbor Day gathering was awesome and thanked everybody.

### **Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session**

None

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Lacey moved for adjournment at 7:24 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Opyd and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

  
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Robert Vear, President  
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Jenny Bechtold, Board Secretary  
*Approved June 13, 2022*