

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
JULY 28, 2020**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Park District of Highland Park was conducted remotely due to the Governor's Declaration of Emergency as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Members of the public were able to view a live stream of the Regular Board Meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Ruttenberg.

Roll Call:

Present: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, Vice President Kaplan, President Ruttenberg

Absent: None

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Smith; Director Voss; Director Peters; Director Gogola, Director Dunn; Director Carr; General Manager/Superintendent of Golf Operations Ochs, Assistant Director Maliszewski; Manager Johnson; Executive Coordinator Hejnowski

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA – None

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA – None

TREASURES REPORT & FINANCIAL FORECAST

Director Peters provided an update of the District's financial forecasts and a report that was presented to the Finance Committee on July 15, 2020.

Special Disclaimer Regarding Research and Forecasts

Director Peters reported that research and forecasts are based on current information as of June 30, 2020, that we consider reliable, but we do not represent it as accurate or complete, and it should not be relied on as such. The information, opinions, estimates, and forecasts contained herein are also as of the date hereof and are subject to change without prior notification.

Overview of the General and Recreation Funds

- A. *Projected Cash Flow Operations*** Director Peters provided a brief update of the District's projected cash flow related to the General and Recreation Funds, reporting that even in these difficult times the District finances are sustaining. She reminded the Park Board of Commissioners that the Park District has a 25% reserve policy for the General and Recreation Funds, which will require both funds to maintain a balance of \$4.7 million at the end of the year. Currently staff are projecting just under \$12 million in fund balance for the fiscal year ending 2020.

B. Budgeted vs. Actual vs. Projected Figures

Director Peters shared a graph comparing the District's approved 2020 budget vs. actual finances as of May 31, 2020 and projections for the end of the year which were made in June due to the Pandemic. She reported that the District budgeted a surplus of roughly \$3 million as of December 2020. Unfortunately, staff projections for year-end surplus will decrease to \$1.9 million. These projections are based on the worst-case scenario. Director Peters was pleased to report that as of May the District's actual revenue is higher than what staff had projected and our actual expenses are coming in less than projected. As of May 31, 2020, the year-to-date net difference from actual vs. projected is trending favorably by \$2 million.

C. Recreation Fund Summary

Director Peters provided a financial update for recreational programs, reporting that the golf course and driving range are exceeding both their budget and net revenue projections. Similarly, outdoor athletics, tennis, and in-person programming are exceeding net revenue projections. As for camps, tennis and golf are expected to meet both budgeted and projected revenues, whereas Camp Hometown (recreation camp) will not meet its projected revenue. As for the lakefront, non-resident revenue is expected to exceed projections, however, due to the challenge from crowd control staffing expenses (Park Ambassadors) are expected to exceed projections. Lastly, Director Peters reported that the Recreation Center of Highland Park's net revenues is not expected to meet projections.

D. Budgeted vs. Actual vs. Projected Figures (this excludes Tax Revenue and Transfers)

Director Peters shared a graph comparing the District's approved 2020 budget vs. actual finances as of May 31, 2020, without property tax revenue or transfer, to better understand what the year-end projections would look like without that added income. She reported that the greater year-end deficit would be \$3.7 million without the additional income from property taxes or the support of transfers. This will adversely affect the Park District by an additional \$1.3million. However, the actual revenue is coming in higher than projected and expenses are lower than projected, so the District is trending favorably by \$501,228 as of June 30.

E. Regression of Restore Illinois Phases or Return to Stay at Home Order this Fall

Director Peters provided a summary of what the District's financials would look like should the Governor's reenact the Stay at Home Order this Fall. Staff projects that a full closure would go into effect starting the week of Thanksgiving and remain until January 2. If this occurs, the only revenue the Park district would receive during this time frame would be from property taxes. She reported that staff used June expenses to project expenses in November through December. The June expenses have been the lowest thus far providing the most accurate expenses related to staffing and utilities since all reductions we are in full effect. As a result, staff is preparing "turn-key" solutions for missed days, a return to Phase 3, or the Stay at Home Order, which only permits virtual programming. Director

Peters shared a graph comparing the District's approved 2020 budget vs. actual finances as of May 31, 2020 and provided projections for the end of the year should the State regress due to COVID-19 spikes. She reported that the District would have a surplus of \$1.2million in the worst-case scenario, which is an additional \$300,000 expense should the state regress.

President Ruttenberg would like to know what is the percentage of that \$300,000 on the total budget?

Director Peters reported it is a 1.5% impact.

F. Monthly Payroll

Director Peters reported that the District has a \$10 million budget for payroll expenses. However, after furloughing part-time employees and reducing the hours for full-time employees, staff re-evaluated those expenses. As of May 31, 2020, staff project the year-end expenses will decrease to \$7.5million, which reflects \$2.5 million savings. After reviewing actual expenses, Director Peters is pleased to report that the District has saved an additional \$248,095 in payroll expenses as of June 30.

Commissioner Grossberg would like to know if reductions to payroll expenses are included in the November and December projections.

Director Peters reported that expenses could be less than the projected figures since most employees have used up their vacation days. If staff is placed on furlough and they do not have available paid time off, those employees will not be compensated while on furlough.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that it is important for the community to know that even under the worst-case scenario the financial health of the district is sound. The Finance Committee and Park Board of Commissioners will keep an eye on the District's financials, but he is pleased to hear that the Park District of Highland Park will meet its financial obligations even if the state regresses.

Treasurer's Report

Director Peters provided a financial summary from the June Treasurer's Report, stating that the Special Recreation Fund has a favorable variance due to tax receipts and payments from contractual services for the Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA). The Capital Projects Fund has a favorable variance due to several projects being differed or delayed. The General Corporate Fund has a favorable variance as well due to a reduction in payroll and District-Wide expenses. The Debt Service Fund has a favorable variance due to tax receipts. Lastly, the Recreation Fund has an unfavorable variance due to closure related to COVID-19.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes from the June 9, 2020, Workshop Meeting; Minutes from the June 23, 2020, Regular Board Meeting; Approval of Heartland Business Systems for the Palo alto Renewal, Wildfire Add-ons, and XDR, Updates to Policy # 7.12 – Video Surveillance System, LiveBarn Live Streaming Service Subscription Agreement, Resolution 2020-11: A Resolution Ratifying and Adopting Emergency Regulations at Millard Beach, the Sunset Woods Playground Renovation Design and Park Master Plan Services; Bills and Payroll in the Amount of \$1,668,949.77.

President Ruttenberg asked that Item F be removed from the Consent Agenda as Resolution 2020-11: A Resolution Ratifying and Adopting Emergency Regulations at Millard Beach is still being discussed.

A motion was made by Vice President Kaplan to approve items A – E & G – H on the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Grossberg.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, Vice President Kaplan, President Ruttenberg
Nay: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Motion Carried

Resolution 2020-11:

A Resolution Ratifying and Adopting Emergency Regulations at Millard Beach

Executive Director Romes reported that staff would like to update Section 5 of the Resolution indicating that September 22, 2020, be the effective seasonal closure and term date for the Emergency Order at Millard Beach.

Commissioner Bernstein would prefer a later date since the beach is a highly utilized amenity since it permits outdoor recreation under the State’s guidelines. He recommends the termination date for the Emergency Order be October 15 or October 31.

President Ruttenberg agrees with Commissioner Bernstein, recommending October 31 as the seasonal closure and term date of the Emergency Order at Millard Beach.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein to approve an amendment to Resolution 2020-11: A Resolution Ratifying and Adopting Emergency Regulations at Millard Beach, in which Section 5a will state that October 31, 2020, be the effective seasonal closure and term date for the Emergency Order at Millard Beach. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grossberg.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Commissioner Flores
Weisskopf, Vice President Kaplan, President Ruttenberg
Nay: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Motion Carried

APPROVAL OF CONDUCT ORDINANCE REVISION REGARDING FIRST AMENDMENT LOCATIONS

The Park District’s Conduct Ordinance was last updated in July of 2015. As it relates to First Amendment Locations under sections 2.08, 2.16, 2.25, 2.36, staff recommends specific locations for First Amendment Rights be added to the Conduct Ordinance under Chapter V regarding “Permits and Other Authority.” He reported that the Park District’s Conduct Ordinance was included in the Board Packet, and the recommended revisions were highlighted in yellow. He asked the Park Board of Commissioners if they had any questions regarding the recommended changes to the Conduct Ordinance.

President Ruttenberg asked Executive Director Romes to provide a brief explanation as to why these changes are recommended.

Executive Director Romes reported that first amendment rights are protected and provide individuals with the right to have a public assembly, which includes meetings, parades, marches, which the Park District has recently experienced. Additionally, those first amendment rights permit the distribution of merchandise at those public assemblies which can be for charitable, religious, and many other purposes. Executive Director Romes reported that as a Park District, our goal is to ensure those first amendment rights do not conflict with programs or facility usage, indicating it would not be appropriate for a large gathering to occur in the lobby of a facility or a small park. The amendment to this ordinance identifies appropriate locations for groups to assemble so that their gatherings do not conflict with Park District programs.

A motion was made by Vice President Kaplan to approve the revisions to the Conduct Ordinance Regarding First Amendment Locations, seconded by Commissioner Grossberg.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Commissioner Flores
Weisskopf, Vice President Kaplan, President Ruttenberg
Nay: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Motion Carried

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Centennial Ice Arena Compressor Replacement Project Progress Update

Manager Schwartz reported that the replacement of the compressor was prompted by the discontinuation of the refrigerant, R22. While that refrigerant is typically used by most ice rink compressors, it was identified as an ozone-depleting substance within the past year by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), so the refrigerant has been phased out, which lead to the compressor replacement project.

Construction began May 18, with a target completion date of August 28. As of August 29, Park District staff will create a sheet of ice and paint it in preparation for programs beginning early September.

She reported that the refrigeration scope of this project has 4 components, which include the chiller, rink floor, rink floor header, and the fluid cooler. She shared design images so the Park Board could better understand all the components and how they work together. She reported that the new system will be built onto the pre-existing cold floor, which was the most cost-effective solution and best suited for the facility. The new chiller was delivered a few weeks ago and has been installed. Crews are currently welding pipes to connect the pumps to the cooler and installing the prefabricated floor. Additionally, crews are working on the trench covers, which is where the team benches are located. The old fluid cooler was removed, and staff expects the new one to be delivered by mid-August. Once all installations are complete, crews will pressure test the Ice Mat and begin the automation scope which digitizes system controls.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANNING AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Executive Director Romes reported that the state is still in Phase 4 of Restore Illinois, so the health and safety of staff and the community remains a top priority along with the District's financials, however tonight's updates will strictly focus on the Lakefront, the Recreation Center of Highland Park, and highlights of August through September programming.

Lakefront Update

A. Rosewood Beach

Executive Director Romes reported that the lakefront properties continue to pose significant challenges, as visitors continue to violate Park District policies and ordinances, state guidelines, and disrespect both staff and park property. While staff are better managing access and crowd control at Rosewood Beach, visitors continue to disrespect Park Ambassadors, Lifeguards, and Beach Managers. Some of the policy and ordinance violations include visitors smoking and bringing alcohol on the beach, dogs on the beach, and a disregard for safety, such as visitors arguing and threatening staff when swimming is closed due to hazardous conditions. There are currently 5 Park Ambassadors monitoring the parking lot and beach 7 days a week, plus aquatics staff.

B. Park Avenue Boating Facility

Executive Director Romes reported significant challenges remain even with 2 Park Ambassadors monitoring the site 7 days a week. The capacity of Park Avenue Beach is 100 people, which has been met several times. Unfortunately, crowd control is challenging since there are numerous access points. Similar to Rosewood Beach, visitors continue to violate Park District policies and ordinances, the most challenging is that this location does not permit swimming, and visitors are not adhering to this policy. Other challenges include parking violations and trespassing onto residential properties from the public beach. As a result, visitors are disrespecting both staff and park property. Thankfully, the Highland Park Police were stationed at Park Avenue Boating Facility this past Sunday to better manage these issues and provide much-needed support to the Park District.

C. Millard Beach

Executive Director Romes reported that even with the passing of the Emergency Order, prohibiting non-residents from utilizing this beach, staff continues to turn away non-residents. Similar to Park Avenue Boating Facility, this is a passive beach that does not permit swimming; however, visitors continue to violate this policy, and as a result, staff are being disrespected. Other violations include visitors smoking and bringing alcohol on the beach and vandalism of park property. Highland Park Police were contacted this past Sunday to better manage some of these issues.

D. Moraine Beach

Executive Director Romes reported that this beach is currently closed, and his signage posted throughout the beach, ravine, and neighborhood notifying visitors. Unfortunately, people are ignoring the signs, accessing the beach, swimming, and bringing alcohol. This poses a significant safety concern since the pathway needs repair.

Executive Director Romes reported that the City cannot permanently schedule police officers at these lakefront properties, however, police will continue to help as needed. As a result, staff are gathering quotes from security guard firms to provide additional support at the lakefront, since the District will lose most of their seasonal staff come mid-August. As a result, Department Heads, Managers, and Supervisors will help monitor the lakefront until an agreement is signed with a security firm and guards are trained and scheduled. Executive Director Romes reported that some neighboring Districts, including Wilmette and Winnetka, closed their beaches due to these issues. Instead, the Park District of Highland Park would like to keep this amenity available. However, we need the community and visitors to respect our policies and the state guidelines.

Commissioner Bernstein commends staff working the lakefront properties, reporting that he has seen the disrespect and abuse they receive from visitors. He supports hiring security guards to help mitigate these issues and recommends closing the lakefront should the problem persist with security guards present.

Commissioner Grossberg reported that he has been recommending added security for the past couple meetings, and supports staff hiring security guards.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf would like to know if other communities experiencing this kind of abuse?

Executive Director Romes reported that other communities are experiencing these challenges and levels of disrespect to staff and park property, resulting in the closure of public beaches.

Director Carr reported that Gilson Beach in Wilmette has closed portions of the swimming beach that were open to non-residents as a result, and Glencoe Park District is looking to hire a security guard firm.

Vice President Kaplan recommends closing all our lakefront properties, as he is opposed to paying for a security guard firm when both residents and non-residents cannot adhere to the rules. President Ruttenberg would like the Park District to invest in security guards and recommends expediting the training process.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that he is willing to commit to the resources, but if violations still occur with security guards present, he will vote to close the beaches.

Vice President Kaplan is opposed to hiring a security firm, however, if the Park Board of Commissioners votes in favor he would like progress reports to see if security guards can diminish these issues.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if the Park Board of Commissioners could enforce Emergency Order at Park Avenue Boating Facility, only permitting resident access.

Executive Director Romes reported that staff would like to schedule security guards before adopting another Emergency Order.

Recreation Center of Highland Park

Director Carr reported that the Park District enhanced its safety protocols for guests utilizing the fitness center on July 24, requiring guests to wear a mask at all times, even when working out. Chicago has mandated this same requirement, and other Park Districts are planning to follow suit. Director Carr reported that since the implementation staff has received positive feedback from the community. Additionally, staff provided educational materials and tips regarding the best masks to use while working out and created an educational video welcoming patron's back to the facility. The video highlights the changes and enhanced safety protocols the District has made. Staff hopes these efforts will encourage the community to utilize the facility since fitness floor reservations are averaging 30 - 40 visits each day. Due to the low utilization, staff have reduced the fitness floor hours, which is currently open Monday through Thursday from 6:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. and in the evening from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday evenings from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. The facility is closed on Sundays.

Outdoor fitness utilization has been much higher and more consistent. Staff are teaching 4 -7 outdoor classes per day and will continue to do so into the Fall, so long as weather permits. Additionally, staff will begin utilizing more locations for outdoor fitness classes, including Sunset Woods Park, and plan to offer childcare options during those classes. Director Carr reported that he and staff continue are continuing to monitor revenue and expenses for the Recreation Center of Highland Park, and he will provide an update at the August 6 Finance Committee Meeting.

As for the indoor pool, Director Carr reported that the shell replacement project is complete, so park staff will begin to fill, treat, and heat the indoor pool. In the meantime, he and staff are developing a lap swim schedule and procedures, which will include staggered times that allow guests enough time to swim and change. He reported that the tentative goal is to reopen the indoor pool on August 10, but due to the challenges at the Lakefront, the reopening may not be until August 17.

Commissioner Bernstein would like staff to try and reopen the indoor pool on August 10, but he understands the challenge. He has been taking advantage of the lap swim hours at the lakefront and he has received positive feedback from the community.

Commissioner Grossberg is pleased to hear staff reduced the hours of operation at the Recreation Center of Highland Park.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf enjoys the outdoor spin classes, but sides with the community reporting that she would not participate if the classes were conducted indoors.

Vice President Kaplan reported that he uses the Recreation Center daily, and he commends staff for how clean the facility is and is pleased to report that all participants are adhering to the rules. He hopes usage increases.

President Ruttenberg is reluctant to reopen the indoor pool based on the current usage of the facility.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that the indoor pool on the agenda for the August 6 Finance Committee Meeting and suggest waiting till then to discuss.

President Ruttenberg asked staff to create and share a survey with the community to better gauge whether they are willing to utilize the indoor pool. He asked that the survey results be shared at the August 6 Finance Committee Meeting.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf agrees with President Ruttenberg, suggesting that she too is reluctant to reopen the pool if usage is low.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that the indoor pool offers recreation for the disabled population and as a District, with a Special Recreation Fund we need to serve that part of the community.

Director Carr reported that parks staff plan to fill and treat the indoor pool next week. If the Park Board of Commissioners decides against reopening the indoor pool, then staff will not run the ventilation system or heat it. Staff plan to offer a learn to swim program come the Fall and recommends offering lap swim in conjunction with those programs.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if a survey can be created and generate enough responses in less than a week.

Director Gogola reported that she can create and distribute a survey within a day. She reported that 90% of the responses are within the first week, however staff typically leave the survey open for two weeks.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf would like to know how staff plan to offer the disabled community priority use of the indoor pool.

Director Carr reported that staff will utilize a reservation system, which allows participants to reserve a lane and a time slot.

The Park Board of Commissioners asked staff to create and distribute a survey regarding the use of the indoor pool and will discuss the responses at the August 6 Finance Committee Meeting.

August Programs / Fall Programs

Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that the August brochure will be released tomorrow, which includes a continuation of mini-camps and athletic leagues, and several new programs such as safety village. He is pleased to report that 4 of the 5 offerings for safety village have already sold out, so staff are working to offer more dates and times.

On August 10, staff will release the Fall brochure, which will offer programs from September through December. The most significant change is programs will be split into two sessions, in hopes of being able to conduct session 1 programs outdoors.

President Ruttenberg would like to know what rules are being implemented to ensure leagues like ice hockey will be safe for children to participate in.

Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that he and staff have met with the Associations to develop a logistical plan which includes entry points, utilization of the ice, player conduct, and social distancing. Additionally, staff received guidance from the USA Rink Association which helped create our policy and guidelines. Finally, he reported, there will be further mitigation strategies, but the Highland Park Falcons and Giants are eager to play and providing full cooperation.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Parks Foundation Update

Commissioner Grossberg provided a summary of updates for the Park Foundation. He reported that the Foundation has been broken up into four subcommittees to which he attended the Fund-Raising Committee, and is pleased to report that the income from the Virtual Firecracker 5k netted \$2,500, so the Foundation plans to offer more virtual fundraisers in the near future. As for the Annual Appeal, the Parks Foundation is exploring different levels of donors and the types of incentives those levels would receive. Regarding the Parks Foundation website, he would like the Park Board of Commissioners to explore the site and provide feedback to the Foundation's Marketing Committee. Additionally, he would like the Park Board of Commissioners to invest more time into it the Parks Foundation by helping network and promote the FYI and SMILE campaigns.

B. Director's Report

Executive Director Romes reported that the Park District was randomly selected for a virtual Illinois Mutual Retirement Fund (IMRF) audit, which began last week and will be conducted over the next 5 weeks. This audit will ensure individuals are properly enrolled in IMRF, will review earnings and contributions, and ensure the District is following IMRF guidelines. In other news, Executive Director Romes reported that Northshore University Hospital employees may utilize the Recreation Center of Highland Park free of charge during August. Director Carr has been in communication with those employees. Staff will record how many employees utilized the facility and provide an update to the Park Board of Commissioners. As for recent events, Executive Director Romes is pleased to report the first drive-in movie sold out, with 30 parking spots reserved. In addition to the feature film, Judy's Pizza sponsored the event and delivered food to families before the movie began. The event was \$20 per family. Lastly, the North Shore Amateur Tournament begins tomorrow, with 122 golfers participating across all 3 divisions (championship, open, and women's).

Commissioner Grossberg would like to know if spectators can attend the tournament.

Manager Ochs reported that spectators are welcome. The first tee-time is 7:00 a.m. through 1:50 p.m. with golfers teeing off every 10mins. Since this is a two-day tournament the leasers will tee-off on last.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that the leaders should finish between 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. on Thursday. Additionally, he commends staff for the positive things he has been hearing from the community including, the youth baseball program, drive-in movies, the golf course and driving range, and finally, the decision to replenish Rosewood Beach.

C. Board Comments – None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Romes, Secretary