

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 25, 2021**

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 6:04 p.m. by President Ruttenberg.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, Commissioner Freeman, Vice President Grossberg, President Ruttenberg

**Absent:** None

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

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA** - None

**PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA** – None

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Grossberg and seconded by Vice President Kaplan to approve the Minutes from the April 13, 2021 Workshop Meeting, the Minutes from the April 27, 2021 Regular Board Meeting, Ordinance 2021-02 Authorizing and Providing for the Conveyance or Sale of Surplus Personal Property, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$1,356,025.64

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, Commissioner Freeman, Vice President Grossberg, President Ruttenberg

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

## **FINANCIAL FORECASTS AND TREASURERS REPORT**

### ***Projected Cash Flow/Operations (Operations General and Recreation Fund)***

Director Peters presented the District's chart of 2021 operations which examines the General and Recreation Funds comparing the budgeted vs. projected cash on hand at the end of each month. As of December 31, 2020, the Park District budgeted to have about \$12.2 million in cash on hand. However, as of April 30, staff are projecting that to increase to \$14.4 million. She reminded the Finance Committee Liaisons that the General and Recreation Funds have a 25% reserve policy, which based on the 2021 expenditures is about a \$4.1 million reserve balance.

### ***Operations (General and Recreation Funds) Budget vs. Actual***

Director Peters reported that as of April 30, 2021, staff budgeted \$2.06 million in operating revenue and she is pleased to report the actual revenue is \$2.66 million, surpassing the budgeted amount. Additionally, the actual expenses are significantly less than the budgeted amount. The actual expenses as of April 30, were \$3.45 million vs. the budgeted \$4.46 million, resulting in a year-to-date net surplus of \$1.6 million. When comparing the District's current financial status to a three-year average pre-covid (2017 – 2019) period, the year-to-date monthly net difference is a \$505,121.05 surplus.

### ***General Fund***

As of April 30, 2021, the District's actual revenue is \$260,875.75 which is significantly higher than the budgeted amount of \$109,850.47. Whereas actual expenses are significantly less than the budgeted amount. The actual expenses as of April 30, were \$1.16 million vs. the budgeted \$1.56 million, which contributed to the resulting year-to-date net surplus of \$552,224.77. When compared to 2019, the District is at \$222,061.96 surplus.

### ***Recreation Fund***

As of April 30, 2021, staff budgeted \$1.95 million in revenue, whereas the actual revenue is significantly higher at \$2.39 million. Much like the general fund, actual expenses are less than the budgeted amount. The actual expenses were \$2.28 million vs. the budgeted \$2.99 million, resulting in a year-to-date net surplus of \$1.05 million. Also, important to note, Director Peters reported that the District's revenues are exceeding expenses, which was not budgeted to occur until May. When compared to 2019, the District is at \$263,541.73 surplus due to the reduction in expenses, since actual revenue is slightly behind 2019.

### ***Special Recreation Fund***

Director Peters reported that this fund is trending as expected.

### ***Debt Service Fund***

Director Peters reported that this fund is trending as expected.

### ***Capital Fund***

Director Peters reported that expenses are increasing each month, however, there is a \$432,321.81 year-to-date net difference due to projects coming in under budget and delays.

***Cumulative Monthly Payroll Actual vs. Budget***

Director Peters reported that as of April 30, the Park District budgeted \$2.33 million in expenditures, and she is pleased to report that the actual expenses are slightly less at \$2.09 million, resulting in a year-to-date savings of \$234,094.30. When compared to 2019, the District had \$2.79 million in expenditures which is \$400,000 more than this year's actual.

***Non-Cumulative Monthly Payroll Actual vs. Budget***

Director Peters reported that for the month of April, the Park District budgeted \$637,807.44 in expenditures, whereas the actual expenses are slightly less at \$551,924.25, resulting in a month-to-date savings of \$85,883.19. When compared to 2019, the District had \$615,343.32 in expenditures.

***Conclusion***

Director Peters reported that several programs and services were canceled until mid-January due to COVID-19 mitigation measures. Fortunately, that allowed the Park District to significantly reduce payroll expenses resulting in a \$234,094 savings. This permitted a \$1.60 million surplus above the budgeted net revenue. Additionally, the number of people being vaccinated is increasing, while positivity rates and hospitalizations are decreasing so the Park District has seen a significant increase in Spring and Summer registrations. Furthermore, when comparing the 2021 actuals to the pre-COVID 3-year average the Park District has a \$505,121 surplus. Additionally, Indoor tennis had a \$249,605 surplus vs. budgeted and golf has a \$221,394 surplus. Overall, all but two of the Park District's cost centers are operating at a surplus.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know what staff is doing to accommodate the tennis requests.

Director Carr reported that staff only offered outdoor classes over the summer season. Due to the pandemic, staff expanded outdoor operations, so that classes and lessons could be offered spring through the fall. Since there are more courts available outdoors the Park District has been able to offer additional classes and lessons.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if staff are developing plans to retain and expand the current audience.

Executive Director Romes that staff are developing plans and will have updates during the review of the 2022 budget.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Sunset Woods Playground Renovation Update**

Manager Schwartz shared renderings of the newly proposed playgrounds reporting that the 5-12 age solar system play area includes a rocket ship play structure, a group spinner, embankment swings, and a net climber; and the 2-5 age nature-inspired play area includes a primary structure with slides, balance activities and tunnels, sand play features, and several types of swings. In addition to the playground improvements, Manager Schwartz reported that Hitchcock Design Group developed an improved pathway system throughout the site and entry points into the playgrounds and shared a rendering of the

newly proposed circular pathway located in between the play areas. Furthermore, staff was asked to gather blueprints for a plaza, which is an amenity from the site master plan, since the installation of a brick paver patio with tables in the center of the circular pathway complements the pathway system improvements acting as a central gathering place between the play areas. She shared examples of neighboring park districts with a plaza or central gathering space, which included Jackman Park and Friends Park in downtown Glenview, Hubbard Park in Winnetka, and Village Green Park in downtown Northbrook.

As for the budget, Manager Schwartz reported that the current cost estimates are coming in over-budget, so staff are working with Hitchcock to try and reduce costs. Currently, the site construction estimates increased from February due to the increase of material costs for concrete, steel, and pour in place and the play equipment costs have slightly increased. Overall, the project is currently estimated at \$1,266,516, so it's coming in \$116,516 over budget.

As for the project timeline, staff plans for construction to begin in August and anticipates the project will be completed by the spring of 2022.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if the costs for the plaza are included in the most recent cost estimates.

Manager Schwartz reported that the costs for the plaza are not included in the most recent cost estimates. The plaza is an additional \$39,000.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know why the costs have increased since the February estimates.

Manager Schwartz reported that the cost of materials has significantly increased, especially steel.

Commissioner Bernstein is in favor of the plaza so long as staff can reduce the costs.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know if there are opportunities for donor bricks to reduce costs.

Executive Director Romes reported that there is potential for the Parks Foundation to help raise funds.

Commissioner Freeman strongly supports the plaza.

President Ruttenberg would like to know the distance between the plaza and the 2-5 play area, suggesting relocating the plaza if the distance is 30ft or more from the 2-5 play area.

Manager Schwartz reported that she will measure the distance and follow up.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Approval of the Brown Park Ground Lease Agreement for a Temporary Fire Station**

Executive Director Romes reported that the City of Highland Park recently approved the redevelopment of a new Ravinia Fire Station on the existing property of the current Ravinia Fire Station.

In an effort to ensure continuity of vital fire and emergency medical services during construction, the City has requested approval from the Park District to construct a temporary fire station and related temporary structures on the Park District's property at Brown Park.

As a result, staff presented and received full consensus from the Park Board of Commissioners to support the general lease terms provided by the City for a temporary fire station at Brown Park. Since then, the City drafted a lease agreement, which was reviewed by attorneys, so staff are recommending approval from the Park Board of Commissioners to enter into an agreement with the City of Highland Park for the Brown Park Ground Lease Agreement for a Temporary Fire Station.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that he reviewed the lease, and he is pleased that the recommendation from President Ruttenberg was incorporated into the lease terms, such as that the utilities would remain for the Park District to utilize after the City of Highland Park terminates the agreement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Freeman and seconded by Commissioner Kaplan permitting Executive Director Romes to enter into an agreement with the City of Highland Park for the Brown Park Ground Lease Agreement for a Temporary Fire Station.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, Commissioner Freeman, Vice President Grossberg, President Ruttenberg

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**B. COVID-19 Emergency Operations Planning Update**

Executive Director Romes reported that the CDC, as well as Governor Pritzker, updated the state's guidelines regarding face masks for fully vaccinated individuals. With this guidance, businesses such as the Park District are still required to continue following other DCEO guidelines consistent with the Bridge Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan, and communications were shared with the community indicating that fully vaccinated Individuals are not required to wear a face mask or social distance when outdoors, whereas individuals not fully vaccinated are encouraged to wear a face mask when social distancing is not possible when outdoors. When indoors, fully vaccinated Individuals are not required to wear a mask or social distance during classes, lessons, and activities unless participating with individuals under the age of 12 or traveling through common areas, such as entries/exits, lobbies, locker rooms, common restrooms, spectator areas, and hallways. If individuals are not fully vaccinated, they should continue to wear a mask and social distance when indoors.

As for employees, they are following the previous guidelines which require a mask be worn at all times except when outdoors so long as 6ft of distance is maintained or when working independently indoors. Staff anticipates these guidelines to change as Phase 5 approaches.

**C. Sunset Valley Golf Club Youth Golf Development Center Outing and Short Game Area Grand Opening**

Manager Ochs thanked the Park Board of Commissioners, Parks Foundation, and staff who contributed to the success of this sold-out event, reporting that the Parks Foundation raised over \$45,000 to cover the final expenses for the youth golf development center. He reported that this amenity will be used for many generations to come and help grow the game of golf. He provided a special thanks to Joel Hirsch, for his generosity allowed the Park District to bring his vision to life and shared images of the completed short game area and walkway.

Commissioner Kaplan commended everyone who contributed to the event.

Commissioner Bernstein commended everyone who organized and hosted the event and reported he is looking forward to more events in the near future.

President Ruttenberg and Commissioner Kaplan requested that a plaque be placed in the clubhouse indicating that Sunset Valley Golf Club is home to the Highland Park High School Giants.

Vice President Grossberg loved the recommendation, as did Manager Ochs.

**D. Director's Report**

Executive Director Romes reported that summer begins this weekend, with the opening of the Hidden Creek AquaPark, swimming at Rosewood Beach, and boating at Park Avenue. Staff are excited to kick off a safe summer.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if residents can access Rosewood Beach free of charge.

Executive Director Romes reported that residents may access Rosewood beach free of charge and will receive 10 free guest passes in addition to their beach pass. As for non-residents, there is a nominal fee to access the beach.

President Ruttenberg would like to know where residents can get their beach passes.

Executive Director Romes reported that they are available at the Recreation Center of Highland Park.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know the maximum capacity for Hidden Creek AquaPark.

Executive Director Romes reported that the maximum capacity is 200 bathers, so guests will need to make a 2-hour reservation.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know when in-person meetings will resume.

President Ruttenberg reported that he and Executive Director Romes are developing a timeline for in-person meetings to resume.

**E. Board Comments - None**

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD - None**

**CLOSED SESSION**

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaplan, seconded by Commissioner Bernstein to adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of Section 2(c)1 – the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline of the District including legal counsel for the District; – the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the District; - for discussions between internal or external auditors and the Board.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, Commissioner Freeman, Vice President Grossberg, President Ruttenberg

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 7:09 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 7:32 p.m.

**ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION IF ANY**

No action was taken during closed session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaplan and seconded by Vice President Grossberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary