

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 26, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 p.m. President Grossberg.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Vice President Freeman to allow Commissioner Kaplan to participate by electronic means.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Bernstein

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Absent:** Commissioner Bernstein

**Staff Present:** Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Peters; Director Gogola; Director Murrin; Coordinator Hejnowski

**Guest Speakers:** None

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg, seconded by Vice President Freeman to approve the Minutes from the March 8, 2023 Workshop Meeting, the Minutes from March 20, 2023 Special Meeting, the Minutes from the March 21, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting, the Minutes from the April 3, 2023 Regular Meeting, Ordinance #2023-04: Authorizing and Providing for the Conveyance or Sale of Surplus

Personal Property, the Changes to Policy #5.01 Fees and Charges, the 2023 Hidden Creek AquaPark Deck Replacement Project, the Changes to the Full-Time Employee Personnel Policy Manual, the Changes to the Part-Time Employee Personnel Policy Manual, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$2,057,745.58

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Bernstein

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**FINANCIAL FORECASTS AND TREASURER’S REPORT**

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

Director Peters reported that as of March 31, 2023, actual revenues are exceeding budgeted revenue by about \$500,000 and actual expenses are \$826,000 less than budgeted, for a year-to-date surplus of \$1.3 million.

***Conclusion***

The following Park District programs and facilities are performing better than budget: youth dance has a \$19,000 surplus, tennis has an \$85,000 surplus, gymnastics has a \$31,000 surplus, sponsorship revenue has a \$21,000 surplus, and fitness center memberships have a \$53,000 surplus. Also interest income has a \$100,000 surplus and there is a \$100,000 savings from payroll expenses.

President Grossberg would like to know why interest income is so high for this quarter.

Director Peters reported that the Park District is aggressively investing in permissible things to make the most of interest income.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Parks Foundation Update**

Director Gogola reported that the Parks Foundation of Highland Park had their annual meeting last week and all the officers are staying in their same positions. There are five new potential members. The Parks Foundation is undergoing its first audit since it has raised over \$300,000.

Commissioner Ruttenberg is pleased to hear about the surplus from sponsorship revenue and would like to know about some of the sponsors.

Director Gogola reported that some of our sponsors include Highland Park Bank and Trust, Illinois Bone and Joint, North Shore Hospital, ABT Electronics, local realtors and realty groups, and local medical offices.

## **B. Board Committee Updates**

Executive Director Romes reported that at the April 12 Facility and Recreation Committee Meeting staff reviewed a programming financial and operational assessment conducted by consultants, BerryDunn, to identify priority spaces at West Ridge Center.

Staff also gave an update of the Danny Cunniff Park Pickleball project reporting that ten tennis courts will be temporarily converted into pickleball courts and available for use this summer.

At the April 18 Finance Committee Meeting staff provided an update of a proposed donation from the Fontana-Pasquasi family to rename Cloverdale Park.

Staff provided a five-year Financial Analysis Report on Hidden Creek AquaPark. Likewise, staff provided a five-year Financial Analysis Report and reviewed quarterly reports for the Recreation Center of Highland Park.

The Park District is soliciting bids for the 2023 Larry Fink Memorial Park Baseball Field Improvements project and presented the most recent Engineer's Opinion of Probable Costs in preparation of the bid meeting. Lastly, staff reviewed the bid opening for the 2023 Hidden Creek AquaPark Deck Replacement project.

## **C. Directors Report**

Executive Director Romes reported that Rebecca Grill has been chosen as the Highland Park Award recipient for the Environmental Award 2023 at this Thursday's Highland Park Awards Ceremony. The ceremony takes place at the HPHS school auditorium at 7:00 p.m. This award recognizes individuals and businesses who have made substantial contributions to improve the environment. We couldn't be more excited and honored that Rebecca is the award recipient recognizing all the wonderful things she has done for sustainability and the environment throughout her career and beyond in Highland Park.

In compliance with [Public Act 102-1088](#), also known as the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act, The Park Board of Commissioners must approve a Resolution to form an Efficiency Committee with the purpose of studying local efficiencies and submit a report to Lake County Board regarding efficiencies and increased accountability, by June 10, 2023 (and at least once every 10 years thereafter). The Efficiency Committee must include all Park Board Commissioners, the Executive Director and at least two (2) Highland Park Residents who are appointed by the Park Board President with consensus from the Park Board of Commissioners. A list of recommended candidates has been compiled based on recommendations from the Park Board and staff and was sent out this afternoon. Considerations for candidates included community members who currently or previously

served on the Parks Foundation, previous Park Board Commissioners, community members who have served on Volunteer Advisory Committees, or residents who are members of Affiliate Groups and community members whose engagement and support for the Park District's Mission to enrich community life through parks, programs, services, projects, and natural areas is commonly known.

The Efficiency Committee is required to meet at least three (3) times before submitting the report to the Lake County Board. Each meeting of the committee must be public and held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

We ask that the Park Board review the list of recommended candidates and identify the top candidates. Based on candidate availability, a Resolution will be approved at the May 24 Regular Meeting to form a Committee on Local Government Efficiency. The Resolution will be sent to the Lake County Board on May 25. Staff anticipates hosting its first Efficient Committee Meeting in Quarter 3 or Quarter 4. Quarterly meetings will be scheduled in 2024, with a final review of the completed report in the third quarter. The deadline to deliver the Efficiency Report to the Lake County Board is November 24, 2024.

Last week staff met with the [Art Impact Project](#) and [The Art Center Highland Park](#) to discuss a collaborative project titled "*Knitting Communities Together*" which is a multi-community art project known more commonly as yarn storming aimed at bringing joy, comfort and camaraderie to the residents of Highland Park and its neighboring communities. Through the therapeutic and community-building process of knitting, residents of Highland Park and the communities surrounding it will come together to knit and crochet colorful yarn creations over the course of six weeks, culminating in a colorful and collaborative art installation at Sunset Woods Park in downtown Highland Park. The installation will be completed just prior to the Independence Day Community Picnic and will remain in place for residents and visitors to enjoy throughout the summer.

The **Art Impact Project** uses strategically designed art projects aimed at achieving greater emotional wellness. This project ties in nicely with the community campaign we are releasing next month to showcase how parks and recreation support mental health and emotional wellbeing in support of **Mental Health Awareness** month. This therapeutic craft ties in nicely with all the other programs and events we are offering to support mental health. Also, every July, the National Recreation and Park Association hosts a campaign showcasing how the power of parks and recreation builds strong, vibrant, and resilient communities. This year's theme is "**Where Community Grows**" which ties in nicely with the Independence Day Community Picnic and the theme "**We are Highland Park**".

We held our first Volunteer Committee Meeting on April 19, 2023, for the Independence Day Community Picnic. Eight (8) community members were in attendance, some of whom were representing a community organization (Gratitude Generation, The Art Center of HP, HP and Highwood Rotary, and the Music Institute of Chicago) and two of our Park Board Members, Commissioner Bernstein and President Grossberg. We provided a brief overview of events and activities scheduled throughout the day and into the evening and discussed our volunteer needs,

specifically logistical responsibilities, and activity coordination. The next meetings will be on Wednesday, May 17, and Wednesday, June 21 at 6: 00 p.m.

Lastly, Executive Director Romes shared upcoming events including Under the Big Top Dance on Saturday, April 29, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Recreation Center of Highland Park. Come enjoy a night full of games, exciting circus acts, incredible food, music, and of course dancing, all under the Big Top! Chicago River Day is on Saturday, May 13 from 9:00 – 12:00 p.m. at the Preserve. Celebrate Chicago River Day with Friends of the Chicago River by cleaning up trash and debris from the site as it occurs in the floodplain of the North Branch of the Skokie River. Mother’s Day Miniature Golf on Sunday, May 14 from 8:00 – 5:00 p.m. at River’s Edge Mini Golf. Moms receive a free round of miniature golf. Mother’s Day Yoga and Mimosas on Sunday, May 14 from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. at Rosewood Beach. Join us for a special Mother’s Day yoga class celebrating all that mothers are and all they do. Stick around after for mimosas and community time. The Enchanted Forest on Saturday, May 20 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at Heller Nature Center. Set out on a pony ride, dance in the fairy circle, giggle while playing gnome games, enjoy entertainment on the lawn, make a magical wand and go on a quest to find gnomes and fairies.

**D. Board Comments**

None.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Vice President Freeman and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary