

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
MAY 24, 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 Bernstein, Commissioner Ruttenberg, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Peters; Director Gogola; Director Voss; Director Hall; Director Murrin; Manager Nichols; Manager Ochs; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speakers: None

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Executive Director Romes would like to add an item to the agenda, the IDNR PARC Grant Application for the West Ridge Center Park and Site Project.

The Park Board of Commissioners approved Executive Director Romes request.

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 April 12, 2023 Facility & Recreation Committee Meeting, the Minutes April 12, 2023 Workshop Meeting, the Minutes April 18, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting, the Minutes April 26, 2023 Regular Meeting, the Heller Nature Center Blue Trail Improvements Project Bid, Ordinance #2023-05: Authorizing and Providing for the Conveyance or Sale of Surplus Personal Property, the Illinois Mutual Retirement Fund (IMRF) Authorized Agent Appointment to Laurel Hall and Supporting Resolution, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$2,418,159.89

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE 2022 ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL AUDIT/REPORT

Director Peters reported that Sikich LLP is still waiting on the IMRF Report, so tonight's report is still a draft. It's highly unlikely any changes will be made from the draft report, however, Sikich LLP cannot provide the finalized report until the IMRF report is finalized.

Ms. Trotter, Sikich LLP, presented a draft of the Park District's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. This is a draft pending the issuance of the IMRF Financial Report. The Park District's final Annual Comprehensive Financial Report should be issued on Friday.

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2021

The District continues to present a report that meets the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) standards and as a result, has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. Sikich anticipates the District will continue to trend in that direction based on the report that has been prepared this year and will be issued in June.

Independent Auditors Report

Sikich LLP provided an unqualified opinion, which is considered to be a clean opinion, which is the highest level of assurance they can provide on the financial statements.

Management's Discussion and Analysis

This is prepared by Park District staff which provides a great deal of context for the financial highlights.

Statement of Net Position

This provides the basic financial statements presented on a full accrual basis of accounting, which includes the District’s long-term assets and long-term liability balances. Total net position is \$70,723,393.

Balance Sheet

This is presented on a modified accrual basis of accounting, excluding long-term items. The General Fund has \$4.8 million. Conversely, the Recreation Fund has \$6.7 million.

Required Supplementary Information

Budgeted vs. actual performance are detailed in this section.

Statistical

Outlines 10 years of historical data including tax collections, levies, etc.

Board Communication

There are no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies based on testing. This is a required communication to those charged with governance. No difficulties were encountered, conversely, there were no adjustments recommended by the auditors. The numbers received for the audit were only adjusted once. As a result, the monthly financials provided by staff are accurate as the adjustment was made to the long-term balances.

Commissioner Bernstein appreciates all the hard work of staff and Sikich LLP for providing an unqualified and clean opinion. This provides the Park Board of Commissioners with an accurate set of financial figures to follow when planning for the District.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Ruttenberg to approve the 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Audit Report conditioned upon no material changes that are required as a result of the IMRF Audit issuance.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

Commissioner Kaplan left the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Approval of Resolution 2023-04 A Resolution Forming a Committee on Local Government Efficiency

Executive Director Romes reported that In compliance with [Public Act 102-1088](#), also known as the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act, by June 10, 2023, and at least once every 10 years thereafter, The Park Board of Commissioners must approve a Resolution to form an Efficiency Committee with the purpose of studying local efficiencies

The Committee is composed of the Park District Board of Commissioners, the Executive Director, and at least two (2) residents from the district appointed by the President of the Board of Commissioners and approved by the Board of Commissioners, and the chief executive officer or other officer of the Park District.

The duties of the Efficiency Committee include studying governing statutes, ordinances, rules, procedures, powers, jurisdiction, shared services, intergovernmental agreements, and interrelationships with other governmental units and the State of Illinois and collecting data, research, and analysis as necessary to prepare a report to the Lake County Board no later than eighteen (18) months after the formation of the Committee, that includes recommendations with respect to the Park District's increased accountability and efficiency.

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. The Committee must provide an opportunity for any person from the public in attendance to be heard at each meeting. At the conclusion of each meeting, the committee must conduct a survey of residents who attended the meeting and ask for input on matters discussed at the meeting. Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, all public bodies must keep written minutes of the meeting.

It is the recommendation of staff and the Park Board of Commissioners that the following individuals forms an Efficiency Committee for the Park District of Highland Park: Terry Grossberg, Park Board President, Jennifer Freeman, Park Board Vice President, Brian Kaplan, Park Board Commissioner, Barnett Ruttenberg, Park Board Commissioner, Calvin Bernstein, Park Board Commissioner, Jean Sogin, Resident Member, Hania Fuschetto, Resident Member, Rafael Labrador, Resident Member, Brian Romes, Executive Director.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Vice President Freeman to approve the Resolution #2023-04: A Resolution Forming a Committee on Local Government Efficiency.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Kaplan

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

B. Consideration to Approve the Larry Fink Memorial Baseball Field Improvement Project Update

Director Smith reported at the May 16, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting, staff provided an update on the bid results for the Larry Fink Memorial Baseball Field Improvement project. The Park District received two bids for the project, both came in significantly over the estimate. Staff met with Gewalt Hamilton to reduce the project scope to stay within a \$1million budget, while also incorporating additional parking. Director Smith shared a rendering of parking lot alterations developed by Gewalt Hamilton to increase the number of parking spots available at the site.

Commissioner Ruttenberg would like to know the goal of the baseball field improvement project.

Executive Director Romes reported the goal is to accommodate multiple age groups and improve playability with artificial turf.

Commissioner Ruttenberg would like to know if the reduced scope has been shared with the Fox Family.

Executive Director Romes reported that staff met with he Fox Family and they are still interested in making a donation.

The Park Board of Commissioners are not in favor of the presented parking lot alternations, but they feel additional parking is needed to support racquet sports, baseball, and soccer. Staff will explore additional options.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Vice President Freeman to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a design services agreement with Gewalt Hamilton Associates for the design of Larry Fink Memorial Baseball Field Improvements in an amount not to exceed \$74,400.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Kaplan

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

C. IDNR PARC Grant Application for the West Ridge Park and Site Project

Executive Director Romes reported that staff received approval from the Park Board of Commissioners to use the proposal from Holabird and Root to apply for the 2023 Park and Recreation Construction (PARC) grant application to build a new community center at West Ridge Park. Staff confirmed that the recipient will be awarded \$2.8million, which the Park District must provide a 25% match.

The narrative of the grant application will be to construct a new Community Center at West Ridge Park to replace the aging West Ridge Center with a new sustainable facility that increases both operational and energy efficiencies, expands recreational capacity, addresses accessibility including compliance with ADA regulations, and enhances safety and security. The new facility is a recommendation of the Park District of Highland Park’s Master Plan to address the poor infrastructure of the existing West Ridge Center. An award of \$2.8M will support a dedicated gymnastics gym, flexible spaces for recreation and enrichment programs, classes, events, camps, and activities for youth and adults, including cultural, visual, and performing arts.

Commissioner Ruttenberg requested holding a Recreation and Facility Committee Meeting the first week in June so staff could provide additional updates related to the PARC grant.

FINANCIAL FORECASTS AND TREASURER’S REPORT

Operations (General and Recreation Funds) Budget vs. Actual

Director Peters reported that as of April 30, 2023, actual revenues are exceeding budgeted revenue by about \$737,000 and actual expenses are \$1 million less than budgeted, for a year-to-date surplus of \$1.7 million.

Conclusion

The following Park District programs and facilities are performing better than budget: youth dance has a \$23,000 surplus, tennis has an \$40,000 surplus, gymnastics has a \$33,000 surplus, sponsorship revenue has a \$23,000 surplus, golf has a \$58,000 surplus, and fitness center memberships have a \$77,000 surplus. Also interest income has a \$150,000 surplus and there is a \$200,000 savings from payroll expenses.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to review all the individual facility charts at the August Finance Committee Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Parks Foundation Update

Director Peters reported that the Parks Foundation of Highland Park discussed upcoming community engagement events, which includes the ribbon cutting at Park Avenue Beach and Boating Facility and the Community Event on June 1 with Ian Hill, and the Pickleball Tournament on June 21. She is pleased to report that the Parks Foundation concluded its first audit in the past four years. The auditors will present their financial report at the next Parks Foundation Meeting.

Vice President Freeman was pleased to see the updated donations from the Gala, as those donations support the Smile Fund.

Commissioner Ruttenberg reported that relevant to the Foundation, there were community members whose children are enrolled in our gymnastics and ice-skating program who requested capital project gap filling.

Vice President Freeman and President Grossberg agreed that those programs need stake holders and need to be introduced to the Parks Foundation to potentially form fund raising committee for capital projects. President Grossberg requested that staff share this request with the Parks Foundation President.

B. Board Committee Updates

Executive Director Romes reported that at the May 16 Finance Committee Meeting staff reviewed a design proposal from Holabird and Root for the West Ridge Park and Site Project in an effort to apply for the IDNR PARC Grant. Staff received consensus from the Finance Committee to move forward with a Design Contract from Holabird and Root.

Staff provided an update on the locker rooms and gymnastics studio at Centennial Ice Arena.

Staff presented recommended improvements to the fitness floor at the Recreation Center of Highland Park to develop a multigenerational space.

Martha Trotter, from the accounting firm Sikich LLP, presented a draft version of the Park District of Highland Park's audited financial statements for 2023. Sikich LLP issued an unqualified or clean opinion for the report.

C. Directors Report

Executive Director Romes reported that Hidden Creek AquaPark and the swimming beach at Rosewood Beach are opening this Weekend. As for Park Avenue Beach and Boating Facility, construction continues to progress. With the summer boating season underway, we will send regular project updates until completion to inform facility users. Our goal is to provide all users with a safe, welcoming, and extraordinary experience.

The concrete surface of the new breakwater is complete, providing critical protection and safe access to Lake Michigan from the south beach. While our project goal was to complete all construction by the Memorial Day holiday weekend, challenging lake conditions have extended the completion of the concrete boat launch and ancillary items on the breakwater.

As a result, these amenities will remain closed until construction is completed. While we are hopeful construction will be completed in the next few weeks, Power Boats and PWCs will not be permitted to launch at Park Avenue until the concrete ramp is safely accessible. While we are excited to open the south beach and sand ramp to all non-motorized boaters over the Memorial Day Weekend, our Power Boat and PWC Season Launch Pass Holders with a Highland Park Launch Sticker will be provided free launch access at Winnetka's Lloyd Beach, 799 Sheridan Rd., until construction at Park Avenue has been finalized.

The south beach and sand ramp at Park Ave will be available beginning Memorial Day Weekend for launching sailboats, kayaks, and standup paddle boards. PWCs will not be permitted to launch from the sand ramp.

Due to ongoing construction, vehicles will only be allowed in and out access to the boating facility from the west side of the water plant. Limited parking will be available at the south and north lots only. Park District staff will be on hand daily for Park Ave launch sticker holders from 9 am – 11 pm to open the west side gate and ensure safe traffic flow.

Lastly, 16 pickleball courts are open and available for use at Danny Cunniff Park. He is pleased to report that the Park District of Highland Park has the largest outdoor pickleball facility in the north shore.

D. Board Comments

President Grossberg thanked the Park Board of Commissioners for their support of his re-appointment as the Park Board President, he thanked Director Voss, Architect Evans, and Director Gogola for helping his family install a park bench.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg, seconded by Vice President , to adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of Section 2(c)1: The employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body; Section 2(c)5 – the purchase or lease of real estate including discussion on whether a certain parcel of property should be acquired;

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Kaplan

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

Regular Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2023

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 7:46 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 7:47 p.m.

The Park Board of Commissioners reconvened into open session to recite the sections to enter into closed session, as Section 2(c)5 is inaccurate, instead the Park Board of Commissioners would like to enter into closed session pursuant to sections 2(c)1 and 2(c)6.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg, seconded by Vice President , to adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of Section 2(c)1: The employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body; Section 2(c)6 – the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the District;

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Kaplan

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 7:49 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 8:12 p.m.

Action From Closed Session If Any

President Grossberg reported that the Park Board of Commissioners met in Closed Session under Section 2(c)1: The employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body; Section 2(c)6 – the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the District.

No action was taken.

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 8:12p.m.

Regular Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary