

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 31, 2024**

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

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Commissioner Ruttenberg, Commissioner Bernstein, President Grossberg

**Absent:** Commissioner Kaplan, Vice President Freeman,

**Staff Present:** Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Peters; Director Voss; Director Gogola; Director Hall; Assistant Director Reyes; Assistant Director Acevedo; Superintendent/Manager Ochs; Manager Sangern; Manager Saunders; Coordinator Hejnowski

**Guest Speakers:** None

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None.

**OPEN TO PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

None.

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE 2024 BUDGET**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Commissioner Bernstein to convene the public hearing for the proposed Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal Year beginning January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2024.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Ruttenberg, Commissioner Bernstein, President Grossberg

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Kaplan, Vice President Freeman

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

President Grossberg reported that the public hearing for the proposed Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal Year beginning January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2024 is now in session.

Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 31, 2024

As required by law, the budget was, with the Park Board’s consensus, laid down for a period of 30 days. The document was available to be reviewed at Recreation Center of Highland Park and the Park District’s web site. Also, in accordance with the law, notification of tonight’s hearing was posted in the Highland Park News.

No members from the public or members from the Park Board of Commissioner’s wished to speak on the public hearing and Executive Director Romes did not receive any written communications relative to the proposed Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal Year beginning January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2024

Commissioner Bernstein reported that the 2024 Budget was reviewed in detail at Finance Committee Meetings, before being presented and laid down. He commended his fellow board members and staff on the development of the 2024 Budget.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Commissioner Bernstein to close the public hearing.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Ruttenberg, Commissioner Bernstein, President Grossberg

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Kaplan, Vice President Freeman

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg, seconded by Commissioner Bernstein to approve the Minutes from the December 6, 2023 Workshop Meeting, the Minutes from the December 7, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting, the Minutes from the December 13, 2023 Decennial Committee Meeting, the Minutes from the December 13, 2023 Regular Meeting, 2024 The Preserve of Highland Park Compton Avenue Trail Connection, the Second Amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement with NSSD112, Ordinance 2024-02 Authorizing and Providing for the Conveyance or Sale of Surplus Personal Property, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$2,607,717.21

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Ruttenberg, Commissioner Bernstein, President Grossberg

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Kaplan, Vice President Freeman

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**FINANCIAL FORECASTS AND TREASURER’S REPORT**

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

Director Peters shared the end-of-year projections and actual figures as of December 31, 2023. She is pleased to report that Actual Revenues exceeded budgeted revenues by \$2.7 million. Actual Expenses were less than budgeted by \$1 million.

***Conclusion***

The following Park District programs and facilities are performing better than budget: interest income has a \$788,000 surplus, athletics exceeded the budget by \$60,000, tennis exceeded the budgeted by \$300,000, Recreation Center memberships, personal training, group ex, and aquatics exceeded budget by \$435,000, and golf exceeded budget by \$557,000 surplus. Also, there was a \$650,000 savings from payroll expenses.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE THE SECOND AMENDMENT TO LOT 3 LEASE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK AND THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK**

Executive Director Romes reminded the Park Board of Commissioners that the Park Board approved a Restricted Donor Agreement with Ron Saslow for a new Paddle Facility at Lot 3 of the Highland Park Country Club at the December 13, 2023 Regular Meeting.

A Contingency of that agreements states that “Neither the PDHP nor Donor shall have any obligations hereunder unless and until the following contingencies are satisfied: the Prime Lease is amended so that the term of the Prime Lease cannot be terminated without cause during the Term of this Agreement.

At the Park Board Workshop Meeting on January 17, the Park Board approved the Second Amendment to the Lot 3 Lease Agreement with the City of Highland Park. This past Monday, January 29, 2024, the City Council approved an updated version of that agreement. Therefore, tonight we are seeking Park Board approval of the new Agreement that was approved by City Council.

Commissioner Bernstein thanked the Saslow family for their generous donation and City Council for their support and partnership.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein, seconded by Commissioner Ruttenberg to approve the updated version of the Second Amendment to Lot 3 Lease Agreement by and Between the City of Highland Park and the Park District of Highland Park.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Ruttenberg, Commissioner Bernstein, President Grossberg

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Kaplan, Vice President Freeman

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**B. Saslow Restricted Donor Agreement Exhibit Update**

Executive Director Romes reviewed Exhibit B of the Saslow Restricted Donor Agreement and the estimated costs of the dome and the proposed funding model.

**C. Approval of Ordinance 2024-01: Combined Budget and Appropriation Beginning January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024**

Director Peters reported that the 2024 proposed budget was presented to the Finance Committee on November 14, 2023, and December 7, 2023. After review and revisions, a final draft was presented to the Park Board at the December 13 Workshop Meeting. At that time, the Park Board provided consensus to make the draft budget document available for public inspection for thirty days. The budget was made available for public review at the Recreation Center of Highland Park and on the District's website during this timeframe. No comments from the Public have been received by the District. In accordance with the Park District Code, tonight's public hearing regarding the budget was posted in the Highland Park News on Thursday, January 18, 2024.

The proposed budget for fiscal year 2023 includes operating revenues of \$25,968,634, additional revenues of \$2,618,927, a debt issuance of \$5,500,000 and total estimated expenditures (district-wide) of \$37,863,017 resulting in an anticipated deficit, of \$3,775,457. This is a planned use of reserves for capital projects related to master planning netted with the debt issuance.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Ruttenberg to approve for the 2024 Budget and 2024 Budget and Appropriation Ordinance (2024-01) for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Ruttenberg, Commissioner Bernstein, President Grossberg

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Kaplan, Vice President Freeman

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Parks Foundation**

Director Gogola reported that tickets for the 2024 Parks Foundation Champions Gala and Charity Auction went on sale today. The event will be held at Sunset Ridge Country Club in Northfield on Saturday, April 13, 2024 from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. She is pleased to report the guest speaker is 12-year Chicago Bears Linebacker and Seve-Time Pro Bowler, Lance Briggs.

**B. Board Committee Updates**

Executive Director Romes reported that at the January 10, 2024 Facility and Recreation Committee Meeting staff reviewed the proposed concept and financial terms for the Concessionaire License Agreement with Madden Concepts, LLC for Sunset Valley Golf Club.

Staff reviewed the terms and funding model for Paddle Facility Reservation Agreement, which permits UPP Paddles, LLC, to sell paddles, related products, and branded attire manufactured in the Paddle Facility located at 2205 Skokie Valley Road, Highland Park, IL 60035.

Staff reviewed the proposed changes to the Second Amendment to the Lot Three (3) Lease Agreements by and between the City of Highland park and the Park District since the Donor Agreement includes a contingency that the Lease Agreement be amended so that the term cannot be terminated without cause during the Term of the Donor Agreement. Staff reviewed the changes to the terms and the funding model for the dome.

**C. Highland Park Golf Learning Center End of Season Report**

Manager Saunders reported that two (2) new target greens were installed last year, the brick pavers around the miniature golf course were repaired, and targets were resodded.

He reviewed the 2023 participation figures for instruction at the Learning Center, this included PGA Camps, the Highland Park Golf Academy, and private lessons.

Manager Saunders reviewed the monthly miniature golf, range buckets, and the operational revenues and expenses.

**D. Directors Report**

Executive Director Romes reported that the Park District and the City of Highland Park are working collaboratively to plan events and activities for July 4, 2024. Logistics and planning are ongoing with the City of Highland Park.

Executive Director Romes reminded the Park Board of Commissioner's approved a Design Agreement with Lamar Johnson Collaborative for improvements to Sunset Woods Park, consistent with and Illinois Department of Natural Resource (IDNR) OSLAD Grant Aware. The Project is based on a concept plan in the Sunset Woods Master Plan. Before beginning schematic design, Architects at LJC will be confirming the plan vision by holding meetings with key stakeholders.

A Neighborhood Stakeholder Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 5:00pm at the Sunset Woods Field House with neighbors that live directly adjacent to the park. At this meeting, LJC will explain the project scope and will facilitate a conversation about cares and concerns as we kick off design.

**E. Board Comments**

Commissioner Bernstein requested a short summary regarding acknowledgements for the Park District of Highland Park at the Annual IAPD/IPRA Soaring to Heights Conference.

Executive Director Romes reported that the Park District of Highland Park was awarded “Outstanding Playground” for Sunset Woods Rocketship.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**CLOSED SESSION**

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein, seconded by Commissioner Ruttenberg, to adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of Section 2(c) 21: the discussion of minutes lawfully closed under the Act, whether for the purposes of approval of said minutes or for conducting the semi-annual review of the minutes as set forth in section 2.06 of the Act.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Ruttenberg, Commissioner Bernstein, President Grossberg

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Kaplan, Vice President Freeman

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 7:04 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 7:14 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) 21: the discussion of minutes lawfully closed under the Act, whether for the purposes of approval of said minutes or for conducting the semi-annual review of the minutes as set forth in section 2.06 of the Act.

In accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act, the public body must meet to review minutes of all closed meetings at least every 6 months, or as soon thereafter as is practicable. At such meeting, a determination is made and reported in an open session that (1) the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of those minutes or (2) that the minutes or portions there of no longer require confidential

Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 31, 2024

treatment and are available for inspection by the public. Contemporaneous with the semi-annual review of closed session minutes, the Park Board should authorize the destruction of the verbatim recordings of closed session meetings more than 18 months old for which the minutes have been approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Commissioner Bernstein and approved by a unanimous vote that the Closed Session minutes from July 26, 2023 Regular Meeting no longer require confidential treatment and be released for public inspection and that the Closed Session minutes from September 13, 2023 Workshop Meeting, September 27, 2023 Regular Meeting, October 25, 2023 Regular Meeting, November 8, 2023 Workshop Meeting, December 6, 2023 Workshop Meeting, December 13, 2023 Regular Meeting; shall not be released for public inspection since the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of those minutes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Commissioner Bernstein and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Roxanne Hejnowski*

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary