

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 18, 2024**

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

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Peters;
Director Gogola; Director Hall; Director Baird; Superintendent/Manager Ochs;
Manager Sangern; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speakers: None

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE TAX LEVY ORDINANCE

A motion was made by Vice President Freeman and seconded by Commissioner Ruttenberg to convene the public hearing for the Tax Levy Ordinance for 2024 (2025 collections), representing the District's request for property taxes to be received in 2025 is now in session. The amount of the levy is \$14,444,642 (fourteen million, four hundred forty-four thousand, six hundred forty-two dollars), exclusive of debt service.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

President Bernstein reported that the public hearing for the Tax Levy Ordinance is now in session.

As required by 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 Tax Levy Ordinance.

A motion was made by Vice President Freeman and seconded by Commissioner Ruttenberg to close the public hearing.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None.

RESOLUTION 2024-03 - HONORING AND RECOGNIZING LISA HODGES

Executive Director Romes reported that on November 20, 2024, I received information from staff that an incident occurred at the Recreation Center of Highland Park where during a fitness class a member collapsed and was taken to the hospital. Shortly thereafter, I learned that the instructor for that class, Lisa Hodges, not only swiftly enacted park district emergency action protocols, as well as practices consistent with her CPR and AED training, but she personally used these skills to assess that this patron was unresponsive and not breathing, and then proceeded to courageously perform CPR on this patron, which ultimately resulted in restoring their breathing, and saving their life.

Because of Lisa's actions, the Park Board has invited her to attend the meeting this evening, to formally thank her, acknowledge her bravery, and express gratitude for her extraordinary service to this patron, and the community.

President Bernstein read the resolution.

A motion was made by Vice President Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Ruttenberg to approve Resolution 2024-03 Honoring and Recognizing Lisa Hodges.

The Park Board of Commissioners commended Lisa for her bravery and swift actions, each provided a heartfelt speech.

Manager DiTomasso echoed the Park Board sentiments, following with she is honored to work with someone as brave and caring.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Vice President Freeman, seconded by Commissioner Ruttenberg to approve the Minutes November 06, 2024 Policy Committee Meeting, Minutes November 13, 2024 Workshop Meeting, Minutes November 14, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting, Minutes November 20, 2024 Facility/Recreation Committee Meeting, Minutes November 20, 2024 Regular Meeting, Ordinance #2024-09 - Tax Levy for 2024, Sikich 2024-2026 Audit Contract Extension, 2025 Highland Park Pops Affiliate Organization Agreement, 2025 Highland Park Players Affiliate Organization Agreement, 2025 American Youth Soccer Organization Affiliate Agreement, 2025 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference Attendance, 2025 Uptown Music Theater of Highland Park Affiliate Organization Agreement, Renewal Letter of the Independent Contractor's Agreement The Golf Practice, SourceWell Cooperative Purchasing Agreement for Golf Maintenance Equipment, Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Contract for Playground Equipment at Lincoln Park, the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Contract for Playground Equipment at Rosewood Park, Ordinance 2024-12 Authorizing and Providing for the Conveyance or Sale of Surplus Personal Property, 2025 License Agreement between the Park District of Highland Park and the North Shore Yacht Club, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$6,218,213.20

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: President Bernstein abstained from item A. Approval of the Minutes from the November 06, 2024 Policy Committee Meeting. Commissioner Ruttenberg abstained from item D. Approval of the Minutes from the November 20, 2024 Facility and Recreation Committee Meeting.

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 November 30, 2024. Projected Revenues are greater than budget by \$2.9 million and projected expenses are less than budgeted.

Conclusion

The following Park District programs and facilities are performing better than budget: interest income has a \$782,000 surplus, tennis has a \$221,000 surplus, Recreation Center memberships, personal training, and group exercise classes has a \$300,000 surplus, golf has a \$775,000 surplus. Also, there is \$316,000 savings from payroll expenses.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET AND THE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE

Director Peters reported that Staff is pleased to present the proposed 2025 Park District of Highland Park Budget for consideration by the Board of Park Commissioners. This budget represents the calendar year January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025. The Finance Committee reviewed the proposed budget in detail at the Finance Committee meetings held on November 14, 2024, and December 3, 2024.

Per park district code “The governing body of each park district shall, within or before, the first quarter of each fiscal year, adopt a combined annual budget and appropriation ordinance.” The purpose of today’s presentation is to gain consensus from Park Board Commissioners to move forward and lay the budget down for a period of thirty days so that the public may review it.

After that period has expired, there will be a hearing for the public on January 29, 2025. Later that evening, the Budget will be presented to the Park Board for approval of the Budget, and the Budget and Appropriations Ordinance. Upon approval, the budget will be certified by the county.

B. Approval of the Updated Policies in the Employee Handbook

Director Hall reported that the Employee Handbook was revised and rewritten in its entirety during 2024. During the revision process, staff input workshops were facilitated to receive feedback from employees on policy changes. Review and input were received from legal, Laner Muchin Ltd., to ensure up-to-date compliance with Federal and State employment laws. All draft policies were reviewed in detail with Board members at four (4) Policy Committee Meetings. The Employee Handbook, including all proposed employee policies, will replace the current two (2) employee policy documents, the Part-time Personnel Policy Manual and the Full-Time Personnel Policy Manual. The District’s goal is to create an Employee Handbook that is Values-driven with industry-leading practices, user-friendly with simplified and more concise language, and to meet all compliance requirements.

Commissioner Ruttenberg recognized the extraordinary work of staff and the Policy Committee liaisons to rewrite the policies in the Employee Handbook.

A motion was made by Commissioner Labrador and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg to approve the updated Policies within the Employee Handbook, to be effective January 1, 2025, and to replace the current employee policies within the Part-Time Personnel Policy Manual and the Full-Time Personnel Policy Manual.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

C. 2025 Master Plan Review and Revision RFP Progress Update

Executive Director Romes reported that Commissioners Grossberg, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman expressed interest in being Liaisons. The Park District received two proposals for the 2025 Master Plan Review and Revision RFP. Staff are preparing an evaluation matrix to summarize and compare proposals. Staff plan to conduct interviews with firms on Tuesday, January 7, 2025.

After receiving new information, staff believe that this Master Planning effort must be completed and approved by the Park Board by the end of August to comply with Distinguished Accreditation. Therefore, both the scope and timeline will be critical. If the Park District feels we need additional time to complete this Master Planning effort, we can discuss lapsing Distinguished Accreditation for 1 year and apply in 2026. While the Park District will still be compliant with Accreditation Standards, for 1 year we will not be Accredited. We can discuss this further as we review the Master Plan Scope and Timeline. Approval is anticipated for the January 29 Regular Park Board Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration for Approval of Fitness Center Flooring Replacement

Deputy Director Carr reported that a water line at the Recreation Center of Highland Park cracked on December 02, 2024. The Park District received a quote from Parkside Restoration for \$237,998 and a quote from Direct Fitness Solutions for \$67,999. The total contractor remediation expenses are \$305,997. The total claim to insurance for Replacement Cost Value is \$261,481. Staff are recommending the Park Board of Commissioners approve Resolution 2024-04, waiving the competitive bidding and awarding contracts for emergency restoration and preservation measures, authorizing the Executive Director to enter into agreement with Direct Fitness Solutions to purchase and install replacement fitness flooring for the Recreation Center of Highland Park.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Commissioner Labrador to approve Resolution 2024-04, waiving the competitive bidding and awarding contracts for emergency restoration and preservation measures, authorizing the Executive Director to enter into agreement with Direct Fitness Solutions to purchase and install replacement fitness flooring for the Recreation Center of Highland Park.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

- B. Approval Annual Renewal of Microsoft Email Licenses from MNJ Technologies Direct, Inc.**
Executive Director Romes reported that this item is deferred until January 2025.

C. Parks Foundation

Parks Foundation President, Josie Beck, provided a year in review of financial support from the Parks Foundation for capital projects and scholarships so Highwood and Highland Park families could participate in Park District programs.

D. Board Committee Updates

Executive Director Romes reported that at the December 03 Finance Committee Meeting staff reviewed the proposed three-year audit extension contract with Sikich. The District has had a positive experience with Sikich over the past five years. Staff provided a detailed review of the 2025 Budget Book. Staff recommend purchasing golf and playground equipment through a Sourcewell Purchasing contract. Staff reviewed the proposed contracts: a Toro Multipro 5800-G with GeoLink Precision Spray System from Reinder's, Inc and Play Equipment for the Lincoln Park and Rosewood Park Renovation projects from BCI Burke Company. Staff received 85 bids for the New Facility and Site Improvements at West Ridge Park.

At the December 10 Facility and Recreation Committee Meeting staff reviewed the project schedule, budget, and bid results for the New Facility and Site Improvements at West Ridge Park.

At the December 18 Facility and Recreation Committee Meeting Architects Holabird and **Root shared** facility and site renderings and presented sustainability elements for the New Facility and Site Improvements at West Ridge Park project.

E. Directors Report

Executive Director Romes reviewed the facility holiday hours and upcoming programs including:
Holiday Break Camps Dec. 23 – 27 & Dec. 30 – Jan 3

- Winter Break Mini Camp (k – 5th) 9:00 – 3:00 p.m. at Centennial Ice Arena.
- Junior Tennis (ages 7 – 14) 9:00 – 12:00 p.m. at Deer Creek Racquet Club.
- STREAM Explorers Winter Break Camp (Ages 5-10) 9:00 – 3:00 p.m. at West Ridge Center.

STREAM Explorers School Day Off Program Mon. Jan. 20 from 9:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Split between Heller Nature Center and West Ridge Center, this program features a variety of activities in Science, Technology, Recreation, Environment, Art, and more.

F. Board Comments

President Bernstein acknowledged staff and the 2024 accomplishments. He thanked everyone for their hard work and wished everyone a happy holidays.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary