

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 17, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by President Grossberg.

A motion was made by Commissioner Beck and seconded by Commissioner Labrador to allow Commissioner Greenberg to participate in tonight's meeting by electronic means.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Greenberg

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg

Absent: None

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Peters; Director Voss; Director Gogola; Director Hall; Director Ochs; Assistant Director Soto; Manager Liewehr; Manager Sangern; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: None

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE TAX LEVY ORDINANCE

A motion was made by Commissioner Beck and seconded by Vice President Freeman to convene the public hearing for the Supplemental and Tax Levy Ordinances. The public hearing for the Supplemental Tax Levy to pay the principal of and interest on the outstanding General Obligation Limited Tax Park Bonds, Series 2024, of the Park District of Highland Park, Lake County, Illinois, representing the District's

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additional request for property taxes to be received in 2026 for the debt service fund. The amount of the supplemental levy is \$27,189.14. The amount of the Tax Levy exclusive of the debt service is \$15,088,021.

Roll Call:

Aye:	Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg
Nay:	None
Absent:	None
Abstain:	None

Motion Carried

President Grossberg reported that the public hearing for the Tax Levy Ordinances 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 Ordinances.

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

Roll Call:

Aye:	Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg
Nay:	None
Absent:	None
Abstain:	None

Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Cal Bernstein

1473 Sherwood Rd, Highland Park

He commended the Park Board of Commissioners and Park District Staff. He is looking forward to 2026 and future years regarding projects and wished every happy and safe holidays.

CONSENT AGENDA

President Grossberg requested that the Approval of 2026 Affiliated Organization Agreements be moved to Unfinished Business so staff could provide a quick update before the Park Board approves the agreements.

A motion was made by Commissioner Beck, seconded by Commissioner Labrador to move items “G. Approval 2026 Highland Park Pops Affiliate Organization Agreement”, “H. Approval 2026 Highland Park Players Affiliate Organization Agreement”, “I. Approval 2026 American Youth Soccer Organization Affiliate Agreement”, and “K. Approval 2026 Uptown Music Theater of Highland Park Affiliate Organization Agreement” to Unfinished Business.

Roll Call:

Aye:	Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg
Nay:	None
Absent:	None
Abstain:	None

Motion Carried

A motion was made by Commissioner Beck, seconded by Commissioner Labrador to approve the Minutes November 08, 2025 Master Planning Committee Meeting, the Minutes November 11, 2025 Finance Committee Meeting, the Minutes November 12, 2025 Workshop Meeting, the Minutes November 19, 2025 Regular Meeting, Ordinance #2025-13 An Ordinance Authorizing a Supplemental Property Tax Levy to Pay the Principal of and Interest on the Outstanding General Obligation Limited Tax Park Bonds, Series 2024, of the Park District of Highland Park, Lake County, Illinois, Ordinance #2025-14 Tax Levy for 2025, the 2026 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference Attendance, the 2026 Renewal Letter of the Independent Contractor’s Agreement The Golf Practice, the 2026 License Agreement Between the Park District of Highland Park and the North Shore Yacht Club, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$8,625,679.78

Roll Call:

Aye:	Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg
Nay:	None
Absent:	None
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 November 30, 2025. Projected Revenues are greater than budget by \$2.5 million and projected expenses are less than budgeted by a little over \$1 million for a projected \$2.5 million surplus.

Conclusion

The following Park District programs and facilities are performing better than budget: property taxes have a \$400,000 surplus and interest income has a \$1.3 million surplus, tennis has a \$221,000 surplus, Park Fitness memberships, personal training, and group exercise classes has a \$75,000 surplus, early childhood enrichment has a \$174,000 surplus, golf has a \$550,000 surplus. Also, there is \$350,000 savings from payroll expenses.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. 2026 Proposed Budget and the Budget and Appropriation Ordinance

Director Peters reported that Staff is pleased to present the proposed 2026 Park District of Highland Park Budget for consideration by the Board of Park Commissioners. This budget represents the calendar year January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026. The Finance Committee reviewed the proposed budget in detail at the Finance Committee meetings held on November 11, 2025, and December 9, 2025.

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 21, 2026. 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.

Staff received consensus from the Park Board of Commissioners to move forward and lay the budget down for a period of thirty days so that the public may review it.

B. Approval of 2026 Affiliated Organization Agreements

Executive Director Romes reported that the Park District of Highland Park recognizes that certain organizations exist within the community whose purposes are to serve and enhance recreational opportunities for a specific purpose and group. These organizations are separate and independent from the Park District and provide for their own leadership and operational structure. Through working relationships with outside Organizations and joint efforts, each party can contribute to greater public service without relinquishing their separate identities or any of their individual responsibilities.

To this end, the Park District is willing to establish working relationships and cooperative agreements with designated Affiliate or Sponsored organizations. Within the terms of a written agreement, the

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parties will define the working relationship, mutual expectations, and individual responsibilities. However, these agreements shall serve only as a frame of reference to ensure that the parties' concept of joint planning, use, and maintenance is followed to the maximum extent possible, while retaining the essential freedom of discretion, decision, and action in planning, developing, and maintaining recreational programs. Under no circumstances shall any sponsored or affiliated club utilize any facility for the complete exclusion of the general public unless otherwise approved by the Park Board of Commissioners. Per Park District procedure, staff received four applications requesting status as Park District Affiliate Groups.

- American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) of Highland Park
- Highland Park Pops
- Highland Park Players
- Uptown Theater of Highland Park

A motion was made by Commissioner Labrador and seconded by Commissioner Beck to approve the 2026 Affiliated Organization Agreements with American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) of Highland Park, the Highland Park Pops, the Highland Park Players, and Uptown Music Theater of Highland Park.

Roll Call:

Aye:	Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg
Nay:	None
Absent:	None
Abstain:	None

Motion Carried

NEW BUSINESS

A. Parks Foundation

Commissioner 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.

B. Board Committee Updates

Executive Director Romes reported that at the December 09 Finance Committee Meeting that staff reviewed the 2026 budget. A public hearing will be held on January 21, 2026, to approve the 2026 Combined Budget and Appropriation Beginning January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026. Additionally, staff reviewed the renewal terms for the Independent Contractor Agreement between the Park District of Highland Park and The Golf Practice for golf programs and services.

At the December 09 Lakefront, Parks, and Natural Areas Committee Meeting Staff and the Park Board meet to discuss the proposal to the City of Highland Park from Resident John Cooper, owner of 2700

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Point Lane, for a special use permit application to permit property tours. Additionally, the proposal seeks a partnership with Heller Nature Center as the access point, including a small trail extension, funding for improvements, shuttle service, and insurance coverage. The partnership would provide financial support, program integration, and event access for the Park District.

Lastly, before this meeting, the Master Planning Committee met. Representatives from the Lakota Group presented the GreenPrint Master Plan initiatives matrix. The matrix has projects listed by capital plan prioritization tiers, noting that tiers 1-3 are safety and legal compliance, critical repairs, and scheduled replacements (highest priority), tiers 4-5 are improving existing items and new items, and tier 6 are unbudgeted items. Director Smith shared a graph highlighting the amount budgeted for tiers 1-3, tiers 4-5, and the total budget (tiers 1-5) over the next 5 years (through 2030). There was also a column for tier 6 unbudgeted projects.

C. End of Season Golf Reports

Manager Sangern reported that Sunset Valley Golf Club hosted 9 events (mix of outings and tournaments), 10 music nights, and he is pleased to report that Relish Catering hosted 3 movie nights, Neighbors' Nights with Trivia, and Breakfast with Santa. In 2026, the restaurant team will bring more Clubhouse events which will include but not limited to trivia nights, wine tasting, bourbon tastings, Oktoberfest and much more.

Director Ochs reviewed budgeted vs actual monthly greens fees and the total paid rounds. He reviewed the actual vs budgeted operational revenues and expenses for Sunset Valley Golf Club.

Director Ochs reviewed actual vs. budgeted revenues from miniature golf and the driving range. Additionally, he shared participation figures from the Golf Practice, which includes private lessons and camps.

Manager Sangern shared what to expect in 2026.

D. Club Pickle and Padel Report

Manager Liewehr reviewed budgeted vs actual membership sales and year to date participation figures for winter pickleball programs, permanent court times, and open play for pickleball and padel.

E. Directors Report

Executive Director Romes reviewed the facility holiday hours and winter break camp opportunities. Looking into January he highlighted the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service event on January 19, 2026.

F. Board Comments

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Beck, seconded by Commissioner Labrador 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;

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 7:14 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 7:54 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;

No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Vice President Freeman and seconded by Commissioner Greenberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary