

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 21, 2026**

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

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, President Grossberg

**Absent:** Vice President freeman

**Staff Present:** Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Voss; Director Peters; Director Gogola; Assistant Director Soto; Supervisor Sanchez, Supervisor Wong; Coordinator Jacoby, Coordinator Stewart, Coordinator Hejnowski

**Guest Speakers:** None

Vice President Freeman joined the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

President Grossberg left the meeting ay 6:41 p.m.

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None.

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE 2026 BUDGET**

A motion was made by Commissioner Labrador and seconded by Commissioner Beck to convene the public hearing for the proposed Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal Year beginning January 1, 2026, and ending December 31, 2026.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

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President Grossberg reported that the public hearing for the proposed Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal Year beginning January 1, 2026, and ending December 31, 2026, for the Park District of Highland Park is now in session.

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 Park Fitness, the West Ridge Center reception desk, the Highland Park Library, and the Park District's web site. Also, in accordance with the law, notification of tonight's hearing was posted in the local newspaper.

No members from the public or members from the Park Board of Commissioners wished to speak at the public hearing and Executive Director Romes did not receive any written communication relative to the proposed Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal Year beginning January 1, 2026, and ending December 31, 2026.

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenberg and seconded by Commissioner Beck 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**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

President Grossberg reported that due to an issue with a contractor, staff are requesting Item G Approval of 2026 Park Fitness Locker Room Renovation be removed from the consent agenda. Staff will present and request approval at a future meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Labrador, seconded by Commissioner Greenberg to remove item G. Approval of 2026 Park Fitness Locker Room Renovation from the Consent Agenda.

**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 Greenberg, seconded by Commissioner Labrador to approve the Minutes from the December 09, 2025 Finance Committee Meeting, Minutes from December 09, 2025 Lakefront, Parks, and Natural Areas Committee Meeting, Minutes from December 09, 2025 Workshop Meeting, Minutes from December 16, 2025 Special Meeting, Minutes from December 17, 2025 Master Planning Committee Meeting, Minutes from December 17, 2025 Regular Meeting, the Addendum to the L6 Technology IT Support Services Agreement, Ordinance 2026-02: An Ordinance Amending the Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal Year Beginning January 1, 2025 and Ending on December 31, 2025, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$3,328,995.56

**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 December 31, 2025. She is pleased to report that Actual Revenues exceeded budgeted revenues by \$2.8 million, actual expenses came in under budget by \$1.7million, for a \$3million surplus.

***Conclusion***

The following Park District programs and facilities are performing better than budget: property taxes have a \$459,000 surplus and interest income has a \$1.4 million surplus, personal training has a \$65,000 surplus, early childhood enrichment has a \$50,000 surplus, golf has a \$600,000 surplus. Also, there is \$400,000 savings from payroll expenses.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Approval of Ordinance 2026-01: Combined Budget and Appropriation Beginning January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026**

Director Peters reported that the proposed 2026 budget was presented to the Finance Committee on November 11, 2025, and December 9, 2025. After review and revisions, a final draft was presented to the Park Board at the December 17 Regular Park Board 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 Park Fitness, West Ridge Center and on the District’s website during this timeframe. In accordance with the Park District Code, the public hearing on January 21, 2026 regarding the budget was posted in the Lake County News-Sun on Monday, January 12, 2026.

Regarding the financial impact, the proposed budget for fiscal year 2026 includes operating revenues of \$29,933,380, additional revenues of \$3,873,839, and total estimated expenditures (district-wide) of \$41,952,571 resulting in an anticipated deficit, of \$8,145,352. This is a planned use of reserves for capital projects related to master planning.

A motion was made by Commissioner Labrador and seconded by Vice President Freeman to approve the 2026 Budget and 2026 Budget and Appropriation Ordinance (2026-02) for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2026.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**B. Consideration to Approve the 2026 New West Ridge Community Center Furniture Bid**

Director Smith reported that the Park District of Highland Park is constructing a new community center at West Ridge Park to replace the West Ridge Center. The project is expected to be completed this upcoming Spring. A bid was issued on January 6, 2026 for the procurement, delivery and assembly for the furniture. The furniture included in the bid is for the following rooms: lobby, community room, enrichment rooms, offices, and storage closets.

The district received two (2) sealed bids on Monday, January 19, 2026. He is pleased to report that both bids came in under budget. After reviewing the bid results in detail and contacting references staff are recommending the Park Board of Commissioners approve the bid from YOUnyted LLC.

A motion was made by Commissioner Beck and seconded by Commissioner Greenberg to approve the Total Base Bid from YOUnyted LLC for the 2026 New West Ridge Community Center Furniture Bid in the amount of \$176,314.00 and authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**C. Annual Marketing Report**

Director Gogola reported that the department’s five primary objectives are to increase engagement with key audiences, build and protect the district brand, advance the district’s position with residents and customers, increase market share, and maximize revenue. She reviewed 2025 highlights, including more than 75 targeted integrated marketing campaigns; new branding for Park Fitness; the grand opening of Club Pickle and Padel; community communications related to the Comprehensive Master Plan (GreenPrint) update; and outreach regarding the new and enhanced GreenPath Sustainability Plan. She also highlighted sponsorship assets and related revenues.

Director Gogola noted that the Marketing Department serves as the liaison to the Parks Foundation of Highland Park and manages the donor database and system, website, email communications, social media, scholarships and grants, fundraising event promotions, and community outreach.

She further reported that the department manages the Park District and Club Pickle and Padel websites and mobile apps; 15 digital display screens for promotional signage; email communications for the Park District, Deer Creek Racquet Club, Club Pickle and Padel, and Park Fitness; and all social media channels. The department also oversees paid advertising efforts, including social media, Google Search, geofencing, and targeted TV and streaming platforms.

Lastly, Director Gogola shared that the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) awarded the Park District of Highland Park first place in the Overall Agency Showcase, as well as People’s Choice awards for logo design, marketing campaign, social media campaign, video, website, written content, integrated photography, and large-format marketing for Club Pickle and Padel.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**C. Heller Nature Center Update**

Executive Director Romes reported that the Park District received a proposal from resident Mr. Cooper at 2700 Point Lane, in December, and on December 9 at the lakefront, Parks and Natural Areas Committee meeting the Park Board authorized the Executive Director to explore the possibility of a partnership with Champions Point that would provide public benefit to the community, congruent with the districts Mission and board approved policies.

It was the consensus of the Park Board of Commissioners that *“Congruent with the Park District of Highland Park’s Mission, Policies, Ordinances, and commitment to protecting and maintaining our natural areas, the Park District must fully understand the actual and potential environmental impacts*

*on Heller Nature Center before considering if any opportunities are conceptually appropriate to explore with Champions Point”.*

It was also the consensus of the Park Board of Commissioners that “*After an assessment of the environmental impact on Heller Nature Center has been completed, the Park Board will make the determination if it is conceptually appropriate to further explore if opportunities exist with Champions Point, only within the context that such opportunities provide equal or greater value to the constituents of the Park District of Highland Park”.*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Parks Foundation**

Commissioner Beck reported that there are \$8,000 in sponsorship sales for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Champions Celebration and 70 tickets have been sold. Additionally, the Parks Foundation is exploring a Beach Party Fundraising Tournament in July or August and a Pickleball Tournament in the Fall.

### **B. Board Committee Updates**

Executive Director Romes reported that at the January 14 Master Planning Committee Meeting the Lakota Group reviewed the presentation which will be shared at the Community Open House.

At the January 20 Finance Committee Meeting PMA Financial Network provided a presentation on future financing opportunities for the Park District. Staff reviewed the updated services for the addendum to the L6 Technology IT Support Services Agreement and the Ordinance Amending the Appropriation Ordinance for the 2025 fiscal year.

### **D. Directors Report**

Executive Director Romes highlighted upcoming events including an Eagle Watch Winter Trip on January 24 where participants will travel with us to Starved Rock State Park for the Illinois Audubon Society’s annual Eagle Watch Weekend, Club Pickle and Padel is hosting an MLP Format Pickleball Tournament January 24, the Yule Ball Family Dance is February 06 where families will step into the magical world of Harry Potter at this year’s Family Dance, Club Pickle and Padel is offering another pickleball tournament on February 13 (mixed doubles), adults can enjoy a Romantic Bonfire Date Night, February 13 and parents can drop their kids off at Rosewood beach Interpretive Center on Valentine’s Day for a Kids’ Night Out: Snow Glow program where kids will have their very own glow party, lastly, the Parks Foundation’s 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Champions Celebration is February 27 from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. at Northmoor Country Club.

### **E. Board Comments**

None.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenberg, seconded by Commissioner Labrador, to adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of Section 2(c)5: the purchase or lease of real estate including discussion on

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whether a certain parcel of property should be acquired; 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 Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** President Grossberg

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 7:08 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 7:35 p.m.

**Action From Closed Session If Any**

Vice President Freeman reported that in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act, the Park Board reviewed the closed session meeting minutes from July 30, 2025 – December 17, 2025.

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenberg, seconded by Commissioner Beck to release the July 30, 2025 Closed Session Meeting minutes for public inspection.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** President Grossberg

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

A motion was made by Commissioner Labrador, seconded by Commissioner Beck that the Closed Session Meeting minutes from October 08, 2025, October 22, 2025, November 12, 2025, November 19, 2025, December 09, 2025, and December 17, 2025 will not be released for public inspection since the need for confidentiality still exists to all or part of those minutes.

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**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** President Grossberg

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenberg and seconded by Commissioner Beck and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Roxanne Hejnowski*

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary