



SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF PALATINE PARK DISTRICT

Palatine Park District, 250 East Wood Street Palatine

Second Floor – MRP

March 16, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.



The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by President Sammons

Commissioners Present

Commissioners Absent

Greg Sammons, President

Joe Petricca, Vice President

Terry Ruff, Treasurer

Jennifer Rogers

Susan Gould

Staff Present

Ben Rea, Executive Director

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Gould moved and Commissioner Ruff seconded that the agenda be approved. Executive Director Rea requested to add an offsite visit to 150 W. Wilson Street for the purposes of potential property acquisition and appointment of a Secretary Pro-Tem to record the meeting minutes. By a voice vote, the agenda for the special meeting of March 16, 2024, was approved as amended.

AYE: Joe Petricca, Jennifer Rogers, Terry Ruff, Susan Gould, Greg Sammons

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

In the absence of the Board Secretary, Ben Rea was appointed as acting Secretary Pro-Tem to record the minutes of the meeting. Commissioner Ruff moved and Commissioner Gould seconded to name Executive Director Rea as Secretary Pro-Tem for this meeting. The motion was approved by a voice vote; the result follows:

AYE: Joe Petricca, Jennifer Rogers, Susan Gould, Greg Sammons, Terry Ruff

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

Visitors and Citizens Present

None

Three-Month Director Update

Director Rea started the meeting with a review of the agenda and objective which is to move the agency forward in 2024 and beyond.

Agency Reorganization

Director Rea stated that we currently have 85 Full-Time Employees and that the proposed reorganization is a phased-in approach that would increase the number of Full-Time employees to 88.75. He explained the reason for the reorganization, shared some concerns and observations. Some observations shared are that we have departments operating in silos, there is no cross communication between departments creating

inconsistencies in how policies are applied. The facilities department operates as a quasi-recreation department with capital improvement and maintenance responsibilities. The Assistant Superintendent of District Services is posting bids; this was previously done by an employee from the Parks and Planning Department. Superintendent Holder has expertise on bids and an Administrative Assistant to help with the postings, it makes more sense under the Parks department.

Director Rea also gave an update on the change he made with merging the Registration Department with the Recreation Department; the feedback from both Superintendent Palmer and Customer Service Manager Hubka has been very positive.

As previously mentioned, we have inconsistent policy procedure implementation. The current policies are too long and redundant with some items found in multiple places. We will eventually have to review all the policies and procedures to streamline and simplify where possible.

Director Rea has started breaking down the barriers created before him. The simple acts of treating people with kindness has made a big difference. He has also received a lot of positive feedback about the monthly birthday and anniversary cards he hand delivers to staff.

Director Rea reviewed details of the proposed reorganization, which would be phased in through 2025, and the financial implications of the changes. Discussion of the proposed changes continued; Director Rea answered Commissioner questions and received feedback on the changes discussed.

On the topic of reorganization Commissioner Sammons added that he gets earfuls about our customer service being unfriendly and inconsistent; feels that we need a unified front. Discussion of communication concerns and resolutions ensued with suggestions of joint agency meetings. Director Rea suggested that we invest in a customer service training program.

Space Needs

Director Rea reported that the available funding figures provided in December were not accurate. Tom, our acting Superintendent of Finance, has done some reallocation and balancing of various accounts. Director Rea reviewed the findings and proposed changes for each account.

Director Rea also reported on an Efficiency Task Force that he will be setting up to have staff review unnecessary expenses such as the courier service, which costs us \$70,000 a year. That is money we can use for capital. We will also look at the utilizing Special Recreation Funding and changing the Corporate Fund Balance policy from 66% to 50% would give us an additional \$1.9 MIL available for transfer to Capital.

Director Rea also reviewed a proposed change to the projected expenditures which would give us a \$13 MIL fund balance by 2030. We would also have 1.4MIL in bond dollars for Capital Projects available after the annual issuance to pay off our existing bond. The goal is to keep to \$3MIL for infrastructure needs so that we can start building the bottom line for the next big capital project.

Director Rea reviewed the Debt Service Fund, plans to build a healthy Fund Balance and the importance of providing what we need now without leaving a large debt for future Board Members, staff, and the public. Details of upcoming projects and their priorities were discussed. Director Rea recommended starting with a new Administration office location to free up the Community Center with more programming space which would allow us to start building the Fund Balance for the Birchwood project; the Board agreed.

Director Rea gave an update on Middleton properties and the property tax issues. Discussion ensued, Director Rea will contact attorney Paine regarding options to finalize the deal and confirm potential tax implications to the district.

Commissioner Gould mentioned the undeveloped park district area section on the east side of Route 53 near Lake Cook Road. The undeveloped area was discussed, and Director Rea said that we could include that in the next master plan.

Comprehensive Master Plan for 2025

Director Rea is exploring the possibility of a joint Request for Proposal (RFP) with the Cary Park District to obtain some cost savings for both agencies with a summer to late summer RFP. Details of the RFP process and the current Master Plan were discussed.

The Park District Mission Statement and Logo was also discussed. The Board had mixed feelings about changing the logo. Director Rea explained that it was something brought up at Directors School and not a priority, but something to consider.

Affiliate Expectations

Director Rea explained the challenges with the new Affiliate Program and that he has instructed staff to be flexible, as long as they continue to meet the deadlines set for them to ensure that we are getting what we need.

The Celtic Soccer program has become extremely large, and the travel program no longer meets our standards for an affiliate, which is 75% Residents and 25% Non-Residents. Celtic currently has 59% Residents and 41% Non-Residents. Director Rea filled the board in on conversations that staff have had regarding the affiliate travel programs and potential changes to be made going into next year. Director Rea has consulted with Attorney Paine regarding the current Celtic agreement and shared his advice with the Board. The Board agreed with the suggested changes that were discussed.

We currently have the Affiliates give an annual report to The Board. Director Rea asked The Board if they would like to continue this practice and suggested that we have the information included with the Department Reports. The Board agreed and Commissioner Ruff suggested having a meet and greet with the Affiliate Boards. Director Rea agreed that was a good idea; conversation of other ideas continued.

Director Rea updated The Board on his meeting with Mayor Schwantz and Village Manager Ottesen regarding the tailgating and alcohol use outside Ost Field before the Palatine Amateur Football Association (PAFA) football games. There has also been issues with parents' behavior and it's becoming a problem for the police department as well. Director Rea is going to meet with the new police chief and come up with a joint response to address this. There will be no tolerance, and anyone caught drinking on the day of game will be an automatic forfeit for both teams; this will apply to all affiliate programs. We need to change the culture and have already started with the removal of a special use permit for alcohol on our rentals.

Stables

Director Rea learned that back in 2016 when they were replacing the siding out at the stable some of the main support columns were rotted and a structural engineer was brought in to address the issue.

As part of our transition to Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) we are getting a structural analysis of the entire facility. There is concern that if they found rotted columns in 2016, they will find more in poor shape. Depending on the engineering report we could be told that is unsafe for people to be there and to update it could cost a few million dollars. Commissioner Gould shared information on domes that would be cheaper than rebuilding the structure. Commissioner Ruff mentioned that 75% of boarders are Barrington residents; he is not against the stables, but he doesn't want to build a new barn for Barrington. Commissioner Rogers asked about getting updated numbers of boarders, lessons, and programs. Discussion about the concerns, pros, and cons of putting more money into the stables continued. Director Rea will share the results of the report when received and will plan another meeting to discuss the results.

Housekeeping Items

Director Rea is proposing that we hold off on renewing our Distinguished Accreditation this year and has confirmed that there is no penalty if we let it lapse for a year. We have a lot going on with the recommended reorganization, new master plan and transition to PDRMA. Conversation ensued and the Board agreed with Director Rea's proposal to reapply for accreditation next year.

A reminder of closed session formality and protecting ourselves from violations of the Open Meeting Act were discussed. Director Rea mentioned that he would like to be kept in the loop on anything being asked of the staff and asked that The Board copy him on any emails they send or reach out to him directly.

We have been getting requests to use Park District property for fundraisers, such as Cancer Walks. Director Rea is in support of these as long as the park district is not putting forth funds or materials to support them. He feels it meets our mission from a health and wellness standpoint. Since these events were not supported by the previous Executive Director he asked The Board for their opinion. Discussion of policies, political parties and other concerns were discussed. The Board agreed as long as there are clear cut guidelines to be followed. Director Rea will seek guidance from Attorney Paine about acceptable restrictions or guidelines.

Currently the Board President must sign all our documents for purchases. Director Rea is used to having the Executive Director sign off on these Board approved documents, aside from resolutions and ordinances, so that not everything has to come before the Board. The Board has agreed with that change; Director Rea will check to see if we need to make a policy change for this.

The Department reports are extremely cumbersome and often repetitive from different departments. Director Rea is recommending that we create a report mechanism to be done when the program guides are going out for the season and streamlined to high level items that the Board is interested in. Commissioners all agreed that the reports need to be streamlined; bullet points and top-level items were suggested. Director Rea will put together an appropriate format for the Board to review and continue with his Friday updates.

Director Rea asked the Board about their annual rotation of officers and feels that they should be able to elect officers every year if they choose to do so; he would recommend a term limit if they were to make that change. He added that there is value to having some continuity in the roles and is helpful to have a strong President out in the community advocating for the park district. Conversation about rotating board positions, structure and requirements of the officers ensued. Director Rea will get the manual to the board for review, and they can have another discussion before the next election of officers.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has a revenue school that Director Rea would like to attend in 2025 or 2026 from the perspective of learning how to generate more revenue with the Birchwood project coming up. Director Rea explained that it's a two-year program like the Director School he attend which will provide him with a certificate of completion and teach different recreation revenue processes. He would also like to consider sending other staff as his time at directors' school was invaluable. The Board agreed and conversation with ideas to increase revenue ensued. The idea of selling advertising in our fields or facilities was mentioned; Director Rea said he will ask Attorney Paine about that as well.

Director Rea asked the Board for feedback on his first 3 months here and stated that he plans to be here for the next 10 years, maybe 12 years, in response to a question from Commissioner Ruff. Director Rea also asked the Board about the format of this retreat. The Board liked the meeting and decided that twice a year is good with the next retreat in 6 months.

The meeting will officially continue as they tour the building located at 150 W. Wilson Street building; Director Rea reminded the Board to limit the discussion to the tour. In response to Commissioner Ruff's question, Director Rea said that the building has enough space for everyone with room to grow.

Commissioner Gould left the meeting at 12:15 pm. The remaining Board Members joined Executive Director Rea for a tour of 150 W. Wilson Street for purposes of a potential property acquisition.

Commissioner Reports/Future Agenda Items

None

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Park Board on this date Commissioner Ruff moved that the regular meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Petricca seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by a voice vote as follows:

AYE: Joe Petricca, Terry Ruff, Greg Sammons, Jennifer Rogers

NAY: None

ABSENT: Susan Gould

Motion carried at 12:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin Rea
Park Board Secretary Pro-Tem

Attest:

Approved:

Benjamin Rea
Secretary Pro-Tem

Greg Sammons
President

<u>2024 Park Board Meetings</u>		
March 25, 2024	June 24, 2024	September 23, 2024
April 8, 2024	July 8, 2024	October 21, 2024
April 22, 2024	July 22, 2024	November 11, 2024
May 13, 2024	August 12, 2024	November 25, 2024
May 27, 2024*	August 26, 2024	December 9, 2024
June 10, 2024	September 9, 2024	*Memorial Day; meeting TBD