

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT  
FEBRUARY 15, 2022  
7:00 P.M.**

**ATTENDANCE AT MEETING**

Board Members Present:

Vice President Michael Reid  
Commissioner Minal Desai  
Commissioner Ezra Jaffe

Remote Attendance:

President Susan Aberman

Absent:

Commissioner Mary Oshana

Others Present:

Executive Director/Secretary Michelle J. Tuft  
Superintendent of Business Services William G. Schmidt  
Superintendent of Parks Corrie Guynn  
Superintendent of Facilities Jon Marquardt  
Marketing and Communications Director, Jim Bottorff  
Skatium Facility Manager, Kurt vonHelms  
Executive Administrative Assistant Ann Perez

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice President Reid called the regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice President Reid asked President Aberman to confirm that her audio is working properly acknowledging that she could hear all board members. President Aberman responded yes. Vice President Reid asked all board members if they could hear President Aberman and all responded yes.

**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL**

President Aberman moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Desai seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Oshana was absent. Motion carried. The Consent Agenda consisted of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 18, 2022; bills payable for the month of January/February 2022, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports.

**NINE-MONTH FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Treasurer Schmidt presented the Nine-Month Financial update to the Board. Mr. Schmidt said compared to what was budgeted the district is doing very well with its nine-month financials. It paints a better picture than what was budgeted a year ago. Summer camps did extremely well this year, but there are still issues with masking and vaccine mandates that are affecting the attendance at Fitness First. Executive Director Tuft said hopefully when the mandates are lifted more people will return. Ms. Tuft said memberships were steadily improving until Labor Day when the mask mandate went into effect, but then slowed. Ms. Tuft said the first time the mask mandate was lifted it took a few months for people to feel comfortable and then memberships

and attendance improved. Commissioner Desai asked how other fitness centers were doing. Ms. Tuft responded that she is hearing that fitness centers are all doing the same, struggling for members.

Mr. Schmidt asked for any questions. Vice President Reid said the financials look positive.

President Aberman asked for clarification on the instructor expense at Skokie Sports Park East. Treasurer Schmidt clarified that the cost of doing more lessons is higher and therefore the cost of the instructors is also higher.

Commissioner Jaffe asked if all funds could be incorporated into the report the next time instead of just the operating funds and Treasurer Schmidt said he would include all funds in future reports. Commissioner Jaffe said it was a good summary.

Commissioner Jaffe asked Mr. Schmidt to explain Funds 11, 12 and 91. Fund 11 is for building and park improvements. Fund 12 is the vehicle and equipment fund. Fund 91 is for major facility improvements. The Skatium renovation project will be in Fund 91 next year.

No motion required, informational only.

#### **APPROVAL OF SKATIUM ICE ARENA RENOVATION BIDS**

Superintendent Marquardt reminded the Board that when the Skatium Renovation bids were approved last month two items were not bid on and had to be re-bid. The first bid was for fire suppression and the second bid was for excavation. The bid for fire suppression, which is the sprinkler system from Nelson Fire Protection, is \$17,459 which is significantly lower than the estimated cost of \$65,000. The second bid for excavation services from Lindblad Construction Company is \$176,200, which is above the estimated cost of \$150,000. Mr. Marquardt explained that there are two alternates being accepted in the excavation bid. The alternates are for new header lines and for subsoil drainage lines. Skatium Manager Kurt VonHelms explained the excavation process.

Mr. Marquardt said sprinklers were planned for above the ice as there are none at this time, but the Village of Skokie may require sprinklers above the sheets of ice. If required, the cost could double and will be brought to the board as a change order.

Commissioner Jaffe moved to approve bid package number 8 from Nelson Fire Protection or \$17,459 and bid package number 12 including two alternates, from Lindblad Construction Company for \$176,200. Commissioner Desai seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Oshana was absent. Motion carried.

#### **REAPPOINTMENT OF MILLER COOPER & CO., LTD AS DISTRICT AUDITING FIRM**

Mr. Schmidt requested the approval of the reappointment of Miller, Cooper., Ltd as the district auditing firm. Their contract expired with the completion of the fiscal year 2021 audit. Mr. Schmidt is requesting a three-year reappointment. The district has had a long and fine working relationship with Miller Cooper & Co., Ltd and Mr. Schmidt would like to continue for fiscal years 2022, 2023 and 2024. The proposed fees are \$41,000, \$42,500, and \$44,000.

Commissioner Jaffe asked about only approving a one-year contract. Ms. Tuft responded that staff are comfortable and familiar with Miller Cooper and would like to do a three-year contract.

Commissioner Desai, Vice President Reid and President Aberman agreed that a three-year contract would be fine as well.

Commissioner Desai moved to approve the appointment of Miller Cooper & Co., Ltd. as the District's auditing firm for fiscal years 2022, 2023 and 2024. Commissioner Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Oshana was absent. Motion carried.

#### **APPROVAL OF REVISED FULL TIME COMPETITIVE PAY STRUCTURE**

Mr. Schmidt requested approval of the revised full-time competitive pay structure. The last time it was updated was January 2018. He explained that in 2019 the district's payroll consultant, HR Source, reported the pay structure in place was good. In 2020, due to COVID-19, a decision was made to keep the present pay structure in place. Staff is requesting an increase to the salary range structure of 2.0%. This does not increase any employee salaries; it only increases the salary pay structure. Increasing the structure is another way to attract quality candidates for employment at the district.

Commissioner Desai moved to approve the increase in full-time salary range pay structure by 2.0%, effective May 1, 2022. Commissioner Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Oshana was absent. Motion carried.

#### **APPROVAL OF OAKTON TEEN PLAYGROUND REMOVAL**

Superintendent Guynn requested approval of the Oakton Park West Playground removal. The play equipment is wood and some metal and is not in good shape. The playground is in a secluded area west of the basketball courts and the parking lot. It is not used very often and gets a lot of graffiti. Staff would like to replace it with turf. Ms. Tuft said normally we would ask to replace the playground, but in this case with the location and lack of use it is better to not spend funds on a replacement. Ms. Tuft also mentioned that there are benches in the area that do not need to be replaced.

Commissioner Desai asked if some exercise equipment could be placed in the area. Mr. Guynn thought it would be better to place exercise equipment on the Oakton pathway as it would be more visible and get more use.

Commissioner Jaffe asked about donating the old equipment to another country as has done in the past and Mr. Guynn said it would not qualify as the equipment is not useable.

Commissioner Desai moved to approve the removal of the Oakton Pak West Playground. Commissioner Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Oshana was absent. Motion carried.

#### **IAPD/IPRA CONFERENCE SESSIONS REVIEW**

Ms. Tuft explained that staff were asked to report on the sessions they attended at the IAPD/IPRA sessions and highlight any particularly useful or good ideas. Ms. Tuft invited the board to share their ideas.

Vice President Reid said he wished the district had \$4.2 million dollars to build an Amphitheatre. He also liked Robin Horwitz's ideas about booking bands for special events. Ms. Tuft said we already use some of these ideas.

Commissioner Jaffe liked the conference sessions summary and thought it was a good best practice.

Vice President Reid said there are fewer sessions for him to attend as he has been going to the conference for a long time and feels that he is a "veteran commissioner". He feels the conference committee needs to include more sessions for people that have been attending the conference for many years. The conference is great for new attendees and is full of good information.

President Aberman and Vice President Reid attended a session that included some good ideas that the district may be able to use when addressing the Native American named parks.

President Aberman attended a Needs and Wants session. She said the park district does surveys to hear the community's needs and wants. She feels the district does a really good job listening to residents and it's nice to know the park district is doing a good job.

Commissioner Jaffe attended a session on leadership, and he said there was a lot of redundancy. He attended a session on Risky Behavior in Parks and thought this session was very interesting.

No motion required, informational only

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners is Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

The Finance Committee Meeting is Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at the Weber Leisure Center. A light dinner will be provided. Ms. Tuft sent out last year's finance presentation and confirmed that the format will be the same this year.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

President Aberman was happy to see that Skokie Amateur Hockey Association (SAHA) is taking over hockey classes during the Skatium renovation project so the district will not lose customers.

Commissioner Jaffe has a contact at the Mitchell Museum of American Indians and offered the contact to the district. Ms. Tuft has a call into the Native American Center in Chicago and is waiting to hear back.

Commissioner Desai noticed that Fitness First has posted QR codes to report broken fitness equipment and thought it was a good idea.

#### **DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Ms. Tuft sent the proposed board workshop agenda to the board in the Friday memo and asked what the commissioners thought. If everyone agrees on the agenda, Ms. Tuft will work to schedule a weekday date for the workshop. Ms. Tuft spoke with Ms. Shipman and feels comfortable with her conducting the workshop. Commissioner Jaffe recommended Ms. Shipman and thinks very highly of her. The board agreed to move forward with scheduling the workshop. Ms. Tuft asked that any changes to the agenda be communicated to her.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Desai moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Commissioner Jaffe seconded the motion. Commissioner Oshana was absent. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.



Susan Aberman  
President



Michelle J. Tuft  
Secretary

March 15, 2022