

**BOARD MINUTES**  
**December 16, 2024**

The regular monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 7:02pm on December 16, 2024, at the Cynthia Neal Center, 8047 W. 91<sup>ST</sup> Place, Hickory Hills, Illinois.

The following commissioners were present: Czarny, Kosnick, Morgan, Peterson, Zalas.

Also present were Jennifer Fullerton, Executive Director, Zach Ingalls, Maintenance Manager, Tammy Muth, Business Manager and Angel Sanchez, Recreation Manager.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Kosnick moved, seconded by Commissioner Zalas, to approve the minutes of November 18, 2024. Ayes: Czarny, Kosnick, Morgan, Peterson, Zalas. Motion approved.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Commissioner Zalas received an envelope in the mail from the Illinois Association of Park Districts.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Nothing to report.

**MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Mr. Ingalls presented the maintenance report, and it was placed on file. Hickory Hills Public Works plows the parking lots prior to the building opening and our maintenance staff plows the other times. Director Fullerton asked what happens when maintenance leaves at 4pm. Mr. Ingalls said it would be maintenance that plows until early in the morning. The City doesn't shovel sidewalks so that is our responsibility. The bridge at Petkiewicz Park was replaced. It was 20 years old. Commissioner Morgan asked how far it is from the ground. Mr. Ingalls said that is the higher end, which is 5' from the ground and at the lower end, it is 3'5".

**RECREATION REPORT**

Mr. Sanchez presented the recreation report, and it was placed on file. Mr. Sanchez said he won a raffle at the SPRA Showcase in November which was a free 90-minute performance by a band called Centerfold. The value is \$1,200-\$2,000. School District 117 has informed us that they would like to offer a before and after school program at Dorn and Sorrick School beginning in the fall of 2025. The other schools may follow in the future. We told them that we would be interested, and they will let us know when we should submit a proposal or whatever documents they need. We assume the parents will pay a fee, but we don't know if we are taking registration or what the details are at this moment. School District 117 replied and said they are interested in the park district running the program so they will let us know the details. They could also be looking at some private firms to give them a quote as well. Director Fullerton said when she was at Butterfield Park District, they had approximately 56 kids and would run the program out of the school. They brought their own supplies, the staff did punch in and out at the school and they ran the entire program. Mr. Sanchez called Oak Lawn Park District because they run it out of the schools, and they were very helpful. Commissioner Peterson asked if it was free. Director Fullerton said we don't know yet. Commissioner Morgan asked if that means we won't have the Before and After program if it all goes through and you would not have them here. Director Fullerton said at the beginning, we would have it here because there are other schools like Glen Oaks, Oak Ridge and Conrady that will still go to Krueger Park. This is the first year, but we are assuming we will eventually be at all the school locations in the future. Commissioner Morgan asked what these teachers would do after teaching in the

morning or after school, in between the two times. Director Fullerton said they would not be working. They would only work in the morning, before school and then after school and that is how it is now. They could work other jobs for us if they have the availability. Some of our staff go to school so these hours are good for them. Mr. Sanchez said the hours are 7-8:45am and 3-6pm. Commissioner Czarny said it may be a minimal charge, and they may get funding. Director Fullerton said there will be a charge because we are not going to run the program for free. Mr. Sanchez said Oak Lawn Park District has access to the schools and the park district sets the fees and charges the parents. They also have Action for Children for low-income families. We don't offer Action for Children right now but will have to offer it for this program. It is a State run program so parents register on their website and list their income. Then Action for Children determines what amount they will pay and what the parent will need to pay the park district. We don't know how long it takes Action for Children to pay us, but we will ask. Director Fullerton said the School District is also looking at private companies to put in a proposal for this. We do not have to be DCFS certified, and neither is Oak Lawn Park District. There are not many after school programs at park districts that are DCFS certified because they don't have nap time or a long day.

Commissioner Morgan asked how the Wind Creek Casino was. Mr. Sanchez said everyone seemed to like it. It is a new casino, so everything was not open yet and there weren't any membership reward cards.

Commissioner Zalas said the bus broke down after going three blocks. The new Recreation Assistant, Amanda, was on the trip, so those people wanted to eat her alive when the bus broke down, but she did pretty well. They went across the street to Oil Express to get some tape. It took 35 minutes to get off 95<sup>th</sup> Street. The casino was clean and open and had a large foyer area.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Ms. Muth presented the administrative report, and it was placed on file. Ms. Muth asked if she could miss the April board meeting in 2025 due to a vacation. Commissioners had no issues with this.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Kosnick moved, seconded by Commissioner Czarny, to approve Claim Ordinance 833. Ayes: Czarny, Kosnick, Morgan, Peterson, Zalas. Motion approved. Commissioner Kosnick asked about #171124 for Four Winds Casino; \$90. Do we have to pay the casino \$90 to go there? Mr. Sanchez said for the Four Winds Casino, we must pay a \$3 admission fee when we send the manifest to them. We have a certain package for the food incentive, and you must be transported by Motorcoach to get that package. Commissioner Morgan made note of the Investment Report of November 30, 2024, which includes the US Treasury statement. Director Fullerton said she is getting rates now for the two CDs that expired Saturday. Commissioner Peterson moved, seconded by Commissioner Zalas, to approve the Operating Statements for November 30, 2024. Ayes: Czarny, Kosnick, Morgan, Peterson, Zalas. Motion approved.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The backpacks were given to the employees and commissioners as a Christmas/Holiday gift. Director Fullerton thanked Steve Mihelich from Williams Architect for all he did for Hickory Hills Park District. He is retiring this Friday. He assisted with both building renovation projects in 2010/2011, the building renovation in 2019/2020 and the splash pad project. He has assisted us even when the projects were over. Mr. Mihelich recommended 2010 Engineering for our HVAC 2024 bid. 2010 was very helpful with the project, referred us to many HVAC vendors, and provided drawings and specs for the project. The mother of the teenager that ran into the fence at Martin Park reached out to the park district and said all she could afford was \$1,000. Director Fullerton called

David Freeman and wrote her an email back and said we could accept the \$1,000. There hasn't been a reply since then and they haven't come in to pay the \$1,000 yet.

**Osborne Park OSLAD Grant Construction Project:**

The final OSLAD and expense reports have been submitted to the auditor for review. The auditor asked for more reports and then replied a few days later and said they have completed the draft and will be sending a final report soon. Then everything will be sent to IDNR for the final report. After their review, we will receive \$67,000 for the other half of the completed project.

**HVAC Bid 2024:**

The pre-bid meeting was on December 3 and 10 vendors attended. Zach Ingalls did an excellent job running the pre-bid meeting. The vendors didn't have any questions nor were there addendum changes. However, a representative from FE Moran, Dallas Madrid, Connelly Electric, showed up three days before the bid opening and asked to see fire alarm panels. Director Fullerton said that all the vendors could have asked questions at the pre-bid meeting and should have asked to see anything they needed to bid on the project. She told the vendor she would have to call the park attorney about this additional showing and pull the maintenance manager off the job he is working on today. Attorney Freeman said that if we showed him the fire alarm panels, we would have to send an addendum and offer to show it to all the other vendors that attended the pre-bid meeting. This was Friday so we only had a day or two to meet with all the other vendors because the bid opening was next Tuesday at 11am. The representative left by the time she had finished getting in touch with the park attorney. He went to Krueger Park and so Director Fullerton went there. When she arrived, he was in the front foyer area taking pictures. She told him that she couldn't show him the panels, however, they would call the engineer because we didn't think the panels would change for this project. Mr. Ingalls called Jeff Chamberlin from 2010 Engineering while the vendor was there. After speaking with Mr. Chamberlin, we let the vendor know that the engineer said there are no new devices for the alarm panel and the project does not affect the alarm panels so there is no reason to open everything up and there is no reason why you need to see it. FE Moran did bid on the job. The bid amount for each vendor was in the board packet.

The references for the lowest bidder PremiStar were called and checked out fine. The budget was \$250,000 for this project. Commissioner Kosnick moved, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve PremiStar for \$131,500 for the HVAC 2024 bid project. Ayes: Czarny, Kosnick, Morgan, Peterson, Zalas. Motion approved.

As of 4/30/24, the Capital fund balance was \$463,000

As of 11/30/24, we spent \$170,000

Purchased marquee \$28,000

Install marquee \$7,000

HVAC \$131,000

Left is \$126,000

We will get \$67,000 back from IDNR so roughly \$200,000 is left in capital. Director Fullerton said she asked the staff to hold off on capital projects until the new director is hired because \$126,000 is not a lot to start another capital project. The new director will meet with the bond company to knowfind out what amount the district can get in new money for future capital projects.

**Paid Leave Act:**

Cook County did not exempt the Park Districts and School Districts from the Cook County Paid Leave Act. Paylocity has been contacted so it is now set up in our payroll software to begin January 1. The part-time employees and two full-time employees that have been here less than a year received a memo. The new full-time employees will receive 6.5 days instead of the 5 days in the current policy for the one year of vacation time. The memo they received are the same details in the ordinance in Exhibit 1. Additionally, Exhibit 1 was added to the employee personnel manual. The three sections in the personnel manual that were discussed last

month have been changed. There is one more section we would like to change in the part-time longevity award section. Attached is the old policy and new policy of this longevity award. We would like to remove the theater tickets and just give out gift cards. The value that was added for the gift cards is what we are currently using today. That dollar amount can change in the future so the dollar amount for gift cards that is in the manual now is what we currently purchase for their longevity awards. Commissioner Zalas moved, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to remove theater tickets and leave the gift cards for the Part-Time/Seasonal Longevity Award. Ayes: Czarny, Kosnick, Morgan, Peterson, Zalas. Motion approved.

Director Fullerton said Ms. Muth mentioned that she and I will not be getting vacation at retirement per the Grandfathered in Vacation Policy. Ms. Muth said the way the vacation works is Jennifer and I are grandfathered in with the last three of the Mohicans. We don't earn our vacation until we complete our years of service. When Jennifer leaves in June, she will not get what other staff members might have gotten because she can't earn until November since that is her anniversary date and by that time she will get four weeks. Director Fullerton said this means she is not getting her vacation pay from November 2024 to June 2025. She said she spoke with an HR professional about it and they said it is illegal. She didn't know about this until Ms. Muth told her. Commissioner Zalas said it is three weeks or four weeks. Commissioner Peterson asked, wouldn't it be prorated? Director Fullerton said prorated is great, rather than nothing at all. Commissioner Peterson said my job is the same way, because you don't get it until you earn it for a year. Commissioner Zalas said it is grandfather clause. Commissioner Czarny asked how it works for Angel. Director Fullerton said Angel and everyone else accrues time. Director Fullerton said that is the policy you have in front of you which is the accrual policy. Ms. Muth said it is an accrual rate of .54 for under a year and .84 for over a year, etc. Director Fullerton said the former director got paid for her vacation and then changed the policy after she left and screwed us. Commissioner Zalas said unfortunately that is how it goes. Director Fullerton said it wasn't spelled out this way for her and there is nothing in writing that says that. Commissioner Morgan said that when Cindy retired, she set up things, so she got paid. Director Fullerton said she knows. She received a \$40,000 payout for sick time so she could use it for health insurance when she retired. It is in a letter she wrote to the Board. Someone needs to find out if this is legal. She can't just decide ~~to not~~ to pay a person's vacation time that they have earned. Commissioner Morgan said the attorney is coming to the January Board Meeting and he can tell us if this is legal. Director Fullerton asked if he knew this law. Also, she has six weeks now because of the way everything falls with month end, payroll, payables and Board meetings. It is difficult to take vacation days because of her job duties. Director Fullerton said she has been screwed before by this park district, so it isn't surprising. Commissioner Zalas said she is not retired yet, so she has time yet to straighten out this problem if you want to change it. Director Fullerton said she will call the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) and find out what we need to do about this vacation policy. Ms. Muth said what is the difference between the old policy and new policy. Commissioner Zalas said it has nothing to do with the policy. The IDOL has their own rules. It is the rules you work under. That is why you must ask the attorney. Director Fullerton said this rule has not been communicated to her. There is nothing in writing to her that says she must wait a year to earn it. Commissioner Zalas said this is something because we are talking about it. Director Fullerton said Ms. Muth told her about it and said when you retire, you are not getting paid your vacation time from November 2024 to June 2025. Ms. Muth said she knew because she was here when the grandfathered part of it started, and she got that policy from the former director. Director Fullerton said she didn't start yet and was not employed at the time when this grandfather policy started. Ms. Muth said somehow that changed when Cindy left. Ms. Muth said she explained this to Jennifer and how she got her time, and she didn't know the complications. She has to complete her years of service. It started when Jennifer started but she was grandfathered backwards so she could get vacation sooner. Commissioner Zalas asked if this is in writing. Ms. Muth said she doesn't have anything in ~~writing,~~ ~~and writing and~~ was told by the former ~~director, director that~~ that is the way it was. She doesn't know if anything was in writing to Jennifer. Director Fullerton said she doesn't have this in writing. Commissioner Zalas said you need to speak with a lawyer. Commissioner Morgan said one way or another you will get your money. Director Fullerton said if she would have known this, she would have retired on November 1, ~~2025~~2025, so she could get her vacation time and was very surprised when Ms. Muth told her this and she told Ms. Muth we need to tell the

Board because it isn't right. Commissioner Zalas said to get the answer in writing and not word of mouth. Director Fullerton said think about how she felt, with being here for 20 years and when you retire, you are not getting your vacation time. That is crazy. Commissioner Morgan said a lot of what Cindy did, she did not bring to the Board and a lot of negotiations with Director Fullerton should have been in writing. Director Fullerton said it was in writing, and the negotiation was not over the phone. There is no discussion in writing about vacation grandfathered in. Commissioner Morgan said that was Cindy, not the Board. Director Fullerton said she just wanted the Board to know that she is getting screwed. Commissioner Morgan said we won't allow that to happen. Ms. Muth said her birthday is the day before her anniversary so she will wait a couple of days when she retires to get her full vacation time.

**PDRMA 2024 Property/Casualty Rates:**

During the PDRMA Property/Casualty Program Council Meeting in November, PDRMA reviewed changes and the 2025 rates. In the board packet is our member rate breakdown. Our rate went up from \$29,842.11 for 2024 which was a 16% increase from the previous year to \$34,551.44 which is a 15.78% increase. This includes a multiprogram member discount of \$1,833.37. The calculation change was based on payroll and operating expenses: Property/Casualty includes the following:

- Property – Asset Values
- Liability – Operating Expenditures
- Employment Practices Liability –Payroll
- Pollution – Acreage
- Workers' Compensation – Payroll
- Cyber – Operating Expenditures

**Bond 2020 Abatement Ordinance:**

Commissioner Peterson moved, seconded by Commissioner Czarny, to approve ORDINANCE 2024-364 - AN ORDINANCE ABATING THE TAX HERETOFORE LEVIED FOR THE YEAR 2024 TO PAY DEBT SERVICE ON \$2,560,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION PARK BONDS (ALTERNATE REVENUE SOURCE), SERIES 2020B, OF THE HICKORY HILLS PARK DISTRICT, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS. Ayes: Czarny, Kosnick, Morgan, Peterson, Zalas. Motion approved.

**Annual Safety Award:**

The annual employee safety award spreadsheet was included in the board packet, so you can see what employees will receive this year. Commissioner Kosnick moved, seconded by Commissioner Zalas, to approve the safety award as presented and to leave the additional \$100 from last year. Ayes: Czarny, Kosnick, Morgan, Peterson, Zalas. Motion approved.

**Legal Symposium:**

The IAPD Legal Symposium notes were shared with the Board. The IAPD has a new Board policy manual, and the table of contents was included in the board packet. The Board can log in to the IAPD website and download the entire manual. If you don't have an account, you can create your account.

**Budget 2025/2026 Preparation:**

We have been working on budget preparation in December and will finish it in January. Budget documents will be ready for the February Board meeting so it will be a longer meeting in February. A closed session will be on the February agenda for the Board to discuss raises and the annual reviews.

**History of Park District Directors:**

There is a History of Hickory Hills Park District Directors in the Board packet. This came up in conversation with John Curran, who is now retired from Tinley Park Park District, many years ago. Over 20 years ago when starting as Director, Director Fullerton was told that Cindy Neal was the first director. Just a few years ago, John told her this was incorrect. He was a Director before Cindy and there were others as well. She finally was able to have some time to do the research on this so that is why the list of "Director History" was created. It is also interesting that the Executive Director title started in 1991. The titles used previously were Director of Parks and Recreation for many park districts. It was interesting to note the park district office was at 8328 W. 95<sup>th</sup> Street in 1967. Commissioner Kosnick was surprised Walter Potacki wasn't in there. Director Fullerton said he wasn't a Director; he was a Commissioner. Commissioner Kosnick said he was surprised because he did all that stuff. Director Fullerton said in all the board minutes, he was a commissioner and not a director. There was no discussion that he did director duties like writing a policy.

**Consolidated Election:**

Director Fullerton distributed the order on the election ballot which will be Sandra Morgan, Patrick Kosnick and Joshua Czarny. She asked commissioners to check their address on the Certificate of Ballot.

**Mid-Year Budget Review:**

The board packet included a comparison of October 31, 2024, with the last two years' budgets ending on October 31, 2023, and October 31, 2022. The highlights were discussed at the board meeting.

**Executive Director Search:**

Director Fullerton said IAPD sent another email blast for the position, so the blasts went out on December 9 and December 12. Commissioner Peterson also received the email blast through IAPD. The deadline is this Friday. Commissioner Morgan said she will receive the resumes from IAPD via email. Commissioner Zalas said that IAPD should be screening the resumes. Director Fullerton said IAPD said if there are 12-14 resumes or less that he will give them all to you and if more than that, he would narrow them down. Commissioner Peterson said he will not be able to attend the January Board meeting. There was a discussion for scheduling the interviews for January 14-16 and the time will be 6-9:30pm. Commissioner Morgan said Alan at IAPD will be calling the candidates and scheduling the interviews. Commissioner Peterson spoke about having a scoring system which would be 1-5. Director Fullerton said you can't ask what someone makes. This is a law that was passed a year ago.

Commissioner Morgan said we need to define policies for the next director. Director Fullerton said she didn't know that the grandfathered vacation meant she doesn't receive her vacation at retirement that she earned from November 2024 to June 2025 of her last year. She was only informed of this by the Business Manager recently. Director Fullerton said there were a lot of things she was told that were not in writing. Another unwritten policy that she was told about by the former director, which had been a problem during her employment as director, was that she couldn't hire, fire or discipline the staff that report to her and that is not in writing either. As she went through her director career here, as you know, she couldn't do any of that. This is very difficult because you can't manage your own staff and because they are going to walk all over you and not listen to you.

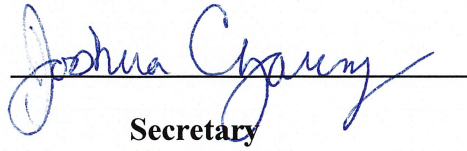
**Miscellaneous:**

The October fitness center and walking track report were included in the board packet.

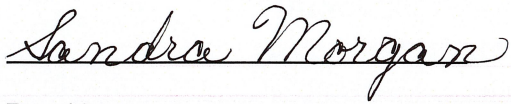
We received a FOIA request from Smart Procure for payables from 8/8/24 to 11/12/24. This organization sends a FOIA request every few months.

Commissioner Kosnick moved, seconded by Commissioner Zalas, to adjourn to the next regular board meeting.  
Ayes: Czarny, Kosnick, Morgan, Peterson, Zalas. Motion approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33p.m.

  
Secretary

**ATTEST:**

  
President