

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE OAK BROOK PARK DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**January 20, 2025 – 6:30 p.m.**  
**Canterberry Room**

1. CALL TO ORDER THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE OAK BROOK PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND CONDUCT THE ROLL CALL

President Knitter called to order the Regular Meeting of the Oak Brook Park District at the hour of 6:31 p.m. Commissioners Gondek, Ivkovic Kelley, Suleiman, Vescovi, and President Knitter answered “present” from the Oak Brook Park District Family Recreation Center, Canterbury Conference Room. Also present in Canterbury Conference Room was Laure Kosey, Executive Director; Marco Salinas, Chief Financial Officer; Bob Johnson, Deputy Director; Robert Pechous, Director of Recreation and Communications; and Steve Adams, District Attorney.

2. OPEN FORUM

President Knitter asked if there were any public comments and reminded attendees that each speaker will be allotted a five-minute time limit.

President Knitter announced to the audience that there is an audience member who is video recording the meeting.

Alan Koren from the Saddlebrook Association distributed packets concerning the Saddlebrook Horse Barn to the commissioners. Koren presented a picture of the horse barn shown in a Chicago Tribune article. Koren described the horse barn and stated that it was built to look more like a home. Koren continued to present the history of the relationship of the horse barn and Park District.

Derek Brenczewski introduced himself as a representative from Electrical Solutions Network and Halo Solar. Brenczewski stated that the company will be submitting a request for proposal (RFP) if there is a solar energy project at the Park District.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 20, 2025 AGENDA
- b. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - i. December 16, 2024 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- c. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024
  - i. Warrant 692

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to approve taking a Single Omnibus Vote on the Consent Agenda as presented.

There was no additional discussion, and the motion passed by roll call vote.

Ayes: Commissioners Gondek, Ivkovic Kelley, Suleiman, Vescovi, and President Knitter  
Nays: None

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to approve the Consent Agenda.

There was no additional discussion, and the motion passed by roll call vote.

Ayes: Commissioners Gondek, Ivkovic Kelley, Suleiman, Vescovi, and President Knitter  
Nays: None

4. STAFF RECOGNITION

- a. None

5. COMMUNICATIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

- a. Board of Commissioners to share communications.

Commissioner Gondek stated that the Park District did a nice job clearing the snow and ice.

President Knitter reported that a resident had discovered a website spreading misinformation intended to discredit the Park District. In response, President Knitter requested that Dr. Laure Kosey address the inaccuracies on the website and ensure that factual information is provided to the Commissioners so they can share it with residents.

- b. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Bob Johnson presented information on the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

Johnson reported that the Illinois Climate Bank has received funding to deploy EV Charging Stations statewide. The Park District has funding earmarked for installation of these charging stations; however, additional contributions from the Park District would be required to fully fund the project. Tennis Center members expressed interest in having EV Charging Stations installed. A proposal for EV Charging Station was previously brought to a Board meeting in 2018 but was rejected at that time.

Johnson reported that the installation of the EV Charging Stations requires a minimum of two pedestals, each with two charging ports. The Park District would also be required to charge a fee for the use of the charging stations. The Client Bank would initiate the RFP process, but this process has not yet occurred.

President Knitter stated that she had inquired at a previous meeting about the Tesla ports and other ports. Johnson reported that there is now a universal charging port available. Johnson asked the Board for direction on whether the Park District should pursue the installation of the charging stations.

President Vescovi asked if the Park District would own the charging stations. Johnson responded that the Park District would own them.

President Knitter expressed that as soon as the Park District has these charging stations, then anyone in the public could charge their vehicle. The Park District should consider that nonmembers who have no relationship with the Park District will be coming to the Park District.

Commissioner Vescovi asked about other locations that have these charging stations.

President Knitter stated that the Village had previously installed charging stations; however, they were not functional or financially viable and were therefore removed. President Knitter further mentioned that individuals utilizing the Park District are typically local and may not require charging stations.

Commissioner Vescovi suggested exploring charging stations at other Park Districts.

Commissioner Suleiman asked if these charging stations are required to be in specific locations.

Johnson responded that for charging stations to be operational, they would need to be accessible to a power source, so they would need to be located near a building.

Commissioner Suleiman stated that the charging stations should not take over handicapped spaces.

Commissioner Vescovi asked for the possible profit.

Johnson clarified the charging stations would not replace handicapped spaces. Johnson further noted that the potential profitability of the charging stations would depend on the rate the Park District is allowed to charge. In 2018, the Park District was not permitted to charge a fee for the use of the stations, but current regulations now require them to charge. The exact rate will be determined later while Client Bank goes through the approval process.

President Knitter asked Johnson to explore the possibility of implementing a variable rate for the charging stations, with a lower rate for residents.

Johnson stated the Park District will research other park districts with EV Charging Stations.

Commissioner Suleiman questioned the technology and equipment.

Attorney Adams followed up with a question about operating costs.

Johnson stated that the operating cost would be offset by the charge rate.

Commissioner Vescovi asked if the installation cost comes from the earmarked funds.

Johnson confirmed that the installation costs for charging stations are included in the earmarked funds. Johnson stated that he will continue to explore the options and feasibility for the EV Charging Stations.

c. Jim Belden, Solar Panel Options for the Family Recreation Center

Dr. Kosey introduced Jim Belden, who will present information on the solar panel initiative. Dr. Kosey also requested that the Board provide direction on whether the Park District should proceed with leasing or purchasing the solar panels for the Family Recreation Center (FRC).

Jim Belden, an energy consultant with Belden Energy Solutions, presented a PowerPoint on the financial analysis for Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and Ownership. The presentation can be found in the Park District's records.

Belden explained that the PPA can be viewed as a lease with a 15-to-20-year term. Belden recommended opting for a non-escalated PPA rate. Belden further noted that the PPA requires no upfront investment. ComEd costs will increase due to inflation and the Illinois policy for clean energy. With the PPA, installation, maintenance, and repairs would be the responsibility of the PPA investor, not the Park District. Additionally, the Park District would receive indirect tax incentive benefits through rebates, resulting in a reduction in the rate.

Belden communicated that Self-Funding is another option where the Park District would own the solar panels. This option would involve an initial out-of-pocket cost to purchase and install the solar panels. Any repairs and replacements of the panels would also be the Park District's responsibility. However, with Self-Funding, the Park District would be eligible for ComEd, federal, and state rebates and credits. Additionally, any overproduction of energy would be returned to the ComEd grid, and the Family Recreation Center (FRC) would receive a credit for the energy produced.

President Knitter asked if the Park District could use the overproduction of energy at the Tennis Center.

Belden responded that the Tennis Center will indirectly benefit from the overproduction. If there is an oversupply of energy, the energy will return to the grid when the Park District buildings do not need it.

Belden recommended installing solar panels due to the current incentives. Belden highlighted that the Family Recreation Center (FRC) is a prime candidate for solar panels because of the recent roof renovation and the building is expected to be in use for the next twenty years. Belden cautioned that future incentives may change with the new administration, so a decision should be made sooner rather than later.

Attorney Adams asked about the possibility of Federal tax credits ending sooner through executive order.

Belden responded that in his opinion, the ending of Federal tax credits would be difficult to implement immediately, as it would require Congressional action. However, Belden recommended starting the process in 2025 to increase the chances of receiving the incentives.

Attorney Adams also asked if PPA rates would be subject to change if the incentives were no longer available, and how much of a benefit the Park District would lose if the incentives end.

Belden stated that the Solar Investors would need to review the contract for an option that allows customers to exit if the incentives end. Belden further explained that even without the incentives, there would be tremendous savings. Belden suggested if there are available funds to purchase the solar panels, the Park District could sign a service agreement to ensure the Park District is not overwhelmed by repairs and maintenance. To plan for future expenses, Johnson and Belden have reviewed the equipment that may need to be replaced. Overall, Belden emphasized that the solar systems are static, and solar panels that Belden uses are Tier One Equipment, which come with a warranty for twenty-five to thirty years.

President Knitter asked about the permitting and approval process with the Village.

Belden stated that the solar panels are mounted on a racking system that is held in place by cement ballasts, ensuring there is no penetration of the roof and no voiding of the roof warranty. Belden explained that the racking system is not visible from below.

Dr. Kosey added that the Park District discussed the possibility of installing solar panels with the Village. The Village responded that it is possible and to begin the process when ready.

President Knitter confirmed that the Tennis Center is not a good candidate for solar panels until the roof is replaced.

Belden recommended acting sooner than later at the FRC, then he suggested working with a roofing contractor to determine the life expectancy of the roof at the Tennis Center.

Commissioner Vescovi asked about the changing technology of the solar panels and inquired if, when a more practical and improved solar panel is manufactured, the existing solar panels would be replaced.

Belden stated with the PPA, the Park District would not need to worry about the technology. The Solar Investor would decide whether to replace the panels.

President Knitter stated that the Solar Investor could be encouraged to switch out the solar panels, but the Park District would have difficulty doing so if the panels were purchased. However, President Knitter noted that solar panels have not changed significantly in the last ten years.

Belden agreed with President Knitter and stated that purchasing the solar panels could also be rewarding because, with the incentives, the funds could be recouped in less than four years, after which upgrades could occur.

Attorney Adams asked about the credited quarterly payments from the Illinois Renewable Credit and whether those are equal amounts.

Belden responded that one to seven quarterly payments are equal, and the last credit being much less. Johnson will be provided with the projections.

Attorney Adams asked if all PPA's are twenty years.

Belden answered that not all PPA's are for twenty years; they could be negotiated. However, the minimum term is fifteen years due to IRS stipulations for owning the solar panels for a certain number of years. Belden emphasized that the PPA is a custom agreement that can be negotiated.

Attorney Adams asked if there is a bid process for purchasing and installing the panels or if there is another option.

Belden responded that there can be a bid process or "turn-key" option. Belden also offered to assist with procurement of request for quote (RFQ) specifications.

President Knitter asked Dr. Kosey what action she would like the Board to take regarding the solar panel proposal.

Dr. Kosey is asking the Board to provide direction on whether to pursue leasing or purchasing the solar panels.

President Knitter asked if there are grants.

Belden responded that grants are not available, but if grants were available then the tax credits would be reduced.

Dr. Kosey stated that the Park District will explore both options of either leasing or purchasing.

Commissioner Vescovi stated that the Park District should evaluate both leasing and purchasing but suggested that purchasing the solar panels seems to have a bigger advantage.

President Knitter agreed to consider both options and recommended reviewing the service agreement as part of the decision-making process.

6. REPORTS:

a. Administration and Enterprise Operations Report

Dr. Laure Kosey presented her report, which can be found in the Park District's records.

Dr. Kosey provided clarification regarding last month's questions about the tax levy and fiscal year (FY) start dates for park districts. The Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) reported that 42 park districts have January 1 FY, 64 have May 1 FY, and a few of them have July 1 FY. The IAPD explained why many park districts have May 1 FY. 1) Tax Levy Alignment: the tax levy must be submitted by the end of December, but park districts do not receive the final tax levy figures until March. May 1 FY allows park districts to adjust their budget accordingly. 2) Election Cycle: new commissioners begin their term in May, allowing them to have a say in the budgeting process from the start of the FY. In contrast, January 1 FY would place them five months into the budget cycle, limiting their influence. 3) Seasonal Revenue Generation: the spring season, which starts around May, generates more revenue due to increased use of fields and park facilities. A May 1 FY captures this peak season's revenue earlier in the cycle

Dr. Kosey explained the Market Based Salary Range Adjustment refers to the salary range associated with a specific job description. Dr. Kosey used the example of the Administrative Services Specialist position, where the previous Specialist retired after over twenty years of service and was at the higher end of the salary range. The newly hired Specialist, in contrast, was hired at the minimum rate of the range and will receive a merit increase at her next evaluation, although she will remain within the minimum of the salary range. Dr. Kosey emphasized that the Market Based Salary Range is based on a market analysis of the salary range for that particular job description.

President Knitter explained that all companies have a salary range.

Commissioner Vescovi asked if all park districts follow criteria depending on the job description.

Dr. Kosey confirmed that all park districts follow a criterion and contribute to that information. Market Based Salary Range Adjustment considers information such as the area demographics, the experience of the position, and the job description.

President Knitter emphasized that the Market Based Salary Range Adjustment is purely based on the job description.

b. Finance and Human Resources Report

Marco Salinas presented his report, which can be found in the Park District's records.

Salinas reported that the Park District completed eight months of the fiscal year. The three major funds have a surplus.

President Knitter asked why the Central Park field rental revenue is down.

Robert Pechous suggested that the Central Park field rental revenue could be down due to lower baseball field revenue which is an industry-wide issue.

Salinas reported that although there is a surplus in the Recreation Fund, the surplus is lower than the prior year due to Capital Improvement projects expenditures.

President Knitter asked why is there \$10 million in the bank.

Salinas responded that there is a schedule as of December 31, 2024 in the Board Packet that shows there is over \$9 million in investments across ten funds. Six funds are restricted funds and can only be used for specific purposes, meaning that portions of the investments are not available for general use. The remaining funds are attributed to the General, Recreation, and Capital Projects Funds. The previous Park District Board adopted a Fund Balance Policy that mandates maintaining a reserve of either cash or investments equivalent to a minimum of three months and a maximum of nine months of operating expenditure.

Salinas explained that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Park District used the reserve funds to continue minimal operations while programs were shut down. Currently, the reserve fund holds approximately six months of operating expenditure. However, this amount will fluctuate, particularly during the slow season. The Park District as a result of the restricted funds and the reserve will have around \$1 million for possible general use.

Dr. Kosey asked about Moody's credit rating for the Park District.

Salinas stated that the Park District received the highest rating, Aaa, from Moody's credit rating when the Park District issued bonds for 2023 and 2019.

Attorney Adams added that, in order to be rated highly, Moody's encourages maintaining Fund Balance surplus in reserve for emergencies.

President Knitter shared that the Park District made every effort to stay open during COVID but ultimately had to use the reserve to continue operations. Park District has been able to grow its reserve in the last two years.

Salinas stated that the Park District takes a conservative approach by maintaining a reserve of at least three months, but no more than nine months of operating expenses. Salinas added that taxing bodies with reserves exceeding two years can face challenges.

Dr. Kosey asked Salinas to address the last tax levy in December.

Salinas communicated that the Park District requested a 3.15% increase for the tax levy. As a result, a homeowner with a property value at \$750,000 would see an increase in taxes of \$26.00.

Commissioner Suleiman asked about having a policy to keep certain funds for growth.

Salinas responded that the benchmark for investments is a three-month US Treasury note. Additionally, there is a policy that prevents overconcentration, while aiming to diversify the investments.

Dr. Kosey reminded the audience members that all of this information is on the website.

c. Recreation and Communications Report

Robert Pechous presented his report, which can be found in the Park District's records.

Pechous reported that the Get Better League (GBL) is sold out and has a waiting list. Many toys have been collected from the Breakaway clinic. Pioneers were busy with lunch at Fogo de Chao and Holiday tea at the Drake.

President Knitter addressed a false statement on the website she had mentioned earlier. The website inaccurately suggested that the Park District spent a significant amount of money on commissioners and employees at restaurants. However, President Knitter clarified that it is the seniors in Pioneers who pay for the program fees to go to restaurant outings and events. When an

employee accompanies the seniors to these events, the employee's expenses are covered by the program fees, which is a standard practice at other park districts and businesses.

Dr. Kosey stated that the Park District tries to spend money within the community.

President Knitter has received a lot of great feedback on Winter Lights.

Pechous presented the Sponsorship Book, which is available on the Park District website. Additionally, physical copies of the book are also available.

President Knitter asked about the Frosty Float Boat Regatta.

Rob Bond, Superintendent of Aquatic and Maintenance Operations, reported that the event was a success. The boats began by making one crossing of the pool as quickly as possible, followed by a challenge to complete as many crossings as possible within a five-minute period. Most boats were able to complete multiple crossings.

Pechous stated that the Park District has been collaborating with ActiveNet to improve reporting, specifically to distinguish between residents and nonresidents utilizing the Park District.

President Knitter received great feedback for the new fitness equipment.

Commissioner Suleiman added that the instruction on the new fitness equipment has been beneficial for the seniors. A fitness instructor led a workshop to teach them how to properly use the new equipment.

Commissioner Suleiman inquired about the reporting of numbers for swim team and swim lessons. Commissioner Suleiman noted a significant loss in revenue for the 2024/25 winter/spring registration and suggested adding another column to the report, as the spring session has not been completed.

Bond stated that Summer has four registrations, Fall is two, Winter/Spring is three. Bond will review and break down the data more to make it more accurate.

d. Parks and Facilities Report

Bob Johnson presented his report, which can be found in the Park District's records.

Johnson reported that the Park District has received the final payment of the OSLAD grant for the North Fields. The ice rink is open, but the sled hill remains closed due to a lack of snow. When the weather warms up, Winter Lights decorations will be taken down. Additionally, an ADA lift chair has been installed at the Aquatic Center, and the in-house team has been conducting HVAC preventative maintenance this past month. The New Year Fitness program is doing well, and Oak Brook First has gained thirty-two new memberships. Fitness instructors are available in the fitness center to assist members with the new equipment.

Johnson stated that the Facility Department is currently managing the Hope's Front Door collection drive.

President Knitter asked if the Park District received the grant for pickleball and playground.

Dr. Kosey reported that the Park District did not receive the grant for pickleball and playground. As a result, the project will be delayed, and the Capital Improvement Project will be reevaluated.



President Knitter responded to a question from a previous board meeting regarding whether the projects would be completed without the grant. President Knitter clarified, without the grant, the project will not be completed.

## 7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### a. Section 1 – Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to approve Section 1 – Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual as amended.

President Knitter stated the Section 1 pertains to the conduct and responsibilities of the commissioners.

Dr. Kosey reported that two amendments were made to Section 1.2. The first amendment deleted Part A, which read “For the purpose of assisting Commissioners in collecting feedback and ideas regarding the facilities, memberships, special events and programs of the District, the Park Board of Commissioners permits up to 8 guests of each Commissioner, per quarter, to participate in and attend District facilities, memberships, special events and programs without charge.” Since Commissioners don’t utilize these passes for special events and programs, Part A was deleted.

The second change was an amendment to Part B, which granted each Commissioner eight guest passes for inviting guests to the Park District facilities, special events, and programs. The amendment excluded special events and programs. Therefore, the eight guest passes will only be valid for use at the Park District facilities. The purpose of these passes is to gather valuable feedback from residents regarding the Park District.

Dr. Kosey communicated that Part A of Section 1.3 stipulated that a Commissioner who has completed a full term on the Board would be eligible for a free lifetime “Fitness Club Membership” upon submission of an application. The term “Fitness Club Membership” has been updated to “Family Recreation Center Membership.”

The motion passed by roll call vote.

Ayes: Commissioners Gondek, Ivkovic Kelley, Suleiman, Vescovi, and President Knitter

Nays: None

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Ordinance 17-0116: An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 17-0116 Regulating Travel, Meal and Lodging Expenses in Accordance with The Local Government Travel Expense Control Act *(Requires waiving the Board Rules to approve at this meeting.)*

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to waive the Board Rules to approve at this meeting for Ordinance 17-0116: An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 17-0116 Regulating Travel, Meal and Lodging Expenses in Accordance with The Local Government Travel Expense Control Act.

Commissioner Vescovi asked for more explanation of Ordinance 17-0116.

Dr. Kosey explained that now that Section 1 has been approved this ordinance aims to clarify the Personnel Policy Manual and the Administrative Policies and Procedures. The purpose is to ensure consistency regarding travel, meals, and lodging expenses, which will be based on the General Services Admission (GSA) per diem rates for the event location, excluding gratuity.

The motion passed by roll call vote.

Ayes: Commissioners Gondek, Ivkovic Kelley, Suleiman, Vescovi, and President Knitter  
Nays: None

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to approve Ordinance 17-0116: An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 17-0116 Regulating Travel, Meal and Lodging Expenses in Accordance with The Local Government Travel Expense Control Act.

There was no additional discussion, and the motion passed by roll call vote.

Ayes: Commissioners Gondek, Ivkovic Kelley, Suleiman, Vescovi, and President Knitter  
Nays: None

b. Market Based Salary Range Adjustment

President Knitter stated that the Market Based Salary Range Adjustment was discussed earlier.

c. Ordinance 25-0217: An Ordinance Transferring Funds to and from Several Park District Funds

Salinas communicated that Exhibit A is included in the Board Packet. Exhibit A outlines the amount of the transfers to and from funds, along with the purpose of each transfer, as part of the budget process. Salinas noted that this is the last year for transferring the debt certificates and the loan to the Village.

d. Tennis Center Exterior Windows Replacement Project Bid

Dr. Kosey reported that the previous bid was over budget. The Park District reevaluated the project and will go out to bid again.

9. THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE OAK BROOK PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 17, 2025, 6:30 P.M.

President Knitter announced the next Regular Meeting of the Oak Brook Park District Board of Park Commissioners will be held on February 17, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to adjourn the January 20, 2025, regular meeting of the Oak Brook Park District Board of Commissioners. The motion passed by voice vote, and the meeting adjourned at the hour of 8:03 p.m.



Dr. Laure L. Kosey, Executive Director