

**Minutes**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE OAK BROOK PARK DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**December 18, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.**  
**Canterberry Room**

1. PUBLIC HEARING – TRUTH IN TAXATION ACT - For the Levying of Taxes and Assessing of Taxes for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 of the Oak Brook Park District, DuPage and Cook Counties, Illinois

(Notice of the Public Hearing was Published on December 8, 2023 in the Naperville Sun, with circulation in Oak Brook, and on the District's Website.)

a. Call to Order the Public Hearing

President Knitter called to order the Public Hearing – TRUTH IN TAXATION ACT – for the Levying of Taxes and Assessing of Taxes for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 of the Oak Brook Park District, DuPage and Cook Counties, Illinois, at the hour of 6:29 p.m. Commissioners Gondek, 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, Superintendent of Communications and IT; and, Steve Adams, District Attorney. Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley arrived at 6:32 p.m.

b. Open Forum for the Receipt of Public Comments and Questions Regarding the Levying of Taxes and Assessing of Taxes for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 of the Oak Brook Park District, DuPage and Cook Counties, Illinois. Twelve Oak Brook residents attended the open forum.

President Knitter announced that the notice of the Public Hearing was published on December 8, 2023, in the Naperville Sun, with circulation in Oak Brook, and on the District's website.

President Knitter asked if there were any public comments or questions concerning the levy.

Dr. Laure Kosey explained the tax levy and stated that the Oak Brook Park District relies more on the charges for services than the tax levy.

President Knitter stated that the goal of the levy is not to make a profit but to be used for everything from maintaining the parks to running the camps. Nonresidents are charged more than residents.

Ray Cesca, a resident, requested that the levy be postponed until the bill for McDonald's open space is paid first. He also stated that Oak Brook residents supplement through taxes activities for nonresident members, such as Silver Sneakers.

President Knitter added that taxes are also coming from commercial sites, and she explained that the levy starts at a higher percentage but then is adjusted and approved for less.

A resident asked when will the next levy come.

Mr. Adams answered taxes are assessed every year.

Commissioner Vescovi stated that if he was in the audience, he would ask what is being spent, how it is being spent, and for what purpose.

Mr. Adams stated that the budget is publicly available. Also, the state law requires the notice as written. Mr. Adams explained why the levy may be increasing.

Dr. Kosey stated by law we must file a tax levy by the end of this month, so the budget for the next fiscal year has not been reviewed yet. When staff try to offset costs for any increases, the first place they look is out of district fees.

Robert Saini, a resident, requested a clear explanation of the budget and to explain why it is justified.

Mr. Adams responded that this is an annual process to receive the capped levy amount. Mr. Adams reminded the resident that this is a hearing about the tax levy and not on the budget. He added that the staff tries to control costs and find other sources of income.

The resident suggested providing a FAQ.

President Knitter recommended attending multiple meetings about the budget since it is a complicated process and stated that the park district is transparent.

Mr. Adams added that the budget does not have a specific correlation to a specific levy. When requesting the levy, by state law the budget is unknown.

A resident asked why the park district is requesting the maximum tax levy.

Mr. Adams replied the levy helps fund the operations of the park district. There will be increased expenses based especially on inflation and growth of programming and activities.

Commissioner Suleiman stated that residents are moving to Oak Brook due to the parks as well, so we need to maintain high standards to get top-notch services provided for the community. When residents use the facilities, the results of where the money is going can be observed. If you try to trim the standards, then people will not come.

President Knitter stated that Oak Brook residents expect a high experience from the park district, so through grants and sponsorships the park district achieves that high experience, so residents are not impacted.

A resident stated that the park district is the very best, but she does not feel like it is for the Oak Brook community. She communicated that the residents are subsidizing the nonresident recreational experience. She stated that we should be conservative with the expansion and additions so to make it smaller for Oak Brook residents.

Elaine Zannis, a resident, stated that residents move to Oak Brook for the low taxes and the schools. The resident added that it would be nice to have a smaller community programming for Oak Brook residents.

Mr. Adams clarified that we are not permitted by state law to exclude nonresidents.

Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley added that it is up to the individual whether they choose to use the park district or not. Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley stated that the park district is a bonus in living in Oak Brook making the park district a local center for the community.

Commissioner Suleiman stated that Oak Brook is a multi-generational community that is always changing. Cycles occur where there will be a time when more residents use the facilities and at other times when nonresidents will.

President Knitter communicated that the nonresidents are actually funding the park district. Because Oak Brook is a small community, the park district would not be able to maintain the facility and parks without the nonresidents.

A resident stated that although she hopes taxes will not increase, she appreciates the park district, and it is a major reason for her to remain in Oak Brook.

The commissioners thanked her.

President Knitter stated that we try to be fiscally conservative by looking for sponsorships and grants. President Knitter reminded residents that there are satellite parks that are used all the time that also need to be maintained.

A resident asked if user fees could be increased.

President Knitter stated that when user fees were increased, there was a decline in membership.

c. **Adjournment of Public Hearing**

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to adjourn the Public Hearing. The motion passed by roll call, and the meeting adjourned at the hour of 7:36 p.m.

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

2. **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 7:37 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, Superintendent of IT and Communications; and, Steve Adams, District Attorney.

3. OPEN FORUM

President Knitter asked if there were any public comments.

George Gilbert, an Oak Brook resident, spoke in support of Dr. Kosey concerning the last Gateway Board meeting. He also announced that a martial arts program, which he was an advocate for, was added to Gateway.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 18, 2023 AGENDA
- b. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - i. November 13, 2023 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- c. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 2023
  - i. Warrant 679

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

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

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to approve the Consent Agenda, and the motion passed by roll call vote.

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

5. STAFF RECOGNITION

- a. None

6. COMMUNICATIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

- a. Board of Commissioners to share communications.

Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley stated that there have been complaints concerning the viewing area next to the restrooms in the Tennis Center.

President Knitter informed the Board that she had received many positive comments about Winter Lights at Central Park West.

Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley commented that the “Winter Lights” sign is great to see on Route 83.

Mr. Robert Pechous replied that since there is a sign, observers can now look up the information.

Commissioner Suleiman stated that many people showed up at the Gateway meeting and that Dr. Kosey did a great job at the meeting. Commissioner Suleiman questioned Gateway’s plans for improvement under the present oversight.

Dr. Kosey reported that the Gateway Board will continue with Ray Graham to manage the Gateway Special Recreation. Ray Graham’s proposals will now be executed in a contract. Oak Brook Park District has six months to review if the contract is being implemented. Dr. Kosey wants the Oak Brook Park District to remain with the Gateway Special Recreation Association but would like to ensure improvements in the product that Ray Graham provides the patrons.

Commissioner Gondek reported that moms who visited Winter Lights complained that there were no lights at the park at Central Park West.

Mr. Adams stated that the parks close at dusk, so an acknowledgement for an exception would need to be made.

Dr. Kosey added that we will need to explore lighting the park, and there is a sign indicating the park rules of closure.

b. Part Time Staff Evaluation Tool

Dr. Kosey stated that due to the high number of part-time staff, especially in aquatics and tennis, a new performance evaluation tool for all part-time staff was created. This performance evaluation will be implemented in Bamboo HR.

7. 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 stated that the report titles have been changed. She will be presenting the Administration and Enterprise Operations Report. Upcoming dates for events and chamber will be listed in her future report in case the Board would like to attend.

Dr. Kosey reported earlier that the 2024 board meetings will be on the third Monday of the month, she also reported earlier on the Gateway Special Recreation Association and Part Time Staff Evaluation Tool.

b. Finance and Human Resources Report

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

Mr. Salinas reported that seven months of the current fiscal year have been completed. There was an increase of net surplus compared to the prior fiscal year. Surpluses will decrease as preplanned large transfers will occur soon.

Mrs. Salinas stated that the annual budgeting process for staff opened in December. Staff will have until late January to submit budget requests. The CFO, Deputy Director, and Executive Director will review revenues, expenditures, and projections.

Mr. Salinas added that the budget will be presented at the March Board meeting.

President Knitter asked if Finance could present a budget workshop for all the commissioners at the same time.

Dr. Kosey suggested two meetings in late February or early March.

Mr. Salinas stated meetings for early March would be helpful. That would allow enough time to have a good, consolidated budget document.

President Knitter agreed an early March budget workshop would be good.

**c. Recreation and Communications Report**

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

Mr. Pechous stated that Google Analytics is being evaluated for program revenue. Google Analytics allows staff to see trends on the website.

Mr. Pechous reported that sponsorships are high. Partnership with Breakaway brought in new LED wireless score boards. Mr. Pechous also announced that full day three year old preschool will begin next year which should eventually bring in more students for the four year old program.

Mr. Pechous communicated that an invisible line counts the number of people walking through Winter Lights. The number of people is well above the last two years' numbers.

**d. Parks and Facilities Report**

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

Mr. Johnson stated that the sled park and ice rink are prepared for when it snows. Soccer fields have been aerated and fertilized with free 100% organic lab certified fertilizer.

Mr. Johnson reported that Aquatics achieved four-star reviews for the last staff audit with four staff members being recognized with five stars, painting will be completed by the end of the week, Cocoa Cabin exceeded beyond expectation, and Pink 5k will be on May 11<sup>th</sup> with registration beginning in the new year.

Mr. Johnson concluded with a strong retention rate in fitness membership, and the enrollment fee has been waived for December and January.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Ordinance No 23-1218: An Ordinance Levying Taxes and Assessing Taxes for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 of the Oak Brook Park District of DuPage and Cook Counties, Illinois.

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to approve Ordinance 23-1218: An Ordinance Levying Taxes and Assessing Taxes for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 of the Oak Brook Park District of DuPage and Cook Counties, Illinois.

Commissioner Vescovi opposes the tax levy ordinance because he does not understand the process for the levy coming before the budget.

Mr. Adams replied that by state law the levy is not related to the budget. The levy is not related to a particular budget due to the timing.

President Knitter added that it is an appropriation budget.

The motion passed by roll call vote.

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

- b. IAPD Annual Business Meeting Credentials

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to approve to appoint Laure Kosey as the District's delegate for the Annual Business Meeting of the Illinois Association of Park Districts.

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

- c. 2024 Board Meeting Dates

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to approve the 2024 Board Meeting Dates.

Dr. Kosey announced that the year for one of the dates will be corrected.

The motion passed by roll call vote.

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

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Gateway Special Recreation Proposal

Dr. Kosey stated that there is no action needed.

10. THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE OAK BROOK PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON JANUARY 15, 2024, 6:30 P.M.

President Knitter announced that the next Regular Meeting of the Oak Brook Park District of Park Commissioners would be held on January 15, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Commissioner Suleiman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ivkovic Kelley, to adjourn the December 18, 2023, 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 8:23 p.m.



Laure L. Kosey, Executive Director