

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT  
July 18, 2023  
7:00 P.M.**

**ATTENDANCE AT MEETING**

Board Members Present: President Mike Reid  
Commissioner Susan Aberman  
Commissioner Ezra Jaffe  
Commissioner Mary Oshana

Others Present: Executive Director/Secretary Michelle J. Tuft  
Superintendent of Business Services William G. Schmidt  
Superintendent of Parks, Planning & Facilities Corrie Guynn  
Superintendent of Recreation Breanne Labus  
Assistant Superintendent of Recreation Mary Amato  
Marketing and Communications Director Jim Bottorff  
Executive Administrative Assistant Ann Perez

Absent: Vice President Minal Desai

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

There were no citizen comments.

**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL**

Commissioner Jaffe moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Vice President Desai was absent. Motion carried. The Consent Agenda consisted of the minutes of the regular meeting of June 20, 2023; minutes of the special board meeting of June 29, bills payable for the month June/July 2023, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports.

**APPROVAL OF SKATIUM CHANGE ORDER #10**

Superintendent Labus requested approval of Skatium Change Order #10 for the rental of the temporary electric panel through June 13 with Excel Electric. The new electrical panel was installed at the Skatium on June 13. The change order also includes the purchase of a temporary lighting box connection that was needed to connect the lights for the Annual Ice Show in May.

There will be one more change order for the permanent lighting box connection. Commissioner Aberman asked what the cost would be. The cost of that change order should be around \$3,000.

Commissioner Jaffe asked if the electrical panel was working fine. Ms. Labus said some voltage adjustments have been needed. Staff are meeting with Wight Construction on Thursday to address the long-standing issues with the boilers and compressor. Ms. Tuft mentioned that we are also looking into an alarm that will alert staff when there are issues with the compressor. The new boilers have had problems since they were installed and are still not operating properly. Wight Construction has been incredibly diligent following up with the installers.

Commissioner Jaffe moved to approve Skatium Change Order #10 for \$10,419.00 for the extension of the temporary electric equipment and \$1,932.04 for the installation of the emergency stage lighting box, in total \$12,351.04. Commissioner Oshana seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Vice President Desai was absent. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF BID FOR TENTS, CHAIRS, TABLES, FENCING, AND LIGHTING FOR BACKLOT BASH**

Ms. Labus requested approval of the bid for the Tents, Chairs, Tables, Fencing, and Lighting for Backlot Bash. One bid was received from the House of Rental who was last year's contractor. Ms. Labus said there is a savings of \$4,000 compared to last year. Commissioner Oshana liked that they are a local company.

Commissioner Jaffe moved to approve the House of Rental bid of tents, chairs, tables, fencing and lighting at the Backlot Bash in 2023, with the option to renew for \$39,698.90. Commissioner Oshana seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Vice President Desai was absent. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF CENTRAL PARK IRRIGATION CHANGE ORDER #1**

Superintendent Guynn requested approval of the Central Park Irrigation Change Order #1. Mr. Guynn said when the bid for the Central Park renovation and irrigation was split, some items were accidentally left off the irrigation bid specifications. These items cost \$3,180.00.

Commissioner Jaffe asked what area the irrigation system will cover at Central Park. Mr. Guynn said it will cover both outfields.

Commissioner Oshana moved to approve Change Order #1 from Halloran and Yauch, Inc., for \$3,180 for the Central Park Irrigation. Commissioner Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote all Commissioners voted aye. Vice President Desai was absent. Motion carried.

## **APPROVAL OF CENTRALPARK CONSTRUCTION CHANGE ORDER #2**

Mr. Guynn requested approval of the Central Park Construction Change Order #2 for concrete work, the backflow preventor enclosure, and the check valve, which were not included in the original bid document.

Commissioner Oshana asked where the backflow preventor enclosure was located and Mr. Guynn explained the location.

Commissioner Jaffe asked about the project running behind schedule. Mr. Guynn said the playground equipment has become an issue. The spinner specified was delayed and would hold up the entire project. So, the playground company is providing a more expensive spinner, the district will not be charged extra, and it should be delivered around July 26. Once the spinner is installed, surfacing can begin.

Commissioner Jaffe moved to approve Change Order #2 from D&J Landscape for \$8,304.45 for the Central Park Renovation. Commissioner Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Vice President Desai is absent. Motion carried.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE**

Treasurer Schmidt said there have been many changes with the IT Department and wanted to update the board. An IT Consultant from Go Technology, Inc. was hired to evaluate the district's infrastructure and to make recommendations to bring the department up to date.

The consultant has evaluated the IT infrastructure and provided recommendations for improvements. Software, hardware, and servers have been purchased. Some of the servers are beyond their useful life and will not be supported after October 2023. The consultant has been a tremendous help. An IT Manager will likely be hired in October 2023, once the infrastructure is up to date.

The identified issues come with a cost and were not included in the 2023-24 budget. However, some of the items budgeted will not be needed. The district must purchase this equipment to secure the district's infrastructure. The largest expense is the servers. Commissioner Oshana asked how many servers we have, and Ms. Tuft will get her the total number.

Commissioner Aberman asked if there was a plan to stagger the replacement of the servers in the future. Ms. Tuft said the new IT Manager will need to create a plan. Staff are confident with the consultant's work and the IT staff are excited about the changes.

Commissioner Jaffe asked about cybersecurity. Ms. Tuft said PDRMA has a program for cybersecurity and the district must complete a checklist and submit it to PDRMA to qualify for cybersecurity insurance.

Commissioner Jaffe asked about financial updates. Ms. Tuft said the first update for FY 2023-24 is scheduled for the August board meeting and will be done quarterly. Mr. Schmidt said summer is the busiest time of the year for the district with revenues collected, but expenses are still coming in.

Commissioner Jaffe would like to publicize the IT changes the district is making for camp registration. Ms. Tuft said the information will be included in the 2024 camp guide. Assistant Superintendent Amato said she will make sure to inform camp families of the changes.

No motion necessary, information purposes only.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners is Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Aberman visited Skokie Water Playground and said the changing facility was not clean, especially in the bathrooms, and had a sewer smell. Mr. Guynn spoke with the supervisor, and they have been overseeing the cleaning maintenance. Mr. Guynn has checked the facility twice since speaking to staff and the bathrooms have been clean.

Commissioner Aberman said the Weber Center and Fitness First is very clean and complimented the maintenance staff.

Commissioner Jaffe asked when the Central Parks tennis court resurfacing would happen, and Mr. Guynn said it will begin the week of August 14.

Commissioner Jaffe asked about the pickleball courts at Oakton Center. Mr. Guynn said sand is being removed. The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District permit needs to be approved for construction to begin. The estimated completion date is October.

Commissioner Jaffe asked about the vandalism at Central Park and the little free libraries that were vandalized around the Fourth of July. He asked about putting cameras in the parks. Commissioner Jaffe feels cameras are a deterrent.

Mr. Tuft explained that staff are looking into additional lighting and possibly adding cameras. The biggest issue with the cameras is the cost of installing a Wi-Fi connection. Mr. Guynn said there are three lights under the Central Park shelter, and staff are looking to enhance the lighting. A resident contacted Ms. Tuft and she asked him to call the police when there is an incident.

Commissioner Jaffe proposed not allowing volunteers to work all shifts at the Backlot Bash. Ms. Tuft does not want to limit the volunteer hours as volunteers are needed. She will continue to monitor the volunteer list.

Commissioner Oshana asked about engaging with local businesses for the Backlot Bash. Ms. Tuft said she can speak with the Skokie Chamber of Commerce about doing a sidewalk sale as they have in the past, but there was not a lot of participation when they were held. Commissioner Oshana will reach out to the Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioner Oshana said that Ms. Amato and the staff did a fantastic job with the Juneteenth event. It was a phenomenal program.

Commissioner Oshana discussed a possible children's book for the story hour at the Exploritorium. Commissioner Oshana wants to be sure to include programming for the Black community. Ms. Tuft said she has ordered the book and will look at reading it for Black History Month.

Commissioner Jaffe asked about the Loyola Academy Rowing Association's (LARA) proposed Rowing Center agreement. Ms. Tuft and Mr. Guynn met with LARA regarding the proposal and informed them that staff would not recommend approval of the agreement. Ms. Tuft said the proposal did not help the district financially and it would decrease the district's control of who could use the Rowing Center. LARA declined to move forward with the proposal and will work with staff to tighten up the fall schedule. Ms. Tuft and Mr. Guynn will also look into the entire schedule of the rowing center this winter.

Commissioner Aberman was excited to hear that Ben Fiddler was hired as the new Hockey Director for the Skatium.

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

Ms. Tuft asked the board about dates for the Pawnee Park Public Hearing, a location to be determined. The date of Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. was selected.

Ms. Tuft asked the board about dates for the parks tour and the date of Monday, August 21, 2023, at 5 p.m. was selected. Ms. Tuft will include the list of parks in the Friday board memo. The board should meet at Oakton Park and Mr. Guynn will drive the bus.

Ms. Tuft reminded the board to purchase Superfan tickets for Backlot Bash if they are interested.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Jaffe moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Commissioner Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Vice President Desai was absent. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.



Mike Reid  
President



Michelle J. Tuft  
Secretary

August 15, 2023