**MINUTES OF THE**
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE**
**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**
**SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT**
**OCTOBER 21, 2025**
**6:30 P.M.**

## ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING

Board Members Present: President Susan Aberman
Vice President Ezra Jaffe
Commissioner Elsa Fisher
Commissioner Courtney Williams

Absent: Commissioner Antonia Kasalo-Terihaj

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 & Facilities Breanne Labus
Assistant Superintendent of Recreation Mary Amato
Human Resource Director Stephenie Gualano
IT Assistant Dylan Kehoe
Executive Administrative Assistant Ann Perez

## CALL TO ORDER

President Aberman called the regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners to order at 6:30 p.m. President Aberman called for the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

## CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

## CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

Vice President Jaffe moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried. The Consent Agenda consisted of the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of September 25, 2025, bills payable for the month of September/October 2025, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports.

## ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE #25-009 AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF APPROXIMATELY $2,776,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION LIMITED TAX BONDS, SERIES 2025B, OF THE SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT

Treasurer Schmidt requested the Adoption of Ordinance #25-009 Authorizing the Issuance of Approximately $2,776,000 General Obligation Limited Tax Bonds, Series 2025B of the Skokie Park District.

Mr. Anthony Miceli of Speer Financial, Inc. explained that the district annually sells this bond to pay off debt and cover capital needs. Four bids were received; the lowest, Time Bank, offered 2.97%. The interest rate was better than last year. After the sale, the issue size increased by $15,400 to $2,791,400. Closing is set for November 4, 2025.

President Aberman thanked Mr. Miceli for the report.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve Ordinance #25-009 to authorize the issuance of $2,791,400 of General Obligation Limited Tax Bonds Series 2025B. Vice President Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

## 2025 TAX LEVY RESOLUTION #25-005

Mr. Schmidt requested approval for the 2025 Tax Levy Resolution #25-005, which includes a 2.9% CPI-based increase. There were no questions.

Commissioner Fischer moved to approve Resolution #25-005. Vice President Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

## FIVE MONTH FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Schmidt reported that the district's primary financial concern is the delayed receipt of second installment tax revenue. Nevertheless, he noted that the district maintains healthy fund balances and that its overall financial position remains sound. The report provides an overview of how all district funds are performing.

Vice President Jaffe inquired about the final property tax amount once the bills are issued. Mr. Schmidt responded that it should be approximately $5,000,000, representing 45% of the total.

No motion required, informational only.

## CHANNELSIDE SOUTH CONCEPT PRESENTATION

Mr. Gage Berger of Wight & Company presented the Channelside South development concept, themed "Reclaimed by Nature." He provided an overview of the entire project and described each area thoroughly.

Mr. Berger stated that the project cost is estimated at $15,800,000. Due to the substantial presence of asphalt, the plan involves transforming the area into prairie by importing additional soil, which is projected to cost between $5,000,000 and $5,500,000.

The combined cost of Skokie Sports Park East and Channelside South is estimated at approximately $54 million. Ms. Tuft said the next agenda item will address hiring a consultant for a possible referendum.

Ms. Tuft asked if the board was satisfied with the concepts shown, and Commissioner Fisher responded positively. Commissioner Williams also expressed approval, noting that the plan included unique features such as an inclusive playground and fitness area not found in other parks.

Vice President Jaffe asked about the amenities included in the development plan of Skokie Sports Park East. Ms. Tuft responded that Skokie Sports Park East will maintain an athletic focus, featuring a gym, pickleball courts and outdoor fields. She clarified that there will be no duplication between the amenities at Skokie Sports Park East and Channelside South. Vice President Jaffe inquired about the possibility of holding camps at Channelside South, and Ms. Tuft confirmed that it would be possible. He also asked about the possibility of installing restrooms at the southern end of the park. Mr. Guynn responded that portable toilets could be placed in that area, as adding permanent restroom facilities is very expensive.

President Aberman thanked Wight & Company for their presentation.

No motion required, informational only.

## REFERENDUM CONSULTANT AGREEMENT

Ms. Tuft said the next step in the development of Skokie Sports Park East and Channelside South is to determine if the district wants to proceed with a referendum to fund the projects. Ms. Tuft recommended hiring Beyond Your Base, a consultant of Wight & Company.

Commissioner Williams mentioned that she had reviewed their background and found them to be highly successful. Commissioner Fischer added that during her time at Northbrook Park District, they utilized their services and chose not to pursue a referendum, thanks to the insights they provided.

Commissioner Fischer moved to approve the agreement with Beyond Your Base, a consulting group of Wight & Company for $15,000. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

## APPROVAL OF THE DEVONSHIRE CULTURAL CENTER FLOORING BID

Mr. Guynn requested approval of the Devonshire Cultural Center flooring bid. The flooring is for the main hallway and four bathrooms. Scharm Floor submitted the lowest bid out of the four received, with a price of $116,100.

Vice President Jaffe moved to approve the bid by Scharm Floor Covering for a total of $116,100 for the Devonshire Cultural Center Flooring Bid. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

## APPROVAL OF SAFETY MANUAL

Ms. Gualano, the Human Resource Director, said the Safety Manual has not been revised since 2021. In 2023, a full-time dedicated Risk and Safety Manager was hired and together with Ms. Gualano, they reviewed the manual and merged it with other relevant documents so that all safety information is now contained in a single manual.

President Aberman said the Safety Manual was very inclusive and covered it all.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the safety manual as proposed, effective November 1, 2025. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

## APPROVAL OF MEDICAL, DENTAL, VISION, AND LIFE INSURANCE RENEWAL

Ms. Gualano reminded the board that the district's insurance is through the Intergovernmental Personnel Benefit Cooperative (IPBC) and shared the rate renewal for 2026. Because this is the district's first rate increase since joining the IPBC, we were given the pool average which is an 11.1 % increase for PPO and 6.2% for HMO insurance. The dental plan rate will rise 4.5%. All rate increases are effective on January 1, 2026.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the Intergovernmental Personnel Benefit Cooperative for health, dental, vision and life insurance for 12 months beginning January 1, 2026, with a monthly premium of $127,550.63 per month, based on current census. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

## APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES – JOB CLASSIFICATIONS AND STAFF BENEFITS

In February 2024, internal staff benefits were approved by the board. Since then, there have been challenges administering the benefits. To address one of the issues around the number of hours staff work and the benefits they receive based on those hours, staff are recommending changing the classifications. The classifications will be PT1, PT2, PT3, full-time equivalent (FTE) and full-time. The board packet contains a list of the new classifications.

The second change is updating the benefit chart for staff. It will be easier for them to read and includes items that were missing in 2024.

Vice President Jaffe moved to approve the policies as proposed, effective November 1, 2025. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

## 2025 BACKOT BASH FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Ms. Labus provided a breakdown of the revenue and expenses for the Backlot Bash in the board report. With the great weather this year, the event was very successful. She was still collecting invoices from the Village of Skokie when the report was prepared. The event's reported $6,000 loss might balance out to break even.

Ms. Tuft commended Ms. Labus for her work on lowering expenses.

Commissioner Williams asked if we ever thought about charging for Backlot Bash. Ms. Labus said she has considered asking for a suggested donation, but it is difficult with so many entrances to the Backlot Bash. Commissioner Fischer said she likes that the event is free.

No motion required, informational only.

## APPROVAL OF CREDENTIALS FOR THE IAPD ANNUAL MEETING

Commissioner Williams moved to approve Commissioner Fischer as the Skokie Park District delegate, Commissioner Aberman as 1st alternate and Vice President Jaffe as 2nd alternate to the IAPD annual business meeting on January 31, 2026. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioner voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

## APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION SCHEDULE, FORM, AND PROCESS

President Aberman asked if the board had reviewed the information regarding the Executive Director's evaluation. Ms. Tuft reminded the board to look at the revised forms, which were different from what was in the board packet. The board discussed the process and form and set a timeline.

Vice President Jaffe will receive suggested changes on the three forms, (evaluation, self-evaluation and 360 review) by November 4. He will then compile the changes and share with President Aberman by November 7. Once the forms are approved, he will distribute them, and all completed forms are due on November 16.

There was discussion on whether this is a policy to be approved by the board. The board agreed to go through the process and have a discussion at the February meeting on how to proceed.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The next Regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners is on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Fischer liked the way the Marketing Report was compiled and asked how long it took to compile it. Mr. Bottorff said the first one took four hours and now he has a template, and it took one hour. She said it was very impressive and gave a lot of good information.

## DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Tuft will respond to a resident request for the district to purchase property at Lincoln Avenue and Babb, to build a new park. The board consensus is that Channelside South and Sports Park East are priorities at this time.

## OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

## NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

## ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Williams moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote all Commissioner voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Susan Aberman

Susan Aberman
President
November 18, 2025

Michelle J. Tuft
Secretary