**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT
DECEMBER 16, 2025
6:30 P.M.**

ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING

Board Members Present:	Vice President Ezra Jaffe Commissioner Elsa Fischer Commissioner Courtney Williams
Remote Attendance:	President Susan Aberman
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 H.R. Director Stephenie Gualano Marketing and Communications Director Jim Bottorff Skokie Heritage Museum Facility Manager Emily England Executive Administrative Assistant Ann Perez

CALL TO ORDER

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

Vice President Jaffe confirmed that President Aberman who was attending remotely was able to hear, as well as ensuring the board could hear her clearly.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

STAFF RECOGNITION

Ms. Tuft expressed that it is important to acknowledge staff members when they receive an award, are praised in correspondence, or demonstrate exceptional performance. Ms. Tuft received an email from Dick Witry, President of the Historical Society, complimenting Emily England who is the Facility Manager of the Skokie Heritage Museum.

Mr. Dick Witry, President of the Skokie Historical Society, stated that in 1991 the mayor transferred ownership of the engine house to the park district, which is now known as the Skokie Heritage Museum. Since 1991 there have been several supervisors at the Museum and Emily England is one of the finest museum supervisors that he has had the pleasure of working with. She has the credentials and has an avid interest in history and developing the history of the Village that we live in. If the park district ever loses her, they would have lost a gem.

Ms. Labus met with Mr. and Mrs. Witry, and they reminded her how special Emily is. Ms. Labus said revenues are hard to come by at the Museum, but under Emily's leadership revenue has increased, and she has recruited 33 volunteers.

Vice President Jaffe offered congratulations to Emily and expressed happiness at honoring her.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Fischer 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 November 18, 2025, bills payable for the month of November /December 2025, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports.

APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES

Human Resource Director Stephenie Gualano reviewed the personnel policy updates explaining each of the following items: Exit Interview Updates, Veterans Holiday, Paid Personal Leave Update, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Leave, Organ Donation and Victim's Economic Security and Safety Act Updates.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the policies as proposed effective January 1, 2026. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

Ms. Gualano reminded the board that she is leaving the park district for another position and expressed her gratitude for the board's support regarding the policies she has proposed over the past three years.

APPROVAL OF IMRF AUTHORIZED AGENT

Ms. Gualano is the current IMRF authorized agent. Because she is leaving the park district a new authorized agent must be appointed. Laura Le, Business Services Manager, will serve as the IMRF authorized agent until a new Human Resources Manager is hired.

Commissioner Fischer moved to appoint Laura Le as the IMRF Authorized Agent. President Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

AUTHORIZATION FOR BUSINESS RELATED TRAVEL FOR PARK BOARD COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Schmidt requested authorization for business-related travel for park board Commissioners. President Aberman, and Commissioners Fischer, Kasalo-Terihaj and Williams are attending the IAPD Conference in January 2026.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve business related travel for President Aberman, and Commissioners Fischer, Williams, and Kasalo-Terihaj to the IAPD Conference in January 2026. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried.

REVIEW STATUS OF 2025-2026 DISTRICT GOALS

Each year, district goals are formally presented to the board and are subsequently reviewed at mid-year to provide an update on progress. The board raised questions regarding certain goals, and the staff provided responses.

No motion is required for informational purposes only.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The next Regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. President Aberman asked if the date could be changed and Executive Director Tuft will coordinate.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Fischer said she was thankful for being invited to the Skokie Chamber Holiday Party on December 11, it was fun.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Tuft reported on the meeting with the referendum consultant on Friday. The main priority is to form a task force focused on planning, development, and gathering feedback. The task force will hold two meetings to review the proposals and should consist of thirty to thirty-five members.

Ms. Tuft will invite the groups that participated in developing the proposed plans. The goal is to ensure a diverse group of stakeholders participate, representing various community interests. Updates from these meetings will be shared with the board, and input from all members is encouraged to help shape the direction of the project.

Vice President Jaffe said there are many taxing bodies in the area contemplating raising taxes. Commissioner Fischer stated that should the district proceed with a referendum in November 2026, it is essential to confirm that no other entity is pursuing a referendum at the same time.

Mr. Guynn and Ms. Tuft met with the Assyrian Church of the East. They are interested in adding an exit lane from their parking lot which borders Emerson Park. They wanted the park district's perspective, and both Ms. Tuft and Mr. Guynn indicated that they had no concerns.

Vice President Jaffe asked about the H.R. Director interviews. Ms. Tuft said she has had first round interviews with candidates for the H.R. Director position and there are good candidates.Eighty applicants applied for the position.

OLD BUSINESS

Safety in the Parks was reviewed to update Commissioner Williams, who missed the previous board meeting. Ms. Tuft reported an incident in Shawnee Park that raised concerns about park safety.

A task force was formed through the Safety Committee, including Ms. Tuft and Mr. Guynn, who will discuss and suggest ways to improve park safety. Possible measures include new signage, cameras, more park monitors, and a village wide safety campaign with the Village of Skokie.

The Park District has 302 cameras, 107 of which are outdoors. Ms. Tuft reached out to neighboring park districts to assess their use of cameras. Most districts install cameras and operate them in much the same way we do. Some districts have cameras in their larger parks with shelters.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Fischer moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj was absent. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Ezra Jaffe
Vice President

Michelle J. Tuft
Secretary

January 2026