MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT
JULY 21, 2026
6:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING

Board Members Present: President Elsa Fischer
Vice President Ezra Jaffe
Commissioner Susan Aberman
Commissioner Antonia Kasalo-Terihaj
Commissioner Courtney Williams

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Seven residents spoke about the proposed referendum and asked the Board to consider adding a baseball field to the Skokie Sports Park East proposed park plan. They noted that with only one large field at Laramie Park it is difficult for children and adults to reserve space to play. President Fischer thanked the residents for attending and sharing their concerns.

Ms. Tuft informed the residents that the Board would consider revising the referendum language that evening to include baseball. She explained that, in 2016, the District considered plans for Skokie Sports Park East and affiliates expressed interest in baseball. However, when the District was able to begin redeveloping Skokie Sports Park East in 2024, the baseball affiliates did not attend the meeting to provide input, so adding a baseball field was not considered. She also noted that if a baseball field was included, artificial turf is not permitted on MWRD property.

President Fischer stated that the permitting procedures for Caleb Field at Laramie Park would also be reviewed before the next season to make it more equitable for Skokie residents. She noted that some non-residents use the park, and that the Park District relies on non-resident participation to help make programs and facilities successful.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Aberman moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried. The Consent Agenda consisted of the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of June 16, 2026, minutes of the Referendum Meeting of June 7, 2026, minutes of the Referendum Meeting of June 6, 2026, bills payable for the month of June/July 2026, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS – POSSIBLE REFERENDUM

Mr. Paul Hanley of Beyond Your Base presented the survey results for the possible referendum, reviewing the survey details. Following the presentation, he stated that the referendum had a chance of passing, with 54% of respondents in favor.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #26-002 PROVIDING FOR AND REQUIRING THE SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSITIONOF ISSUING $53,000,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION PARK BONDS TO THE VOTERS OF THE DISTRICT AT THE NOVEMBER 3, 2026 GENERAL ELECTION

Ms. Tuft stated that she had consulted with the bond consultant about the proposed referendum resolution and ballot question, and both were revised to allow baseball to be included if the Board decided to add it to the project. She noted that the resolution differed from the version included in the Board packet and asked the Board to review it. If approved, the resolution would place the referendum on the November 3, 2026, ballot.

President Fischer stated that the public would need to be informed about the updated referendum plan if baseball were added. Commissioner Aberman said the Board is committed to doing what is best for the community and that the language is being changed to be more inclusive.

Vice President Jaffe moved to approve Resolution #26-002 providing for and requiring the submission of the proposition of issuing $53,000,000 general obligation park bonds to the voters of the District at the November 3, 2026, general election. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

APPROVALOF ORDINANCE #26-004 AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE ORDINANCE REGULATING THE USE OF THE PARKS AND PROPERTY OWNED OR CONTROLLED BY THE SKOKIEPARK DISTRICT REGARDING BICYCLES, E-BIKES, E-SCOOTERS AND OTHER E-POWERED DEVICES, WEAPONS AND FIREARMS, AND DISORDERLY CONDUCT

Ms. Tuft stated there were three proposed amendments to the Conduct Ordinance. The proposed amendments add language regarding abusive language and gestures, revises the definition of a weapon, and includes a restrictive ordinance prohibiting motorized scooters, e-bikes, and e-powered devices from District property.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve Ordinance #26-004 amending sections 2.12(a)(3), 2.40(b), and 3.02. Commissioner Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. The motion carried.

LARAMIE PARK SYNTHETIC TURF REPAIRS

Mr. Guynn stated that repairs are needed for the synthetic field at Laramie Park, which receives heavy use, particularly around home plate, and the bases. The field will be closed for six to seven days in August so the contractor can complete the repairs. The cost is $26,300, and sufficient funds are available in the Capital Improvement Fund. The District will contract with the same company who installed the turf initially. Ms. Tuft noted that the work was not budgeted and thus wanted to make the Board aware of the repairs and cost.

There was no motion for approval as this was informational only.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The next regular board meeting will be held Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Vice President Jaffe said he hosted a pickleball tournament for his birthday at the Rally Room. He said the courts are great, the staff was helpful, and it was a really nice event.

Commissioner Williams participated in Unplug Illinois Day and attended several of the planned activities. Ms. Labus noted that the event is sponsored by IAPD, and Commissioner Williams stated that it was well attended.

President Fischer thanked staff that worked on the SPD app and also thanked staff who worked on the 4th of July celebration.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Tuft reported that an incident occurred at Gross Point Park on July 19 involving several youths who were arguing. During the incident, one youth lifted his shirt and displayed what appeared to be a firearm, prompting a call to police. The item was later determined to be a BB gun, and the individual will be suspended.

Mr. Guynn stated that playground renovations are planned for next year at Lockwood and Shawnee Parks and asked whether the Board could schedule a public meeting at each site in August. The board picked the date of August 19 at 6 p.m. at one park and 7 p.m. at the other park.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Tuft stated that Hamlin Park is one of the Park District's MWRD leased properties. The O'Brien Plant is undergoing renovations, and the construction company has requested use of the south end of the park for equipment storage during construction, agreeing to pay for use of the property. The Board discussed possible charges. Mr. Guynn stated that the company agreed to pay $1,000,000 for four years of use and showed the Board the area of the property that would be used on the screen.

After using the field, the company would restore the soccer field. Mr. Guynn is working with MWRD to determine whether the Park District can sublease the property and whether MWRD would be entitled to any payment. Ms. Tuft asked whether the Board was open to the arrangement, and the Board indicated support with the possibility of charging more.

No recommendation was needed as this was informational only.

BOARD RETREAT DISCUSSION

President Fischer stated that tentative dates had been identified for the Board retreat and asked the Board to agree on the retreat topics before Ms. Tuft began searching for a facilitator. The Board reviewed the focus areas and agreed on a list. President Fischer asked whether three hours would be enough, and Commissioner Williams suggested four hours, which the Board accepted. The tentative dates are November 18, 23, and 30, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Williams moved to enter into Executive Session pending litigation pursuant to Section 2(c)(11). Vice President Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote all Commissioner vote. Motion carried.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

The regular meeting was reconvened at 8:21. There was no action taken from Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Aberman moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:21 p.m. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 8:21p.m.

Elsa Fischer
President

Michelle J. Tuft
Secretary

August 18, 2026