

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT
MARCH 18, 2025
6:30 P.M.**

ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING

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

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
Human Resources Director Stephenie Gualano
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 Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Commissioner Williams was absent. Motion carried. The Consent Agenda consisted of the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 25, 2025, bills payable for the month of February/March 2025, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports.

**ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE #25-003 AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF
APPROXIMATELY \$2,500,000 OF GENERAL OBLIGATION ALTERNATE PARK
BONDS OF THE SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT, SERIES 2025A, FOR THE PURPOSE OF
FINANCING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR PARK PURPOSES OF THE DISTRICT**
Treasurer Schmidt requested the approval of Ordinance #25-003. This request is made every two years for capital funding. The exact dollar amount will be determined when the interest rate is finalized. A bond hearing will take place at the April board meeting and the funds should be received in June.

Vice President Jaffe asked if there was a structured payback on the bond and Treasurer Schmidt explained the payback process.

Commissioner Williams entered the board meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Commissioner Fischer moved to approve Ordinance #25-002 authorizing the issuance of approximately \$2,500,000 of General Obligation Alternated Park Bonds of Skokie Park District, Series 2025A, for the purpose of financing capital improvements for park purposes of the district. Vice President Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF WAGE SCALE

Ms. Stephenie Gualano, HR Director, said the district increases the wage scale every year. HR Source, the district's consultant, recommends a 2.4% increase.

Vice President Jaffe moved to approve a 2.4% increase in the full-time salary range pay structure effective May 1, 2025. Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATE

Ms. Gualano requested two personnel policy updates.

The first request is an update to the parental leave policy from eight weeks to twelve weeks of paid leave.

The district's current policy allows for twelve weeks of FMLA leave but there is a gap of four weeks between the twelve weeks of FMLA (unpaid) and the eight weeks that is paid. To be paid for the final four weeks, an employee must use and sometimes exhaust their other paid leave such as vacation, and sick time. Offering twelve weeks of paid parental leave is a great benefit and will help retain and recruit staff.

The second request is to revise the part-time staff paid time off policy. The amount of paid leave for part-time employees enrolled in IMRF will increase. The proposed policy will also recognize employees that have more tenure as they can accrue more time. Currently employees earn between 9 - 42 hours of paid leave and the new policy will increase paid leave to between 40 - 80 hours of leave, depending on years of service.

Commissioner Fischer thinks it is important to include paid personal time off for part-time staff.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the policies as proposed, effective May 1, 2025. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF 2025 CONCRETE IMPROVEMENTS BID

Mr. Guynn requested approval of the 2025 Concrete Improvements bid. The work includes removal and replacement of concrete sidewalk squares, pads, and curbing at twelve sites throughout the park district. The major work will be at Oakton Park, Tot Learning Center, and Channelside Park.

There were six bidders with the lowest bid of \$165,723 from Advantage Paving. They have successfully completed concrete projects for the district in the past.

Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj moved to approve the bid from Advantage Paving of \$165,723 for the 2025 Concrete Improvements bid. Vice President Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

ADA EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN UPDATE

Every year staff completes an update to the ADA transition plan. The initial audit was performed thirteen years ago and since then staff have completed most of the items on the list. A new audit will be performed in fiscal year 2025-26.

President Aberman said there are six items left on the parks list and asked if staff was addressing Lauth and Terminal Parks during the renovations currently underway. Mr. Guynn said the items should be taken care of except for a curb cut that will be done by the Village.

Vice President Jaffe asked if there were any changes to the ADA standards over the past thirteen years and Mr. Guynn said there probably were and that is why we are hiring a consultant to perform the next audit.

MWRD PROPERTY/CHANNELSIDE SOUTH

At the February board meeting the board reviewed concepts for the Skokie Sports Park East renovation and a referendum is being considered for the renovation.

Now, the MWRD property and Builders Asphalt donation property on the east side of McCormick, that staff are informally referring to as Channelside South, may be available in late spring or early summer. The district also wants to develop this property, so it makes sense to include it in the possible referendum. Director Tuft wants to see what the board thinks about including it.

Commissioner Kasalo-Terihaj said it makes sense to do this, and it would be more cost effective.

Ms. Tuft said input needs to be collected from staff, the board, and the public to determine what might be developed. Some initial ideas include paths and an inclusive playground and/or a nature playground. Commissioner Fischer said there are grants for the inclusive playgrounds.

The board consensus was to include the Channelside South property in the possible referendum. Staff will bring a contract to the board at a future meeting so they can approve the development process.

No motions. The board will approve a contract at a future board meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Finance Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners is Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

President Aberman attended the Little Women's performance with her granddaughter at Devonshire Center and said it was phenomenal, and they did a fabulous job. Her granddaughter really enjoyed it.

Commissioner Williams asked about the grant funds from Jan Schakowsky and Mr. Guynn said the district received the signed grant agreement this week. The playground equipment will be here in a few weeks and the reimbursement process will be quick. President Aberman saw Ms. Schakowsky last night and thanked her personally for the grant.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Tuft was happy to report that the district received a check in the amount of \$125,000 from Evanston for the Pooch Park renovation.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Williams moved to enter Executive Session to discuss executive session minutes for the purpose of the approval of the minutes, semi-annual review of the minutes and to authorize the destruction of executive session recordings pursuant to Section 2(c)(21) and the discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the park district pursuant to Section 2(c)(1). Vice President Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

The regular meeting reconvened at 7:30 p.m.


Commissioner Williams moved to approve the Executive Session Minutes of September 17, 2024, and January 21, 2025. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

Following review of Executive Session meeting minutes dating from January 2004, Commissioner Fischer moved to release the minutes from September 17, 2024, and January 21, 2025, and to have those remaining minutes not previously released remain closed because the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of the minutes. Vice President Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.


Commissioner Williams moved to approve Resolution #25-002 authorizing the destruction of verbatim recordings for the closed session meeting of April 20, 2023. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Jaffe moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. On a roll call vote all Commissioner voted aye. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.



Susan Aberman
President



Michelle J. Tuft
Secretary

April 22, 2025