

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT  
OCTOBER 17, 2023  
7:00 P.M.**

**ATTENDANCE AT MEETING**

Board Members Present: President Mike Reid  
Vice President Minal Desai  
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

**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. Motion carried. The Consent Agenda consisted of the minutes of the regular meeting of September 19, 2023; bills payable for the month September/October 2023, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports.

**STAFF RECOGNITION**

Assistant Superintendent Amato said Ms. Caronica Swift has worked at the Park District for over 31 years. She is the Director of the Extended Pre-School program at Elizabeth Meyer School. Ms. Amato wanted to acknowledge Caronica for her remarkable skills and dedication, stating we take pride in having such an outstanding teacher on our team. Ms. Amato read submissions from staff and parents who had wonderful things to say about Caronica.

An email was received from a parent stating that Caronica has a unique ability to connect with young learners. A staff member wrote that when you are a parent you

meet people that you would trust with your own children and that is Caronica. She is fair and kind and so peaceful.

Commissioner Desai shared a video of her children thanking Ms. Swift for being their teacher at Meyer School and saying she was so deserving of this award. President Reid presented Ms. Swift with a certificate of achievement and took a picture.

Caronica spoke and said when Skokie Park District offered her the position it is one of the best paths she has taken; it has been so fulfilling and she is overwhelmed and touched with tremendous gratitude.

**FISCAL YEAR ENDED 04/30/2023 ANNUAL  
COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT (ACFR), MANAGEMENT LETTER AND  
CONTROL DEFICIENCY LETTER**

Treasurer Schmidt introduced Mr. John Epperson of Miller Cooper & Co. Ltd. to present the audit report, management letter, and control deficiency letter which the Board received under a separate cover from the board packet.

Mr. Epperson led the audit team and highlighted the three sections of the report which are the introductory section, financial section, and statistical section. Mr. Epperson said the park district has 94% funding for IMRF, which is excellent. Anything over 80% is very good and the district has been in excess of 94% for the past four years.

Mr. Epperson then discussed the management letter and control deficiency letter. He said there were no significant deficiencies. There are two recommendations, one relates to the inventory record system and the other relates to data security. Mr. Epperson said he knows the district has a good security system for keeping data safe.

Commissioner Aberman moved to approve the fiscal year end 04/30/2023 ACFR, management letter and control deficiency letter. Commissioner Oshana seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

**ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE #23-008 AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF  
APPROXIMATELY \$2,547,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION LIMITED TAX BONDS,  
SERIES 2023B, OF THE SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT**

Mr. Schmidt said five bids were received. The lowest bidder was First Secure Community Bank with a rate of 4.72%, which is a little higher than in previous years but is due to short-term interest rates having risen. It is a one-year issue and Speer Financial believes the rate is fair and reasonable.

Commissioner Jaffe asked what the increase in cost is relative to what was budgeted. Mr. Schmidt said it is just a little higher than what he budgeted.

Commissioner Oshana moved to approve Ordinance #23-008 to authorize the issuance of approximately \$2,547,000 of General Obligation Limited Tax Bonds Series 2023B. Vice President Desai seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, President Reid, Vice

President Desai, Commissioners Aberman, and Oshana voted aye. Commissioner Jaffe abstained from voting. Motion carried.

### **TAX LEVY DISCUSSION**

Mr. Schmidt said the tax resolution is usually presented in October, but he is still waiting on the EAV. He has a preliminary estimate, and the tax levy doesn't need to be filed until December. Mr. Schmidt suggested an increase of 4.99% and explained the process. There was discussion and it was decided to levy at 4.99%. The tax resolution will be presented in November and the tax levy approved in December.

No motion required. Informational only.

### **APPROVAL OF EXPLORITORIUM EQUIPMENT PURCHASE FOR TODDLER AREA**

Ms. Amato requested approval of the Exploritorium Equipment Purchase for the Toddler Area. She presented a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the equipment and changes to the toddler area. There will be multiple pieces of equipment that are more suitable for the age group of one to three years old. Ms. Labus said they surveyed parents, and the toddler area was identified as the area to be updated.

Commissioner Aberman asked about the lighted table, little cars, and magnetic tile and Ms. Amato said they will remain; the little cars are very popular.

Commissioner Jaffe said being 16% under budget is great. Ms. Labus said if they needed to look for other equipment, they would be able to do so. Ms. Amato said the timeline for the project is ten to twelve weeks.

Commissioner Oshana asked if there were any musical elements and Ms. Amato said not at this time as they received numerous complaints about the loudness of the facility. Commissioner Oshana really liked the clouds in the room.

Commissioner Jaffe moved to approve the purchase from Ravenswood Studio, Inc. for the toddler area equipment at the Exploritorium for a total of \$36,045.00. Vice President Desai seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

### **APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER #1 FOR THE OAKTON PARK PICKLEBALL COURTS**

Superintendent Guynn requested approval of Change Order #1 for the Oakton Park Pickleball Courts from Obsidian Asphalt. The cost of the change order is \$2,000 which will increase the cost to \$459,832. Mr. Guynn said the proof roll is soft and they will be bringing in some large stones to help with drainage.

Mr. Guynn also provided an update on the project. The concrete work is done. The pruning is being done tomorrow and the asphalt will be in by the end of the week. Color coating cannot be done unless the temperature is around 65 degrees. The courts will probably be opened in late spring or early summer of 2024.

Commissioner Jaffe asked where the project is budget wise. Mr. Guynn is comfortable with where the project is at as it is still under budget.

Vice President Desai moved to approve Change Order #1 from Obsidian Asphalt for \$2,000 for the Oakton Park Pickleball Courts. Commissioner Jaffe seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners vote aye. Motion carried.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners is Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Oshana commented that her cousin is having her daughter's birthday party at Devonshire Center in a baking class and that her cousin felt the Skokie Park District rates are reasonable. Vice President Desai said she has friends who had parties and they were impressed with the variety of options. Ms. Amato said the Marketing Department does a great job of advertising the birthday party rentals.

President Reid congratulated Fouzia Khan for the \$44,000 grant she received at Tot Learning Center.

Vice President Desai said Scream Scene was great. It was the first time the highschoolers went with the lights out and they loved it.

### **DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Ms. Tuft said she will be sending the letter, which includes a survey, to the Native tribes next week which will start the process of engagement regarding native park names. Ms. Tuft said fall is busy for the tribes and doesn't think the meetings will begin until January.

Ms. Tuft and Mr. Guynn discussed Skokie Sports Park East. They will select architects and when they get a contract it will be brought to the board. The process for development will include meetings with staff and board, as well as public meetings. Commissioner Jaffe asked about extending the MWRD lease agreement and Ms. Tuft said she is working on it; it is a slow process.

Ms. Tuft discussed the Efficiency Committee meetings. By law, the committee must meet at least three times to study the district's efficiencies. IAPD has provided a template for the report. The report will be presented to the committee for comments, additions, and corrections. Ms. Tuft reached out to the resident committee members and would like to hold the meeting at 6 p.m. prior to a board meeting. There was discussion and the first meeting was scheduled for January 16 at 6 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Commissioner Jaffe asked about the Backlot Bash Financial Recap. Ms. Tuft said it will be on the November board agenda.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Vice President Desai was contacted by a tennis group asking if a bubble could be put placed on a tennis court for winter because there is no indoor facility available for tennis. Mr. Guynn said this would be expensive.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Jaffe moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Commissioner Oshana seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

  
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Mike Reid  
President

  
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Michelle J. Tuft  
Secretary

November 21, 2023