



Call to Order:

President Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Commissioners Present: Cathy Cagle, Jason Heisler, Karen Johnson, Linda Matthias,
Sarah Michehl, Eric Anderson

Commissioner Absent: Mike Jacobson

Legal Counsel: Scott Puma, Ancel, Glink, Diamond, Bush, DiCianni and Krafthefer, P.C.

Staff: Jason Herbster, Executive Director, Erik Jakubowski, Superintendent of Park Services, Amy Olson Manager of Park Planning and Development, Tina Becke, Superintendent of Business Services, Kurt Reckamp, Superintendent of Recreation Programs and Facility Services, Anne Sandor, Recording Secretary, Park Police Chief John Longo, Park Police Officers John O'Hara, Colleen Galvicius, Nick Marino, Eric Tripoli, Tyler Rizzo, Jon Irizarry, Kellie Makowski, Park Police Administrative Secretary, Robin Oerkfitz, Guest Services Associate, Stephanie Scott, Recreation Aquatics Supervisor

Citizens: Bob Makowski, Diane Miller, Bob Miller

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Anderson requested that staff introductions be moved before Matters from the Public. Commissioner Cagle requested that item K. The Crystal Lake Parks Initiative Foundation Cardboard Regatta request be moved to New Business.

Commissioner Cagle moved to approve the agenda, as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Michehl. All were in favor.

Staff Introductions:

Tina Becke, Superintendent of Business Services introduced Robin Oerkfitz, Guest Services Associate and mentioned that she will introduce Rocio Arreola-Escutia, Human Resources Manager, at the next Park Board meeting.

Kurt Reckamp, Superintendent of Recreation Programs and Facility Services, introduced Stephanie Scott, Recreation Aquatics Supervisor. Stephanie was recently promoted from the Guest Services Associate position to Recreation Aquatics Supervisor position.

Matters from the Public:

Chief John Longo, Park District Police, referred to the Park Board's discussions regarding the Park Police Department. He shared his experiences of working with the City of Palatine as a Police Officer and with the Crystal Lake Park District Park Police Department. Chief Longo noted that his work was more reactive than proactive as a municipal police officer and that outside agencies will not be able to provide the same work for the Park District as the Park Police Officers, i.e., outside agencies will not provide foot patrol at the large parks such as Veteran Acres, Lippold

Park, Shamrock Hills, Main Beach. Park Police Officers have rescue training and will investigate situations and provide incident reports. Crystal Lake Park District Police Officers have worked and attended yearly trainings, and Police Law Enforcement Association conferences with Park Police from Rockford, Springfield and Naperville.

John O'Hara, Park Police Officer, stated that he worked as a police officer for twenty-three years for Crystal Park District and eight years as a municipal officer. O'Hara stated that he attended a Committee Meeting of the Whole and wanted to share some perspective and context on some of those discussions. Cost per call 287 = approximately \$700 / perspective is not high enough; he wants the calls to be zero. The City of Crystal Lake and the Village of Lake have had 30,000 calls per year, the Park District has 287 calls, which is prevention. Police resources in the parks causes this prevention. The Intergovernmental Agreement proposed by the City of Crystal Lake recognizes this and the District will need to pay for patrol. We do not know the Park District without Park Police. The Recreational experience will be different, the crime experience will be different. He suggested proposing a referendum question to the public asking them to decide if they would rather have an aquatic center than public safety and crime prevention. He requested that the Park Police Officers be part of discussions to answer any questions that may arise.

Diane Miller, Resident, noted that the playground in Knaack Park needs upgrades and requested the Park District add this park to the list of upcoming projects. She requested that the 10-year plan be available to the public and suggested priority projects should not include new projects. She added that the money saved from eliminating the Park Police could be used for needed upgrades to the neighborhood parks. Mrs. Miller submitted a copy of her comments; these comments will be included in the correspondence section of the February 15, 2024 Regular Board Meeting packet.

Bob Miller, Resident, referred to the Park Police Discussion Item on the agenda and asked the Board when are going to stop having the discussions about unnecessary and wasteful Park Police. He addressed the article in the newspaper written by a staff member and asked why is it that only Park District employees and Park Board members think it is okay to keep throwing away tax dollars to an outdated and inefficient segment of the Park District's budget and stated that there is no need for a redundant park police force, the City of Crystal Lake Police can enforce all ordinances and keep the peace in all of the parks. He noted there would be savings from eliminating the Park Police Department and asked the Board to shift the tax dollars to where it will do good for all of the citizens of Crystal Lake and Lakewood. Mr. Miller submitted a copy of his comments; these comments will be included in the correspondence section of the February 15, 2024 Regular Board Meeting packet.

Unfinished Business: None

Consent Agenda:

Commissioner Matthias moved to approve the following consent agenda item, as amended.

- A. Approval: The Voucher Expenses for the month ending, December 31, 2023, in the amount of \$2,515,556.53.
- B. Approval: The Interim Voucher Expenses for the month ending December 31, 2022, in the amount of \$542,533.79.
- C. Accept: The Treasurer's Report for the month ending, November 30, 2022, in the Amount of \$16,016,695.13.
- D. Approval: Committee Meeting of the Whole 12.07.23

- E. Approval: Regular Meeting Minutes 12.21.23
- F. Approval: Committee Meeting of the Whole Minutes 01.04.24
- G. Approval: Ordinance 23.24.10 Tax Abatement General Obligation Bonds (Alt Rev Source) Series 2020A
- H. Approval: Ordinance 23.24.11 Tax Abatement General Obligation Bonds (Alt Rev Source) Series 2022B
- I. Approval: Resolution 23.24.08 Transfer of Funds
- J. Approval: Stages of Transformation Fundraiser Request
- ~~K. Approval: The Crystal Lake Parks Initiative Foundation Cardboard Regatta~~
Seconded by Commissioner Cagle. All were in favor.

Items Removed from Consent Agenda:

- K. The Crystal Lake Parks Initiative Foundation Cardboard Regatta

New Business Action Items

Item K. The Crystal Lake Parks Initiative Foundation Cardboard Regatta

Commissioner Cagle questioned the \$5 per person admission fee and to clarify there will be Park District Concessions and the Foundation will be having a Food Vendor and beverage sales. Executive Director Herbster noted that the regular beach admission fees will resume when the Regatta concludes and there will be a food and beverage vendor and the Park District concessions will be opened. Commissioner Johnson noted that the concessions were closed during the last Regatta, and this year, the Park Initiative Foundation wants the Park District's to open the concession stand to make a profit.

Commissioner Anderson moved to approve Item K. The Crystal Lake Parks Initiative Foundation, as presented. Commissioner Cagle moved to amend the motion with the clarification that the regular beach admission fees will be charged after the Regatta event. Commissioner Anderson moved to amend the motion to have the admission fee be excluded after the Regatta event. Commissioner Cagle moved to amend the motion to have discussion regarding the admission fees. Commissioner Michehl agreed with Commissioner Cagle to resume the regular beach admissions after the Regatta event. No other comments were made. Commissioner Cagle moved to return to the regular beach admission fees after the Regatta event.

Seconded by Commissioner Michehl.

Roll Call: Ayes: (5) Cathy Cagle, Jason Heisler, Karen Johnson, Linda Matthias, Sarah Michehl
Nays: (1) Anderson

Discussion Items

A. Goals Update – Quarter Three

Executive Director Herbster reported that some progress has been made in quarter three, but not as much as he wanted. Cagle asked Herbster what is to be expected in quarter four in regard to financial sustainability/cost recovery modeling. Executive Director Herbster said that once the current topics are resolved, he expects to have all of the goals, which are all priorities be completed in quarter four. Herbster noted that these financial goals are a continued work in progress and that the focus is to determine the key areas and then get started.

Teen Programs: Commissioner Matthias asked for an update on the focus groups with District 155. Superintendent Reckamp reported that staff reached out to the school district in regard to focus groups. The school district staff were not interested in sharing student information to form Park District groups and suggested that the Park District reach out to its own student employees.

They also encouraged the Park District to participate in their job/career fairs. Executive Director Herbster stated that the School District may not have understood what the District is looking for and will try another approach with the school district. Commissioner Cagle noted that Reckamp's reports to the Board have noted there are more teen programming listed.

Park Naming Policy: Commissioner Cagle asked if the Park Naming Policy would be included in quarter four. Commissioner Anderson asked about naming Haligus Park and thought it would be appropriate to consider naming the park after the Ms. Odom, former, Village of Lakewood Trustee. Executive Director Herbster stated that there have been questions with naming a park after a person; some people like the person and some do not like the person, and people may not know the person. Herbster will present a draft Park Naming Policy to the Board at the next Committee Meeting of the Whole in February. Commissioner Anderson noted that the decision can be made without a policy and requested a discussion in regard to the naming the Haligus Park at the next meeting.

B. Park Police Discussion

Commissioner Anderson thanked Park Police Chief Longo and Officer O'Hara for their comments regarding the Park Police Department. Anderson noted that he agreed with their comments. He said that the issue is cost benefit analysis and using the funds for something else, the issue is to not maximize our taxes. Commissioner Cagle noted that the value of the police is in the prevention and is the main benefit. She is in favor of security and safety within the parks, and the security or police officers need to be visible. Commissioner Michehl stated that she sees the Park Police often when she runs in Veteran Acres Park and appreciates the contributions that they make and said she thought the Board is talking in circles on this issue. Commissioner Anderson stated that he will press for decision soon, and with a full Board decision. Commissioner Matthias did not agree with Commissioner Michehl's comment in regard to the Board talking in circles and did agreed that there has been a lot of time spent on this issues. She stated would like to see more information and hear from both sides before deciding.

Commissioner Johnson asked Officer O'Hara for an example of the difference of working for a municipal police department and the Park Police. O'Hara explained that the Park Police is very sensitive to the recreational experience. For example, if someone had a gun at Main Beach, the Park Police would come in quietly and try to isolate the situation, and the municipal police would be aggressive, coming in with patrol rifles and yelling everyone get down. To involve municipal police, there will be no control on how situations are handled because they do not work for the Park District. This will be a different experience. Chief Longo stated that he retired from the municipal police department after 26 years. The municipal police are very involved with arrests, DUI's and other situations that would keep them from patrolling the parks. He noted that there are car burglaries at The Racket Club, and Park Police detail was set up every shift. Chief O'Hara did stop some men from burglarizing cars. In the summer time there are more people at Lippold Park and Main Beach, which require more policing.

Commissioner Johnson asked for staff comments.

Superintendent Jakubowski noted that if the Park Police Department was disbanded, it would change the culture of the District, as the Recreation and Parks Teams rely on their assistance. He spoke of the security the Park Police provide and their proactivity. The Park Police are called when staff are working in the parks and they see suspicious activity and when participants and instructors request their presence when leaving a facility in the evening. Superintendent Reckamp noted that our Theatre program runs in the evening.

The instructors are high school students and their parents had requested security in the parking lot, or they would not allow their child to work at the District. Erik added that the restrooms in the parks are checked nightly to be sure they are locked and there is no one in the building.

Superintendent Reckamp noted that the Park Police assist staff on a daily basis. Situations do arise in our programs that require their assistance. There was a situation at Barlina House Preschool where a single parent was worried that the non-custodial parent was going to try to pick up the child. There was a restraining order against the non-custodial parent. A Park Police Officer was present at the preschool during drop off and pick up hours, this assistance provided staff and the parent much relief. Reckamp expressed concerns regarding safety at the beach, for the staff and the summer crowds. He worries about going from two officers to beach staff or hiring someone to patrol walking the paths. Having the Park Police is very helpful to staff and they have the experience with crowds. Superintendent Jakubowski added that the Park Police watch out for our safety of our staff and that is priceless.

Superintendent Becke noted that Park Police are responsible for picking up and delivering bank bags and taking deposits to the bank. Having a staff person assume this responsibility could be risky; having a police officer to do this is beneficial to the District. Commissioner Anderson asked Becke about the bottom line for the Police Department. She stated she did feel there would not be any savings. She explained that the Budget is a guideline so what the budget figures are showing things that what staff anticipates and the funds may not always be used. For example, if the work schedule is planned for two officers on a shift and one officer could not work, the expense for those wages will not show up as an expense. The Chief, a salaried employee, will cover that shift which will save on the part-time expense. Becke added that costs for body cameras were included in budget, a State requirement for police officers. Commissioner Anderson stated that he wants to throw out the budget and focus on the actuals.

Commissioner Michehl stated that the District and community have this benefit of the experience in our parks and she appreciates this.

Commissioner Cagle requested discussion on how other Park District accomplished security. Executive Director Herbster stated that he worked for four other Park Districts without Park Police and when he began working the Crystal Lake Park District he had many of the same questions the Board had. It did not take him long to be very grateful that we had the Park Police because our District is different than other Park Districts. While working at the Palatine Park District he said when there were issues at a softball game, staff would call the Village Police and hope they would arrive in time. The police did not patrol the parks and there were shady areas of that District which made staff uncomfortable having to deal with situations. After seeing the large parks and the amount of activities, he saw the value to having the Park Police as a presence.

In regard to duplication of services, the work of a City police officer is different from a Park Police officer. Executive Director Herbster reported that in his first six months of working at the Crystal Lake Park District there were several suicides in the parks. He recalled one situation when a City Officer was called to the scene and could not find the location. A Park Police Officer was called to the area and knew the exact location.

In regard to costs, he agreed with Commissioner Anderson to look closer to the actuals, determining costs to be sure everything is covered. The research on private security firms is showing that it may not be less expensive depending on the model chosen. In researching security firms hired by Park District, Herbster found that the St. Charles Park District has hired a

security firm for one officer to patrol only in the evenings from 3pm – 11pm. The costs are between \$120,000 and \$150,000 per year. Glenview Park District had hired a retired Chicago Police Officer to check on picnic permits. Due to his stature and experience, he did not receive any resistance. The Crystal Lake Park District had younger, not as experienced staff checking on picnic permits and many patrons showed them no respect.

Herbster added that currently, there are 15 Districts in the State of Illinois with Park Police. When he talked to some people from other Districts that did not have Park Police, they said that they wished that did have Park Police to help deal with some of their situations. Herbster added that it makes him nervous to think of not having the Park Police and asked if we are doing right by our residents to make sure our parks are safe. He encouraged the Board members to schedule a ride-a-long with Chief Longo to see what their day-to-day duties entail, before deciding to disband the Park Police Department.

Reports to the Board:

Executive Director Herbster

- The majority of staff will be attending the IPRA/IAPD State Conference January 25 – January 27, 2024.

Superintendent of Business Services, Tina Becke

- The Representation Letter was submitted. Audit will be received next week and distributed for the Board to review. The Audit will be presented to the Board for acceptance at the Regular Park Board Meeting in February.

Manager of Park Planning and Development, Amy Olson

- Distributed the latest Haligus Road Park design layout. The design is almost 100%. Will attend a meeting with Lamp Construction next week.
- Noted that she appreciates the Park Police. Cameras were placed at project sites and the Park Police have stopped problems proactively. She added that she will not go to the forest preserves at Cook County alone and feels comfortable in our parks.

Matters from the Board:

Commissioner Cathy Cagle

Commended Superintendent Reckamp and staff on the programming. She asked if the District would share coupons with District 47 counselors to share with families in need.

Purple Moose Child Enrichment Center is looking for a new location.

Commissioner Sarah Michehl

- Liked the idea of having teen performances before the Tuesday night concerts.
- Commended the Park Service's staff for snow removal and clearing the sidewalks and parking lots so early.

Executive Session: None.

Adjourn: Commissioner Anderson adjourned the meeting at 7:30pm.

Approve: _____ Attest: _____
President Secretary