



Administration Office

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September 12, 2024

Memorandum for the Decennial Committee

Subj: Board Meeting

The next Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 19, 2024 at 7:00 pm. If you cannot attend please contact me immediately to ensure we have a quorum.

Reminder: You received the most recent DRAFT Decennial Committee Efficiency Report a week ago. Please come with thoughts on additional needed research. The Final Report is Due no later than November 4, 2024.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bret Fahnstrom".

Bret Fahnstrom, CPRE

Executive Director

Enclosures

**RIVER TRAILS PARK DISTRICT
DECENNIAL COMMITTEE**
At 401 E. Camp McDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070

**September 19, 2024
7:00 PM**

- I. Committee Chair Lussem to Call Committee to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Agenda
- IV. Approval Decennial Committee Meeting minutes of September 5, 2024
- V. Review of the DRAFT Efficiency Report changes and any desired additions
- VI. Committee Comments
- VII. Submittal Recommendation
- VIII. Post-Meeting Community Input (Visitors Comments - limit 3 min ea.)
- IX. Adjourn Meeting

**MINUTES OF THE DECENNIAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
RIVER TRAILS PARK DISTRICT,
COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, HELD
AT 401 E. CAMP MCDONALD ROAD IN SAID DISTRICT
ON THE FIFTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7:00 P.M.**

- I. Committee Chairperson Leah Lussem called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and directed Crista Altergott, Administrative Assistant/Risk Management to call the roll.
- II. Upon the roll being called, the following Decennial Committee Members answered present: Commissioners Leah Lussem, Melissa Ackerman and Nancy Parra. Commissioner Robert Hoban III arrived at 7:04p.m. and Commissioner Jennifer Rezek arrived at 7:05p.m. Also present were Community Committee members Eric Raz and Lauren LoPresti as well as Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom, Superintendent of Finance and HR Dave Oswald, Superintendent of Communications and Marketing Christine Powels and Superintendent of Parks Mike Hanley. No other community visitors were present.
- III. The Agenda for September 5, 2024, was submitted for approval. Commissioner Parra moved to approve said agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ackerman and approved by common consent.
- IV. The Minutes for April 18, 2024, was submitted for approval. Community Committee Member LoPresti moved to approve said minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Community Committee Member Raz and approved by common consent.
- V. Brief Review of the Committee Requirements - Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom
 - a. Establish a Committee on Local Government to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, et seq (the "Committee"): This requirement has been met passing Resolution NO 23-05-04 and Establishing the Decennial Committee effective May 4, 2023.
 - b. Meet a minimum of three (3) times: The committee may choose to meet as often as desired but the three-meeting minimum must be in person with a majority of the Committee. The committee has met the requirement by meeting on May 18, 2023, April 18, 2024 and September 5, 2024.
 - c. Prepare a written report to submit to the county within 18 months: The River Trails Park District Decennial Committee was officially formed on May 4, 2023 and therefore a written report must be submitted on or before November 4, 2024.
- VI. Review of the Progress to Date - Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom
 - o Director Fahnstrom led the group through the latest draft of the Decennial Efficiency Report for the River Trails Park District. He complimented IAPD for providing a good template which helped the documentation creation.
 - o Commissioner Lussem called the report comprehensive.
 - o Commissioner Parra thinks the report is easy to read and void of typos and spelling errors. She inquired if the report will be available on the District's website. Director Fahnstrom replied that it would be a Committee decision.
 - o Community Committee Member LoPresti believes that the report reflects the Committee's discussions.
 - o Community Committee Member Raz called the report incredible and applauds the staff for going above and beyond in the amount of work that was put into the creation of this report.

VII. Post-Meeting Community Input None

VIII. Next Meeting

- a. Commissioner Hoban requested additional time to review the contents of the report. After group discussion, it was determined to extend the final approval until the next meeting. Committee members were advised to review the report and send questions to Bret by Monday, September 9th.
- b. The next meeting will be held on September 19th with the intent to review the final draft of the report, vote on the document and submit it to the county.

IX. Adjournment. There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Lussem adjourned the meeting at 7:20p.m.

Chair

Secretary

EFFICIENCY REPORT FOR THE RIVER TRAILS PARK DISTRICT



**APPROVED BY THE PARK DISTRICT'S
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY
ON**

I. Purpose

The River Trails Park District (“Park District”) formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on **May 4, 2023**, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, *et seq.* (the “Committee”).

II. Committee Membership

<u>Leah Lussem</u>	[CHAIRPERSON/COMMISSIONER]
<u>Jennifer Rezek</u>	[BOARD PRESIDENT/COMMISSIONER]
<u>Nancy Parra</u>	[COMMISSIONER]
<u>Robert Hoban III</u>	[COMMISSIONER]
<u>Melissa Ackerman</u>	[COMMISSIONER]
<u>Eric Raz</u>	[RESIDENT MEMBER]
<u>Lauren LoPresti</u>	[RESIDENT MEMBER]
<u>Bret Fahnstrom, CPRE</u>	[EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR]
<u>David Oswald</u>	[SUPERINTENDENT OF FINANCE / HR]
<u>Patti Mitchell, CPRP</u>	[SUPERINTENDENT OF RECREATION]
<u>Mike Hanley</u>	[SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS AND FACILITIES]

III. Committee Meetings

Meeting Date	Meeting Time and Place
<u>May 18, 2023</u>	<u>7 pm; 401 E. Camp McDonald, Prospect Heights</u>
<u>April 18, 2024</u>	<u>7 pm; 401 E. Camp McDonald, Prospect Heights</u>
<u>September 5, 2024</u>	<u>7 pm; 401 E. Camp McDonald, Prospect Heights</u>
<u>September 19, 2024</u>	<u>7 pm; 401 E. Camp McDonald, Prospect Heights</u>

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Park District’s website or upon request at the Park District’s administrative office.

IV. General Overview of Governing Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction

The Park District was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of the Park District in **1965**. All Illinois park districts, including the Park District, are governed by the Park District Code, 70 ILCS 1205/1 *et seq.*

Having a separate and distinct taxing body for parks, recreation, and conservation within the local community, which operates apart from general purpose governments, is extremely beneficial to the community for many reasons, as detailed further in this report.

- **Elected, non-partisan, non-compensated board.** The Park District is governed by a board of 5 commissioners. Commissioners must reside within the boundaries of the park district and are elected at the Consolidated Election in odd-numbered years. Pursuant to state law, commissioners are non-partisan and serve without compensation.
- **Accessible and focused representation.** Having a dedicated board to oversee these essential facilities, programs, and services provides the community with increased access to their elected representatives and allows those elected representatives to remain focused solely on those facilities, programs, and services. This is contrasted with general purpose governments where elected representatives are responsible for broad oversight on a wide range of issues. This special purpose benefit is particularly advantageous when it comes to budget and finance oversight.
- **Increased transparency.** Having a dedicated unit of local government to provide park and recreation services also improves the relationship between the park district and its residents because of the transparency and openness related to the board and park district operations. Having detailed agenda and action items allows taxpayers to be better informed about the inner workings of their local government. When individual units of government are responsible for providing specified services like park districts, transparency is increased because action items and budget procedures are more detailed. Additionally, these items and budgetary decisions are subject to more scrutiny by locally elected officials than is the case with larger, multi-purpose governments with a multitude of departments.
- **Protection of revenues.** Because the Park District is a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for park district purposes. This assurance is contrasted with general purpose governments like cities, villages, and counties that provide a multitude of services such as fire, police, public works, economic development, etc., where revenues that are generated specifically for parks and recreation can be expended on these other services with limited, if any, input from voters.
- **Protection of assets.** Public parks and other real property owned by the park district is held in trust for the residents of the park district, and, subject to very limited exceptions, can only be sold or transferred if residents approve of the sale or transfer by a referendum. This is contrasted with general purpose units of government, which have authority to sell or dispose of property by a vote of the governing board.

- **Providing the Community More with Less.** The Park District does more with much fewer funding options. Unlike other units of local government that receive direct state funding, and income, sales, use, hotel/motel, motor fuel and other numerous taxes, the Park District's only tax revenues come from a modest portion of a resident's overall property tax bill. In fact, despite its limited funding options, the Park District share is approximately 6% of the local tax bill.

As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the management of day-to-day operations, the Park District has also adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures:

- *Board Policies and Procedures Manual*
- *Personnel Policy Manual*
- *Financial Policy Manual*
- *User Regulations and Policy Manual*
- *Safety and Risk Management Policies*
- *Strategic Plan*
- *Capital Replacement Plan*
- *Comprehensive Master Plan*
- *ADA Transition Plan*
- *Intergovernmental Agreements*

V. List of Shared Services and Partnerships

The Park District works diligently to provide the best possible programs, services, and facilities to our community at the least possible cost. One of the many ways the Park District achieves this goal is by partnering with neighboring park districts, school districts, other units of local government within or near the community, the State, non-profit organizations, and for-profit corporations. Below is a comprehensive list of the current partnerships, agreements, and other relationships that assist the Park District's mission of delivering the best possible services at the least possible cost to our community.

1. Membership in SRA if Any

The Park District is part of the **Northwest Special Recreation Association** ("SRA"). Special recreation associations are a form of intergovernmental cooperation among units of local government that are authorized under the Illinois Constitution, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, the Park District Code, and the Municipal Code. Their formation is rooted in a fundamental belief and recognition that "Recreation is for Everyone." They are shining examples of local government efficiency.

By partnering together, local communities are able to effectively and efficiently deliver more successful program opportunities to community members who have special needs. Furthermore, by participating in the SRA, the Park District networks with 16 other local governments to provide many more program opportunities for our community members who have special needs and offers a choice between participating in the SRA's programs or in programs that are provided by the Park District.

The Park District and the SRA also achieve efficiency by utilizing existing facilities that are owned and operated by the SRA's members, including the Park District. Utilizing these existing facilities allows the SRA to deliver services to its member communities at a lower cost. Currently the Park District provides the SRA access to the following facilities for their program offerings:

- *Burning Bush Community Center*
- *Weiss Community Center*
- *The Zone*
- *Woodland Trails Mini Golf*
- *Woodland Trails Pool*

The SRA also provides the support needed for participants with special needs who choose to register for the Park District programs or inclusive programming. The SRA collects information on the registered participant and determines what support is needed for that participant to be successful in this inclusive setting or the Park District program. This could include additional training of the supervisory staff, additional support staff, the use of adaptive equipment, behavior management, and/or other measures that will assist in the successful participation of this individual in the Park District program. Although success may not look the same for everyone, the SRA works with the Park District's staff to ensure the best possible results for all the participants in the program. The Park District's cost of providing these services would be much greater without its participation and partnership in the SRA.

In 2023, the SRA successfully served 26 residents in 9 program groups. The SRA also supported 3,561 participants in inclusive programs that were provided by the Park Districts.

The Park District is very proud of the ongoing collaboration with the SRA. By working cooperatively with other local governments, not only are we better able to collectively serve all citizens within our communities, including persons with disabilities, but we are able to do so in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

2. Other intergovernmental agreements with other park districts, forest preserve districts, conservation districts, or municipal recreation agencies

- *Mount Prospect Park District- joint programming for STEM classes, Computer, Magic and Karate, shared facility use*
- *Wheeling Park District – joint programming for Basketball and Karate*
- *Arlington Heights Park District – joint programming for Tennis, Computers and Magic*
- *Prospect Heights Park District- joint programming for Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball, STEM Classes, Computer and Magic, shared facility use*
- *Mount Prospect Park District and Prospect Heights Park District Partner Resident Agreement*

3. Intergovernmental agreements with other units of local government

- *School District 21 - joint programming, shared facility use*
- *School District 26 - joint programming, shared facility use, landscaping*
- *Village of Mount Prospect – storm water management at Burning Bush & Aspen*
- *City of Prospect Heights – storm water management at Willow*

4. Intergovernmental agreements with the State of Illinois

- *OSLAD – Burning Bush 2019, Aspen 2021, Willow 2022*
- *MWRD (Metro Water Reclamation District) – Woodland creek bed restoration, Burning Bush Trails Park redevelopment, Aspen Park redevelopment*
- *State Cooperative Purchase Programs (IL, WI, TX)*
- *LWCF streambank improvements 2017*

5. Partnerships or agreements with athletic or similar affiliate organizations that operate sports or other leagues

- *District 214 Girls Golf Team (Hersey High School & Wheeling High School)*
- *Kuba Soccer Clinics*
- *BVB International Soccer*
- *Co-op Programming with Mount Prospect Park District, Prospect Heights Park District & Wheeling Park District*

6. Partnerships or other interrelationships with non-profits

- *Lions Club – swim scholarship*
- *Illinois Monarch Project*
- *Project Wingspan*
- *Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission*
- *NWSRA Staff included in partial employee benefits*
- *Rotary Club of River Cities*

7. Partnerships with for profit organizations

- *Mount Prospect Figure Skating Academy – joint programming for Ice Skating Lessons*
- *Pure Elite Fitness*
- *SuperHero Parkour Academy*
- *Open Kitchens (Grill and Banquet @ Rob Roy Golf Course)*
- *Midwest Paper Retriever*
- *ComEd Energy Efficiency Program*
- *Kuba Soccer*
- *BVB International Soccer*

8. Informal cooperation with other units of local government which save taxpayer dollars by eliminating redundancy

- *Village of Mount Prospect –shared equipment, shared space (VOMP uses Sled Hill parking lot to store machinery), permit and services*
- *City of Prospect Heights – shared equipment; permit and services*
- *SD26 – swap free gym and program space for landscaping responsibilities*
- *SD21 – free gym and program space*

VI. Other Examples of Efficient Operations

Use of volunteers. One way in which the Park District reduces the burden on taxpayers is through the use of volunteers. Last year, 140 individuals volunteered 1,510 hours of service to the Park District.

Youth employment. The Park District is a major employer of youth in the community. Last year, the Park District employed 106 youth. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment serves as a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

Joint purchasing The Park District participates in joint purchasing cooperatives pursuant to the Governmental Joint Purchasing Act (30 ILCS 525/0.01 *et seq.*) thereby saving taxpayer dollars through economies of scale. These include:

- *Suburban Purchasing Cooperative (Vehicle purchasing)*
- *Omnia (equipment construction bidding, material purchasing, playground)*
- *State Cooperative Purchase Programs (IL, WI, TX)*
- *Willow Trails Playground co-op with Landscape Structures*

River Trails Parks & Recreation Foundation. In 2023, the Foundation raised \$13,600 in private donations, which help alleviate the burden on taxpayers. The Foundation also supported the Park District through:

- *\$2,800 Scholarships*
- *\$900 Tree Replacement*
- *Learn to Swim / Life Safety Scholarships*

Collaboration with other park districts on best practices. Because park districts are not truly in competition with one another, they are more willing than the private sector to share best practices. These best practices help to avoid unnecessary costs and deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

- *Legislation*
- *Policies Manuals*
- *Capital Project Information*
- *Personnel Information*
- *Share Equipment as Needed*
- *Shared Work Apps*
- *Crisis Management (e.g. pool exit strategy)*
- *Risk Management Resources*
- *Environmental Policies*
- *Noise Studies*
- *Decennial Efficiency Report*
- *First Amendment Audits*
- *Recycling Procedures*

Reliance on Non-Tax Revenue. Unlike most local governments that rely on a wide range of sales, use, and income taxes, the Park District is not permitted to assess these types of taxes. Additionally, although the Park District is an economic engine for the community and generates much revenue for the state and our community in the form of hotel/motel, sales, and motor fuel taxes, our Park District does not receive any of these revenues. Also, unlike Illinois cities, villages, counties, and school districts that received billions of dollars in direct financial assistance from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), our Park District did not receive any such direct federal aid. Our Park District also does not receive state funding under the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) or General State Aid (GSA) that these same cities, villages, counties, and school districts receive through the State budget.

Instead, the Park District provides all the programs, facilities, and services to the community with a very modest amount of property taxes and from **non-tax sources** such as memberships, program registrations, and other user fees as well as private donations and grants.

Environmental Efficiencies. Staff do not believe that the purpose of this report is to address environmental efficiencies. However, here are the items staff would include as a part of this category:

- *Detention Pond/Flooding Mitigation*
- *LED Systems*
- *No Mow May*
- *Rain Barrel Collection*
- *Purchase of EV Tool Truck*
- *Future Development of Environmental Policies*
- *Future Development of Shared Recycling Procedures*
- *Deciduous Tree Plantings at Parking Lots to Reduce Heat Island Effect*
- *Biosolid Fertilizers*
- *No Broad Herbicide Treatments*
- *85% of all Landscape Designs Ensure Plants are Native to Region for Habitat and Pollinator Benefit and Reduced Watering Benefit*

VII. Transparency to the Community

The following information about the Park District may be obtained by citizens in the location listed.

Document	Location(s) Available	
	Website	Admin
• ADA Transition Plan	N/A	X
• Annual Budget & Appropriation Ordinance	X	X
• Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (AFR)	X	X
• Annual Tax Levy	N/A	X
• Bids & RFP's	X	X
• Board Calendar, Agenda, and Minutes	X	X
• Capital Replacement Plan	X	X
• Comprehensive Master Plan	X	X
• Employee Compensation	X	X
• FOIA Information	X	X
• Ordinances & Resolutions	N/A	X
• Prevailing Wage Schedule	X	N/A
• Statement of Revenues & Expenses	N/A	X
• Strategic Plan	X	X
• User Policies & Regulation Manual	X	X

The Park District offers residents many opportunities to provide feedback. These include:

- The board of commissioners is scheduled to meet two times each month. Residents may provide public comment at every meeting. The Board meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month.
- The Park District's annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance is available in tentative form at least 30 days prior to its adoption at an open meeting of the Park District board. Additionally, at least one public hearing is held prior to final action, and notice of the hearing is published in the newspaper at least one week prior to the hearing.
- The Park District's annual property tax levy is approved at an open meeting of the Park District board in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The Park District follows all public notice and hearing requirements under the Truth in Taxation Law prior to the adoption of this annual tax levy.
- Parks Planning has met with the community for the following input meetings:
 - *Willow Trails Park*
 - *Woodland Trails Park*
 - *Aspen Trails Park*
 - *Burning Bush Trails Park*
 - *Tamarack Trails Park*
- Public Hearing with the community ability to comment
 - *Bond Rollovers January 2023*
 - *Program, Rental Surveys*
 - *Comprehensive Master Plan 2017*
 - *Needs Assessment 2014*
- Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at 847.788.0551 or email at Info@rtpd.org.

List of committees, boards, etc. that have community representation.

- *River Trails Parks & Recreation Foundation*
- *Decennial Committee*

List any community meetings and resident surveys in the past 5 years; include program surveys and any other surveys that sought community input no matter how complex or simple.

- *Tamarack Park Renewal 2022*
- *Woodland Trails Park Renewal 2023*
- *Burning Bush Park Renewal 2018*
- *Aspen Trails Park Renewal 2019*
- *Strategic Plan 2017*
- *Annual Program Surveys*

Identify any public hearings or similar meetings where community input was obtained in the past 5 years.

- *OSLAD 2021, 2020, 2018*
- *Annual Levy Ordinance*
- *Annual Budget Ordinance*
- *Bonding 2020 for 2021 Bond*
- *Bonding 2017 for 2018 Bond*
- *Annual Bond Rollover January 2023*

VII. District Awards and Recognition

The District's achievements have been recognized in numerous ways.

- IAPD
 - *Member in Good Standing 1970-2023*

- IPRA
 - *Agency Showcase 1st Place Winner - Website 2017*
 - *Agency Showcase 2nd Place Winner - Brochure Series 2018*
 - *Agency Showcase 3rd Place Winner - Brochure Series 2023*
 - *Outstanding Program & Special Event Award; Division 2 Program – Parkour 2017*
 - *Outstanding Program & Special Event Award; Overall – OCR 2017*
 - *Outstanding Program & Special Event Award; Division 2 Special Event - OCR 2017*
 - *Outstanding Program & Special Event Award; Special Event - OCR 2020*

- IPRA/IAPD
 - *Agency Showcase – 1st Place, Website 2016*
 - *Agency Showcase – 2nd Place, Brochure Design 2017*
 - *Distinguished Park & Rec Accredited Agency 2000-2005, 2006-2011 & 2013-2018, 2018-2023*

- Jeff Ellis & Associates – Aquatic Safety Award
 - 2008 - Bronze 2016 - Gold*
 - 2009 - Silver 2017 - Platinum*
 - 2010 - Gold 2018 - Platinum*
 - 2011 - Silver 2019 - Platinum*
 - 2012 - Gold 2021 - Silver*
 - 2013 - Gold 2022 - Gold*
 - 2015 - Gold 2023 – Gold*

- PDRMA
 - *Accreditation Award 2016 – 2020*

- APWA Suburban Branch
 - *Public Works Project of the Year 2023, Burning Bush Trails Park*

- Government Finance Officers Association
 - *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting 2019*
 - *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting 2020*
 - *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting 2021*
 - *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting 2022*

- 2023 Board Members
 - *Jennifer Rezek, IAPD Member*
 - *Leah Lussem, IAPD Member, Notable Member 2022, IAPD Boot Camp 2023*
 - *Nancy Parra, IAPD Member, Notable Member 2022, IAPD Boot Camp 2019*
 - *Robert Hoban III, IAPD Member, Notable Member 2023*
 - *Melissa Ackerman, IAPD Member, IAPD Boot Camp 2023*

- 2023 Full Time and Part Time IMRF Staff – Administration Department
 - *Bret Fahnstrom, CPRE*
 - 2023 IPRA Distinguished Member of A&F Section
 - 2021 NWSRA Board Chair
 - 2021 IPRA Chairman Award
 - 2016 IPRA PDSRegent Chair
 - 2016-2017 Rotary President
 - *David Oswald*
 - Chief School Business Official (CSBO) Certification
 - M.A. School Administration
 - Illinois Professional Educator License (PEL)
 - BS Biology Education
 - *Carole Dohse*
 - IMRF Authorized Agent Certification Program 2023
 - Certified Public Accounting CPA
 - BS Accounting
 - *Donna Tortorella*
 - BS Studio Art, Minor in Business
 - *Michael Posch*
 - AA Associate of Arts Degree
 - Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP)
 - Microsoft Certified Desktop Support Technician (MCDST)
 - Cisco Certified Entry Network Technician (CCENT)
 - Virtualization Certified Professional (VCP)
 - Cloud Certified Professional (CCP)
 - Microsoft 365- Administration and Configuration 2023
 - *Christine Powles*
 - IPRA Leadership Academy: Level 1 Graduate April 2014 & Level 2 Graduate April 2017
 - IPRA PDS Graduate 2015
 - IPRA Communication & Marketing Section Secretary 2017 & 2018
 - *Crista Altergott*
 - Risk Management Institute 2023
 - BS Communications

- Full Time and Part Time IMRF Staff – Recreation Department
 - *Patti Mitchell, CPRP*
 - *2023 Beck Seminars - Delivering Exceptional Customer Service*
 - *2023 Skills IPRA Development Webinar Series*
 - *2021 Beck Seminars Participant – Delivering Exceptional Customer Service*
 - *2016 Marcy Adams Spirit Award*
 - *PDMRA Risk Management Institute*
 - *PDRMA HELP Certificate*
 - *PDS Graduate 1993*
 - *BA Leisure Studies*
 - *Vance Violante, CPRP*
 - *Food Sanitation Manager*
 - *BS Sports Management*
 - *Katie Halverson, CPRP, AFO*
 - *PDS Graduate 2019*
 - *PDRMA HELP Certificate*
 - *PDMRA Risk Management Institute*
 - *PDRMA Aquatic Institute*
 - *2023 Skills IPRA Development Webinar Series*
 - *BS Parks and Recreation Administration*
 - *MS Parks and Recreation Administration*
 - *Josh Mulholland*
 - *IPRA ProConnect*
 - *BA Business Administration*
 - *Justin Slade*
 - *PDS Graduate 2022*
 - *BA Recreation Administration*
 - *Andy Sirakides*
 - *Harper College*
 - *Louis Eckenbrecht*
 - *ANSI Accredited Food Handler*
 - *Illinois BASSET Certification*
 - *PDS Graduation Date 2025*
 - *BS Psychology*
 - *Eileen Meyers*
 - *2023 Beck Seminars - Delivering Exceptional Customer Service*
 - *2022 IPRA Supervisor Symposium*
 - *2021 Beck Seminars Participant – Delivering Exceptional Customer Service*
 - *2015 Fred Pryor Seminar – Master the Art of Working with People*
 - *1985 DePaul Graduate: Teaching*

- Full Time and Part Time IMRF Staff – Parks Department
 - *Mike Hanley*
 - ISA Arborist
 - IL Dept of Agriculture Applicator License
 - Risk Management Institute
 - *Jeremy Hakala*
 - ISA Arborist
 - IL Dept of Agriculture Applicator License
 - PDRMA Mow Operator
 - *Tom Kearns, Certified Pool Operator*
 - *Erik Hosp, Certified Pool Operator*
 - *Ryan Geisler, Certified Pool Operator*
 - *Sean Waite*
 - IL Dept of Agriculture Applicator License
 - PDRMA Mow Operator

VIII. Benefits and Services

The Park District serves the entire community from the youngest child to the oldest adult and all ages in between. It does so in a variety of ways.

1. Facilities

The Park District offered the following facilities to the community last year:

<p><i>Woodland Trails Pool</i></p> <p><i>Woodland Trails Mini Golf</i></p> <p><i>Woodland Trails Driving Range</i></p> <p><i>Woodland Trails Park</i></p> <p><i>Woodland Trails Skate Park</i></p> <p><i>Woodland Trails Sled Hill</i></p> <p><i>Sycamore Trails Park</i></p> <p><i>Maple Trails Park</i></p> <p><i>Evergreen Trails Park</i></p>	<p><i>Marvin S. Weiss Community Center</i></p> <p><i>Burning Bush Community Center</i></p> <p><i>Burning Bush Trails Park</i></p> <p><i>Rob Roy Golf Course</i></p> <p><i>10th Hole Bar and Grill</i></p> <p><i>Tamarack Trails Park</i></p> <p><i>The Zone</i></p> <p><i>Willow Trails Park</i></p> <p><i>Aspen Trails Park</i></p>
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The Park District offered the following park amenities to the community last year:

<p><i>Baseball Fields - 6</i></p> <p><i>Basketball Courts – 8</i></p> <p><i>Futsal Courts – 4</i></p> <p><i>Roller Hockey Courts – 2</i></p> <p><i>Soccer Fields – 10</i></p> <p><i>Tennis Courts – 8.5</i></p> <p><i>Volleyball Courts – 5</i></p> <p><i>Woodland Trails Community Garden</i></p>	<p><i>Tot Playgrounds - 7</i></p> <p><i>Youth Playgrounds - 9</i></p> <p><i>Teen Playgrounds - 3</i></p> <p><i>Pickleball Courts - 2</i></p> <p><i>Fitness Pods - 3</i></p> <p><i>Nature/Quiet Areas - 2</i></p> <p><i>Shelters - 8</i></p> <p><i>Woodland Trails Sled Hill</i></p>
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2. Programs

The Park District offered the following programs last year. Registration numbers are provided.

Events at No Charge (Summer & Fall 2023)	
Last Splash Bash	450
Monsters Bash	665
Movie in the Park	30
Pool Party with the Police	450
TOTAL	1,595

Events Registration Numbers (Spring, Summer & Fall 2023, Winter 2024)	
Breakfast with Santa (2 seatings)	192
Easter Egg Hunt	160
Family Valentine's Dance	56
Parkour Championship	60
Polar Express	231
Pool - Christmas in July	76
Pool - Pirate Night	200
Stocking Deliveries	35
The Trails Challenge Youth Obstacle Course Race	314
Yoga Socials (3)	40
TOTAL	1,364

Trailblazers Preschool Registration Numbers (Spring, Summer & Fall 2023, Winter 2024)	
Trailblazers Preschool Registration Include Tiny Tyke, Junior, Senior and Junior/Senior Combo Trailblazers, Trailblazers Holiday Camp & Trailblazers Spring Camp	47

Kid Squad Registration Numbers (Spring, Summer & Fall 2023, Winter 2024)	
Kid Squad Registrations Include Single and Multi-Day Programs, Before School and After School.	7,244

Holiday Camps and Hit The Trails Registration Numbers (Spring 2023 & Winter 2024)	
Holiday Camp Registrations include Single and Multi-Day Programs, Before School and After School.	170
Hit The Trails: School's Out (includes all 18 HTT dates)	303
TOTAL	473

Summer Camp Registration Number (Summer 2023)	
Before & After Camp Care (includes single and multi-day options, 3 sessions)	246
Camp Adventure (Session 1, 2 & 3)	39
Camp Champ Sports (M-F and M/W/F, Session 1, 2 & 3)	130
Camp Fun (M-F and M/W/F, Session 1, 2 & 3)	454
Camp Kiddie (Tu/Th and M/W/F, Session 1, 2 & 3)	111
Camp Mini (M-F and M/W/F, Session 1, 2 & 3)	172
Camp Pathfinder (only Session 2)	12
Camp PeeWee (M-F and M/W/F, Session 1, 2 & 3)	199
Camp Thrive Girls (only Session 3)	21
Camp Parkour	94
Camp Prairie Trails Summer School	37
Tag Ons Camp Kiddie (Session 1, 2 & 3)	64
Tag Ons Camp Mini (Session 1, 2 & 3)	67
Tag Ons Misc (Session 1, 2 & 3)	65
Tag Ons Archery, Golf, Parkour & Sports (Session 1, 2 & 3)	134
Tag Ons Swimming (Session 1, 2 & 3)	207
Counselors in Training (Session 1, 2 & 3)	46
TOTAL	2,098

Adult Programs Registration Numbers (Spring, Summer, & Fall 2023, Winter 2024)	
Bags League (teams of 2)	66
Coed Softball League: 14" & 16" Coed League	17
Outdoor Men's Basketball League	15
Pickleball Drop In, Punch Card & Walk-up	658
Painting (All Seasons & All Sessions)	59
Community Garden	10
Trips	9
Continuous Fitness Membership (includes employees)	416
Fitness Club Memberships	200
Fit Club	171
Exercise Class (Pay as you go)	91
WeFit and WeFit Punch Cards	154
PureEliteFit	364
Yoga (Includes classes, drop in & punch cards)	262
Group Fitness Flex Passes: Aqua, Group Fitness Punch Cards	309
Pool Aqua Fit, Drop In, Lap Swim & Punch Cards	285
Silver Sneakers	55
Renew Active (UHC)	17
Miscellaneous	11
GRAND TOTAL	3,169

Youth Programs Registration Numbers (Spring, Summer, & Fall 2023, Winter 2024)	
BASEBALL	
Micro Baseball League - Player & Coach Registration	85
BASKETBALL	
Basketball Fundamentals Camp	34
NWPDBC - Jr High Basketball League Player Registration	3
CO-ED Kindergarten Winter Basketball League - Player Registration	16
Youth Winter Basketball League - Player & Coach Registration	189
DANCE	
Ballet/Tap (3 Levels)	40
Hip Hop/Poms (3 Levels)	65
Private Dance Lessons	1
PARKOUR	
Parkour Home School	92
Parkour Junior	431
Parkour Kinder-Kour	586
Parkour Open Gym	5,655
Parkour Pre-Kour	327
Parkour Toddler Time (with Parent)	46
Parkour Levels 1 -5	754
SOCCER	
Little Kickers Youth Soccer - Player & Coach Registration	182
Pee Wee Soccer: Pee Wee Soccer	6
Youth Indoor Soccer League - Player Registration	2
Youth Outdoor Soccer League - Player & Coach Registration	21

Youth Programs Registration Numbers (Spring, Summer, & Fall 2023, Winter 2024) (Continued)	
SWIM	
Gators Swim Team	95
Pool (Includes Daily Afternoon, Camp, Employee and Punchcards)	12,919
Pool- Season Pass: Pool Pass (Unlimited)	979
Swim Lessons (Includes Jr. Swim Lesson Instructor, Parent-Tot, Preschool, Private, Regular and Semi-Private)	381
VOLLEYBALL	
Youth Volleyball League - Player & Coach Registration and Volleyball Skills Clinic	189
GENERAL ATHLETICS	
Futsal Skills Clinic	3
Grip It & Rip It Archery	36
Ice Skating Lessons	46
Junior Tennis	19
MiniGolf	1,694
Open Gym - Weiss	3,509
QuickStart Tennis	26
Shotokan Karate	247
Sports and More	62
PROGRAMS	
General (Includes all One Day & Multi-Day Parent-Tot, Tot & Youth Programs)	624
TOTAL	29,364

3. Other Benefits

While the Park District is a special purpose district, its impact on the community is multi-faceted and far reaching. For example, the Park District's parks, recreational programming, and other opportunities improve the community's overall physical and mental health and wellness, thereby reducing health care costs. Before and after school and summer programs offer safe, convenient, and affordable childcare options for working families during critical times when school is not in session. These opportunities also help reduce juvenile crime. The Park District's open space and trees help improve air and water quality and mitigate flooding. Here is a short list of many of the well-known benefits of Parks and Recreation:

Health & Wellness Benefits include:

- Managing body fat percentages, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- Increasing muscular strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance.
- Providing a connection to nature which studies demonstrate relieves stress levels, tightens interpersonal relationships, and improves mental health.
- Improving self-image, self-esteem, and confidence.
- Developing gross and fine motor skills in children.
- Enhancing overall physical health and well-being.
- Improving psychological and emotional well-being.
- Helping manage existing chronic conditions.
- Improving the quality of sleep.
- Improving balance in seniors.
- Improving overall quality of life.
- Developing personal growth.
- Increasing self-reliance.
- Reducing anxiety and depression.
- Providing a sense of work/life balance.
- Promoting creative expression.

Social benefits include:

- Improving social skills.
- Encouraging friendships and social interactions.
- Reducing feelings of loneliness.
- Developing cooperation and teamwork skills.

Community benefits include:

- Reducing self-destructive behavior and negative activity in children.
- Building understanding between diverse cultures.
- Encouraging participation in community life.
- Promoting family and community bonding.

Environmental benefits include:

- Preserving plant and animal wildlife.
- Protecting air, water, and soil quality.
- Providing accessible places to enjoy nature

IX. Recommendations for Increased Accountability and Efficiency

1. Intergovernmental Fees and Charges

One opportunity for efficiency would be the elimination of fees and charges assessed by other units of government. By way of example, below are amounts that other units of local government charge the Park District even though the Park District's taxpayers are also taxpayers of these other units of local government. Such fees and charges, and the bureaucracy that accompanies them, inhibit the park district's ability to deliver programs, facilities, and services at the least possible cost.

Item Description	Location	Additional Notes	2023 Amount (\$)
Building Permits	Village of Mount Prospect or City of Prospect Heights	Fees depend on scope of project and may be waived	\$ 300.00
Construction Permits	Village of Mount Prospect or City of Prospect Heights	Varies	\$ 300.00
Alarms	Rob Roy, Weiss, 401, Zone, Burning Bush, Mini Golf, Golf Garage, Pool, Woodlands Garage		\$ 5,277.40
IL State Police Background Checks	Varies		\$ 2,660.00
Pool Permits	Woodland Pool	IDPH Annual	\$ 375.00
Water Systems Inspections	Woodland Pool and Weiss	Boiler Inspection, State Fire Marshall, Annual Pool Inspection	\$ 210.00
Traffic Light Maintenance	Weiss	Cook County Transportation and Highways	\$ 1,810.00
Elevator Inspection	Rob Roy		\$ 770.00
Ice Machine License & Inspection	Rob Roy		\$ 132.00
State Liquor License	Rob Roy		\$ 1,060.00
Vending Machine License	Weiss, Zone		\$ 140.00
Total			\$ 13,034.40

Other units of local government should recognize that intergovernmental fees often lead to inefficiency in the expenditure of taxpayer dollars through extra bureaucracy and administrative costs. In many cases, the unit of government assessing the fee ultimately benefits from the project or event, meaning it can recoup its costs through the extra sales tax or other revenue that will be generated. Where such fees are absolutely necessary, general-purpose units of government should offset the fee by crediting the park district for all benefits they will receive from a project, event, or property. For example, open space that is protected and maintained by the Park District helps mitigate storm water management costs, so assessing storm water management fees on the Park District not only leads to inefficiency, but it is also shortsighted.

Governmental units should be discouraged or prohibited from charging more than their out-of-pocket costs associated with the activities covered by a fee that is assessed to another unit of local government with the same taxpayers. Put another way, one unit of local government should not profit by taxing another. Eliminating local permit fees is a way to reduce administrative costs without impacting overall public revenue. Local government best serves the people when it cooperates and works together. Some communities recognize this and do not charge fees to other units. All communities should be encouraged to follow that model to receive the best results for local taxpayers and to promote governmental efficiency.

2. Inefficiency of Other Governments

The Park District is also negatively impacted by the inefficiency of the state and other units of local government.

- *Recycling by other local governmental entities.*
 - In 2024, The District was unable to participate in a community recycling program by the Village.
- *Delay in 2022 Tax Installments, Received January 2023*
 - In 2022, the District, along with all other taxing bodies in Cook County, did not receive tax installments in a timely fashion. The \$949K in tax revenue expected in the fall of 2022 was not received until January of 2023. Although the district had the fund balance to cover our operations in the short-term and eventually did receive the funds, there was still a negative financial impact to the district. There was lost productivity for administrative who had to strategize and deal with accounting issues related to this delay.

3. Unfunded Mandates

Unfunded state mandates are another cost driver. While the Park District recognizes that there are benefits to some of these mandates, modifications could help alleviate some of the burden to the park district.

- Minimum Wage Increases
- Cook Country Benefits Ordinance
- Decennial Committee

a) **Non-resident FOIA Requests.** Last year, the park district spent \$350.00 on staff time and legal fees to fulfill FOIA requests. Often the individuals/businesses submitting the FOIA requests are from outside of the park district boundaries, and they appear to be serving a specific agenda, rather than assuring better local government.

Date of Request	Description of Requested Records	Date of Disposition
3/8/2023	SmartProcure request for purchasing records 11/22/2022 to current	3/11/2023
5/5/2023	Job titles, wages, dept, hours worked for payroll on November 12, 2022	5/10/2023
6/7/2023	2021 Payroll	6/8/2023
7/28/2023A	Willow Trails Park Development bids	7/31/2023
7/28/2023B	SmartProcure request for purchasing records 3/9/2023 to current	8/3/2023
11/3/2023	SmartProcure request for purchasing records 7/27/2023 to current	11/3/2023
11/20/2023	FOIA Professionals services request for multiple software service contracts	12/6/2023

Under current law, resident taxpayers end up footing the bill for these non-resident or commercial requests. In order to help alleviate the burden for these non-resident requests the law could be amended to: (1) add a requirement that non-residents identify/explain the purpose of the request for information; (2) add a time limit on how far back a non-resident can request information; (3) staff time and costs could be included in the amount that is reimbursable for non-resident and commercial requests; (4) move back the deadline for non-resident requests 10 business days so that the park district does not have to delay services to its residents in order to comply with a non-resident request.

Sunshine laws are supposed to protect taxpayers by allowing them to shed light on any issue that is not exempt from FOIA. However, local government can be burdened by having to drop everything to rearrange priorities to meet FOIA deadlines, particularly if it has limited resources. Since local residents ultimately bear the expense of complying with FOIA, treating resident and non-resident requests differently would be justified.

b) **Criminal Background Checks.** All park districts are statutorily required to conduct criminal background checks on all employees pursuant to Section 8-23 of the Park District Code. The background checks must be done through the Illinois State Police (ISP). In 2023, the park district spent \$2,660.00 for criminal background checks. The Park District does not recommend eliminating this mandate because it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of children and other park district patrons. However, the State should explore ways in which it could improve the current system and make it less costly for park districts to comply with the law.

The mandate also raises the fundamental question as to why one layer of government is forced to charge its taxpayers to comply with a State mandate when the State made the determination to impose the mandate. Put another way, if the State has determined that criminal background checks are necessary for public safety, the State should assist with compliance.

The Park District recommends studying whether there can be a more efficient background check process implemented through the ISP to reduce the time and expense it takes for background checks. Another suggestion is for ISP to waive the fee for checks on minors or waive all fees for name checks. If there is a "hit" from a name check, the fee could be charged for the costlier fingerprint check. Since it is a state mandate, perhaps the fee structure for park districts should also be reviewed to determine whether the fee being charged exceeds the actual cost of doing the check and, if so, perhaps the ISP could consider reducing its cost to local governments.

c) Newspaper Publication. The newspaper is no longer the most effective way to provide notice. Websites are cheaper and reach more people. Permitting the park district to post the information on its website in lieu of newspaper publications would reduce costs. However, certain items are required to be posted via newspaper publication. In 2023, the Park District made 6 publications for a total cost of \$773.00.

4. Opportunities for Increased Transparency

As illustrated above, the Park District is very transparent in its operations. The following are opportunities for increased transparency.

- *Add to website:*
 - *Annual Tax Levy*
 - *Americans with Disabilities Transition Plan*
 - *Ordinances and Resolutions*
 - *At minimum, Table of Contents*
 - *Policy Manuals (some)*
 - *Sustainability Measures*
 - *Internal Committee Minutes (Committees with Board Representation)*
 - *Grants*
 - *Inter-agency Collaborations*
 - *EV Charging Stations*
- *Needs Assessment*

5. Opportunities for Increased Efficiency

As illustrated above, the Park District is very transparent in its operations. The following are opportunities for increased efficiency.

- *Look into opportunities to work with churches (i.e. The Bridge)*
- *Set up rental agreements*
- *Look into lacrosse opportunities*

Dated: _____

Signed: _____ [CHAIRPERSON]