

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
RIVER TRAILS PARK DISTRICT,
COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, HELD
AT 401 E. CAMP MCDONALD ROAD IN SAID DISTRICT
ON THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY 2025**

- I. The President called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m. and directed Crista Altergott, Administrative Assistant and Risk Management to call the roll. Upon role being called, the following Commissioners answered present: Leah Lussem, Jennifer Rezek, Nancy Parra, Robert Hoban III and Melissa Ackerman. Also present were Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom, Superintendent of HR & Finance David Oswald, Superintendent of Recreation Patti Mitchell, Superintendent of Communications & Marketing Christine Powles and Superintendent of Parks Mike Hanley.
- II. Visitors Comments
 - a. None
- III. The Agenda for January 16, 2025, was submitted for approval. Commissioner Rezek moved to approve said agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parra and approved by common consent.
- IV. Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting of January 9, 2025. Commissioner Ackerman moved to approve said agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hoban and approved by common consent. Commissioner Parra abstained.
- V. Approval of the Paid Invoice List for December 14, 2024 – January 10, 2025 - Superintendent of HR & Finance David Oswald
 - Superintendent of HR & Finance David Oswald presented an overview of the invoices paid.
 - Commissioner Rezek moved to approve the Paid Invoice List for December 14, 2024 – January 10, 2025, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parra where she then called for discussion. After a brief discussion the President directed Crista Altergott, Administrative Assistant and Risk Management to call the roll. Upon the roll being called, the Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE:	Leah Lussem, Jennifer Rezek, Nancy Parra, Robert Hoban III, Melissa Ackerman
NAY:	None
ABSENT:	None
- VI. Communications
 - a. Staff Reports – Recreation – Superintendent of Recreation Patti Mitchell
 - Superintendent of Recreation Patti Mitchell presented an overview of the Recreation Operations Report for November and December 2024.
 - Staff have been busy with winter programs and events. Mitchell thanked Commissioner Nancy Parra for volunteering to be Mrs. Claus and aiding in the success of the Polar Express days.

- Staff are already preparing for the busy summer season. Pool Passes opened for sale on January 14th and participants have already started purchasing in anticipation for summer. Summer Camp registration begins for residents on February 4th and non-residents on February 18th. New tag-ons have been added driven by ideas presented by the campers in the last few years.
- Parkour numbers continue to decline a bit but overall, the program continues to be a community draw. A survey will be going out to the participants that have not returned to identified areas of improvement.
- Commissioner Hoban asked when summer staff hiring will begin. The application link should be active mid-February. The Human Resources and Administration team is working with Paycom to integrate the application and hiring process.

b. Miscellaneous Communications - Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom,

- Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom presented a thank you letter from Higher Up Ministries for a recent raffle donation. Higher Up Ministries has been a valued partner to the District and holds an annual summer event at Evergreen Trails Park in the Boxwood neighborhood.

VII. Old Business

a. Approval of the 2025 Wage Scale Structure - Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom

- Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom presented the second viewing of the 2025 Wage Scale Structure. The second viewing includes additional details including implementation and staff recommendations.
- Commissioner Parra moved to approve the 2025 Wage Scale Structure, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rezek. Commissioner Hoban called for discussion and inquired where River Trails Park District is in comparison to other Districts. Director Fahnstrom replied that we are competitive in the Northwest Suburbs of Chicago and according to HR Source, 93% of wages are within the ranges identified. By modifying the competitive market-based compensation structure the District hopes to retain current staff.
- The President directed Crista Altergott, Administrative Assistant and Risk Management to call the roll. Upon the roll being called, the Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE:	Leah Lussem, Jennifer Rezek, Nancy Parra, Robert Hoban III, Melissa Ackerman
NAY:	None
ABSENT:	None

b. Ordinance 25-01-16 Employee Wellness Program Policy - Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom

- Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom gave a brief overview of Ordinance 25-01-16 Employee Wellness Program Policy. Commissioner Ackerman moved to approve, Ordinance 25-01-16 Employee Wellness Program Policy as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rezek. Commissioner Hoban called for discussion to clarify a few details of the old program versus the new program. Commissioner Ackerman has seen many of these programs and noted the effectiveness of consolidating more than 20 wellness programs in one place, using well-respected sources and getting rid of burdensome prior systems.

- After a few more questions from Commissioner Hoban, the President directed Crista Altergott, Administrative Assistant and Risk Management to call the roll. Upon the roll being called, the Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE: Leah Lussem, Jennifer Rezek, Nancy Parra, Robert Hoban III,
 Melissa Ackerman
 NAY: None
 ABSENT: None

VIII. New Business

- a. DRAFT Investment Policy – Appendix B - Superintendent of HR & Finance David Oswald
 - Superintendent of HR & Finance David Oswald explained that as part of the 2023 audit process, the auditors noted a slight deficiency in the Districts investment policy. Oswald noted that none of the Districts investments currently involve custodial risk but updating the policy is aimed to modernize the Districts investment policy in case of future need. No action is requested at this time.

- b. Comprehensive Strategic Master Plan approval - Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom
 - Executive Director Bret Fahnstrom provided the history of major organizational plan documents. Master Planning is typically done every 10 years. River Trails Park District completed a Comprehensive Master Plan in 2016 for the years 2017-2026 and then completed a refresher to the document in 2020 to revisit goals, objectives and other priorities. Staff feel that while the refresher has been a good document, since the 2020 and 2021 Covid years, enough has changed to require complete renewal. Additionally, the District has a Comprehensive Master Plan and a Strategic Plan which could be consolidated into one, cohesive planning document.
 - Staff recommends conducting a Community Needs Assessment by utilizing Northern Illinois U-Center for Government Studies (NIU-CGS) to manage in-depth survey collection data and hiring Mike Clark, CEO of Plan4Action, a long time Parks and Recreation Member in Illinois to consult on the 2025 Comprehensive Strategic Master Plan.
 - Commissioner Rezek moved to approve the Comprehensive Strategic Master Plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parra. Commissioner Hoban called for discussion. Commissioner Hoban led the discussion inquiring about the process and Mike Clark’s role, calling into question Clark’s qualifications listed as “extensive knowledge and experience in providing insight and best practices towards DEI issues and specifically for the transgender population.” Hoban stated reasons for his disagreement and wished to question Clark further. After discussion, it was determined that Mike Clark’s personal experiences towards Inclusion are not pertinent to his role as a consultant. His role is to collect inputs from all the sources. The Board of Commissioners and key Staff will be the ones driving decisions and deciding outcomes, based on the results of the Community Needs Assessment and District goals. The President directed Crista Altergott, Administrative Assistant and Risk Management to call the roll. Upon the roll being called, the Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE: Leah Lussem, Jennifer Rezek, Nancy Parra, Melissa Ackerman
 NAY: Robert Hoban III
 ABSENT: None

IX. Commissioner Comments

- a. Commissioner Parra noted that the 2025 Board Meeting Schedule has not yet been posted and asked that it be done immediately.
- b. Commissioner Lussem was so impressed with the improvements at the Fitness Center that she signed up for a membership! It was a quick and easy process and likes the re-built desk for the Fitness staff. Lussem asked if there were any other updates planned. Director Bret Fahnstrom informed the Commissioners that the vestibule of Weiss will be getting a Community Bulletin Board.

X. Executive Session

- a. At 7:51 pm, Commissioner Rezek made a motion that the Board go into Closed Executive Session to consider and discuss the minutes of meetings closed under the Open Meetings act pursuant to Section 2(c)21 of the Open Meetings act, either to approve said meeting minutes, or to conduct a semi-annual review to determine the ongoing need for confidentiality of said minutes, or the information regarding appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of an officer, an employee or employees pursuant to Sections 2(c)(1) and 2(c)(2) of the Open Meetings Act. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ackerman.

AYE: Leah Lussem, Jennifer Rezek, Nancy Parra, Robert Hoban III,
Melissa Ackerman
NAY: None
ABSENT: None

The Board resumed the Regular meeting at 7:53 pm

XI. Action as a Result of the Executive Session

- a. Resolution 25-01-16 A Resolution Determining the Confidentiality of the Closed Session Minutes. Commissioner Rezek moved to approve Resolution 25-01-16 A Resolution Determining the Confidentiality of the Closed Session Minutes. Commissioner Ackerman seconded the motion. Commissioner Hoban requested to abstain from the Closed Session Minutes from December 5th, 2024 due to absence. Abstaining in part is not possible due to the way to Resolution is written on the agenda. After this discussion, the President called for the roll and the Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE: Leah Lussem, Jennifer Rezek, Nancy Parra, Robert Hoban III,
Melissa Ackerman
NAY: None
ABSENT: None

- XII. Adjournment. There being no further business to discuss, President Leah Lussem adjourned the meeting at 7:56pm.

President

Secretary