

West Suburban Special Recreation Association

December 14, 2021

WSSRA Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting location: Park District of Forest Park, 7501 W. Harrison in Forest Park

MINUTES

- I. Chairman Jackie Iovinelli called the **meeting to order** at 4:11pm those present included:

Jan Arnold, PD of Oak Park
Jackie Iovinelli, Andrew Doss PD of Forest Park
Ted Gruber, Village of Elmwood Park
Carlene Greifelt, Veterans PD attended remotely
Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District arrived 4:16
Joe Modrich, Franklin Park PD, Attended remotely
Anna Wegrecki, Village of Harwood Heights

Sandy Fejt, Berwyn PD, Attended remotely
Annemarie Flaherty, Norridge Park District
Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside
Teresa Mrozik, Nicole Collier, Village of North
Riverside
Mark Sladek, North Berwyn Park District

Others in Attendance:

WSSRA staff: Annie Hart, April Michalski, Marianne Birko

WSSRF: Geri Estvanik, NBPD

Remote Attendance Approval: Arnold/Malchiodi motioned to approve remote attendance from Fejt, Berwyn Park District, Modrich, Park District of Franklin Park and Greifelt, Veterans Park District. Motion approved unanimously

- II. **Arnold/Wegrecki moved to approve the agenda. The motion was approved.**

- III. **Arnold/Flaherty moved to approve the November 9, 2021, Regular Board Meeting minutes. The motion was approved.**

- III. A. **Arnold/Malchiodi moved to accept the November 2021 Financial Report. The motion was approved.**

B. **Arnold/Collier moved to authorize payroll, The board, by roll call vote, authorizes payroll, prepaid disbursements #40041 and ending with check #40057 and authorizes payment of November payroll and disbursements debit charges and cash transfers totaling \$159,761.62 and authorizes payment of December 2021 disbursements #40058 and ending with check #40069 disbursements debit charges and cash transfers totaling \$35,425.11 pending the availability of funds. Roll call vote showed 11 yes votes and the motion was approved.**

- V. **Public Comment** No Public present.

- VI. **Under the Foundation Report: Geri Estvanik shared she is a North Berwyn Park District resident and happy to report on behalf of the WSSRF.** The Foundation hosted their last meeting of the year on November 15, 2021, via Zoom. The focus of the meeting was to finalize details on the "Holiday Concert in the Woods" event, Holiday Solicitation and beginning plans for 2022. We are excited for the success of hosting Luck of the Irish, Derby Gala & Fall in for Our Stars Virtually and hosted the Bocce Tournament and Holiday Concert in person. So far, the WSSRF has raised over \$75,000. The Holiday Solicitation kicked off with Giving Tuesday and raised 2,000 and will continue through the end of December. See your invite included in the Board packet you received today. So far, we are seeing wonderful generosity from long time donors. To date we have raised over \$12,000 with the solicitation only being out only a week. Please keep the Foundation in mind while you make any end of the year donations. Most importantly Thank you for your continued support. It has been another busy year and the Foundation could not have survived without the support of all of you! Stay Safe and Enjoy your holidays with the ones you love...

VII. **Under Committee Reports**

- A. **Nominations Committee Report** Mike Sletten, past Chairman, shared Iovinelli will continue as the Board Chairperson and Malchiodi will continue as the Vice Chairperson. Arnold/Wegrecki motioned to approve Iovinelli as Chairperson and Malchiodi as Vice Chairperson for 2022. Roll call vote approved the motion.
- B. **No Other**

VIII. **Unfinished Business**

- A. **No unfinished Business**

IX. **New Business**

- A. **Accept New Board Alternate for the Berwyn Park District** Arnold/Sletten motioned the Board of Directors Accepts Deborah Gayon as the New Alternate Board Member for the Berwyn Park District. Motioned was approved.
- B. **Approval of Resolution 2021-01 Appreciation of Service of the late State Senator and United States Congressman Harris W. Fawell** Sletten/Arnold motioned the Board of Directors by roll call vote Approves Resolution 2021-01 Appreciation of Service of the late State Senator and United States Congressman Harris W. Fawell in honor of his service and support for all persons including persons with disabilities in the provision of recreation service. Motion was unanimously approved.
- C. **Approve the Proposed 2022 WSSRA Board of Directors Meeting schedule** Arnold/Sletten motioned to approve the WSSRA Board meetings to be in person at the Park District of Forest Park for the first two meetings to meet the space protocols for CDC Covid Guidelines. Future meeting locations will be changed as needed. The March meeting will be moved to March 15 due to Parks Day and the Legislative Conference. Meeting dates are as follows: January 11, March 15, May 10, July 12, September 13, October 11, November 8, December 13, 2022. Motion was unanimously approved.
- D. **No Other**

X. **Under Correspondence-** No comments

- XI. **Under Board Reports** Wegrecki reported for the Village of Harwood Heights the Youth Commission programs are wrapping up and they will be singing with Santa this Saturday. Wegrecki wished everyone a very Merry Christmas! Flaherty reported the Norridge Park District is currently running all Holiday activities with a severe staffing shortage. Superintendent of Recreation is on FMLA, they just hired a new Recreation Supervisor, Clayton and a new Director of the Early Childhood, Amanda, and a Nutritionist. They are currently looking for an Assistant Director, full and part-time teachers, and bus drivers. They are looking to get the positions filled so than can address adding participants from their wait list. They are especially grateful for the CCRG grant funds as it has helped keep things going during the challenges of COVID. Sladek reported the North Berwyn Park District's Holiday activities, Santa's Workshop, House decorating, and Home Alone programs were well attended. They are seeing a gradual uptick in the participation numbers. But the senior programs are still being challenged by COVID. Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park's Youth Commission Sharks started Saturday for 4th – 8th grade basketball. Bocce is still going in full force with 120 teams 5 days a week. The Golf League is also running with 7 teams and 150 members. The room is busy Monday – Thursday and the new Workout Room has been open since October and is a great addition to the CRC. Collier reported the Village of North Riverside's is currently wrapping all their Holiday festivities with the Christmas tree lighting and home decorating contest. They are getting geared up for the start of the Basketball season next. They are also super excited to announce the hiring of Toni Giovenco, as their new Program Coordinator! A great addition to the department. Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside had a very successful return to the Holiday Stroll and a special thanks to WSSRA for participating in the event again this year. They are hoping for the "Big Chill" as they just installed the border for the outdoor ice rink. Basketball numbers are back to matching those of 2019. And they have hired Sean O'Hara to the Recreation Team as the new Recreation Supervisor. Sletten reported the River Forest Park District's hosted their Annual Tree lighting and decorating and a special thanks to WSSRA for participating. They are ready for the start of Basketball season with a full slate of registrants. They will be going out to bid in 4 weeks to redo the tennis courts and adding basketball courts to

Keystone Park area. Fenwick won the bid for the Priory property, and they will be negotiating with them shortly for future access. **Arnold reported the Park District of Oak Park** is wrapping it 'successful Holiday events that were all well attended too. Tear down of the building on 228 Madison has begun. PDOP's Board is proud to announce the approval to build the Community Recreation Center project and is scheduled to begin on March 19. Bids for this 40,000-sf structure have been awarded to 19% minority owned and 10% women owned companies. The building is scheduled to have its Grand Opening in the Spring of 2023. Currently School District 97 is not allowing non-residents in their buildings and PDOP has recently hired 10 full-time positions and still has 3 more to fill. **lovinelli reported for the Park District of Forest Park** and announced the Smores event was rained out and they are trying again this week. Work continues on the Splash pad, and it is still on schedule for the May pool opening. The Village Pocket Park development project is on hold until the OSLAD results are known. Program enrollment continues to be going well. They recently lost their Full time Recreation Coordinator and are filling the flex-gap with 5 Excellent Part-time employees who are increasing their hours and responsibilities. Recreation Supervisor Doss will also contribute by taking over the pool for the summer. They recently hired a very qualified internal candidate Karrie Schlichting to be the new Office Coordinator. **Fejt reported the Berwyn Park District** has a fully staffed Recreation Department. Staff have been busy hosting letters with Santa, three runs of Polar Express, the Candy Cane hunt, and a senior event to wrap up the holiday season. They are looking forward to many cooperative opportunities in 2022. **Modrich reported for the Park District of Franklin Park** is pleased to report Timber and Hawthorne Parks projects are wrapping up but there is still work to be done. District staff are currently working on a design for the Children's Garden. The Polar Express and Holiday programs are going well. Basketball and Volleyball are seeing a great return in participation as well. They are still being challenged by COVID and as a result are deferring their Holiday Party until the New Year!

Greifelt reported the Veterans Park District the Winter Wonderland event had to be modified as a drive through event due to the rain. They have a sold Breakfast with Santa event this Saturday, December 18th. They too are hiring swim instructors and ballet instructors if you know of anyone. The sold-out basketball leagues start in January and runs through March. We are delighted to be hosting WSSRA's Imaginarium at the George Leoni Center. Greifelt invited everyone to come check it out.

XII. **Executive Director's Report Birko Reported**

- A. **Board Member Appointments Due by December 31, 2021**, The Amended and Restated Articles of Agreement state that each partner should make their appointments to the WSSRA Board by December 31 of each year. We respectfully request that all the appointments be confirmed in writing using the sample letter included in the packet. We will accept those appointments at our annual meeting held January 11, 2022.
- B. **WSSRA/WSSRF Annual Holiday Solicitation** has been mailed and hopes to get a positive response for their efforts throughout the year. A sample card featuring WSSRA participants and highlighting the accomplishments of WSSRA and the WSSRF.
- C. **Annual Visits** Birko is continuing her 2020 Annual visits presenting highlights of 2020. Visits can be done in-person or virtually. Please don't wait to contact Birko to confirm a date.
- D. **Proposed Draft Committee Appointments for 2022** Birko has proposed committee appointments for approval at the Annual WSSRA Board meeting in January 2022. Please review and let her know if you would like to make any changes. Arnold encouraged new board members to consider the Finance Committee to learn more about the agency.
- E. **All Staff Training & Holiday Party Success** WSSRA staff conducted an All-Staff In- Person Training followed by a Holiday Party on Thursday, December 2. The Training included brainstorming staff recruitment, Logo updates and use, Safety topic "How Aware Are You?" Review of Job responsibility changes and continued discussions on our Safety Zone Conversations on Racism & Equity. The work was followed by a couple hours of Bocce play in the Village of Elmwood Park's Community Recreation Center. A great deal was accomplished along with some friendly competition. A Big Thank You to Ted Gruber and all the Village of Elmwood Park staff for hosting this event. Seriously consider this location for your next event! A special thanks to Village President Skip Saviano who welcomed us to the CRC and Jackie lovinelli who made an appearance of support!

- F. **Illinois Parks Day at the Capital** _Note the dates for Illinois Parks Day at the Capital are March 8, 2022, due to a change in the Legislative session. The Legislative Conference will follow on March 9, 2022.

G. Staff Report April Ryan, Superintendent of Recreation Reported

1. Holiday Events

- **Turkey Bingo**- WSSRA attended North Riverside's Turkey Bingo event on November 19. The participants had a blast and were thrilled to win a ton of great prizes.
- **WSSRA Santa Express**- Our Santa Express event is taking place on December 11. Registration includes an outdoor visit with Santa and each participant will receive a gift bag, the event is sponsored by Thumbuddy Special.
- **Sensory Sensitive Treats with Santa**- WSSRA is collaboration with the Park District of Oak Park on December 15 to offer a sensory-friendly evening for families at the Cheney Mansion. There will be activities, treats, and a visit from Santa. The program is sold out with 45 participants and family members registered.

2. Holiday Hullabaloo WSSRA is offering 6 days of activities during winter break. Activities will include pottery, a cooking lesson, a magic show, bowling and more. WSSRA currently has 29 unique participants attending our Holiday Hullabaloo Events.

3. Hiring Update WSSRA is seeking to fill two Full-Time Recreation Specialist positions to join our team. We are in the process of conducting interviews and hope to have someone begin on January 3, 2022. We are also hiring seasonal staff to work inclusion and seasonal programs.

4. Programs Winter programs begin on January 31 and run until March 26, registration for winter programs opens on December 20. This year we are printing winter and spring brochures separately in the hopes that we will be able to offer more programs and have access to more facilities by spring. WSSRA will continue to print a limited quantity of brochures to distribute to our partner districts and participants.

5. Special Olympics WSSRA had 3 participants attend the Special Olympics Bowling Tournament on December 4, athletes placed 4th, 7th, and 6th. WSSRA has two basketball teams for the 2021-2022 season with 27 athletes playing. Home games will be played on Tuesday evenings 7:00pm at Elm Middle School and Elmwood Elementary School in Elmwood Park.

6. Imaginarium Sensory Room Grand Opening WSSRA held its grand opening event for our Imaginarium Sensory Room on December 1, we had a great turnout and families are very excited for this opportunity. Thank you to Veterans Park District Staff for supporting the event.

H. Staff Report: Annie Hart, Superintendent of Safety and Operations Reported

1. Inclusion We currently have 34 participants scheduled for 53 programs this fall. Our Inclusion Manager, Chris Sturm, has returned from his FMLA. Chris will step back into the role of your main contact for anything inclusion related. Bethany Pastrana has joined our Inclusion Team as she steps into her new role as Recreation Coordinator as of the first of the year. In the meantime, she is working closely with Chris and getting out to sites to get familiar with all WSSRA communities.

2. Transportation We officially have a full fleet of vehicles as of last month. We are preparing to have the vehicles wrapped with an updated design asap. We are working with **It's a Sign** and at their new location we are concerned the alley entry is too tight to fit our vehicles. If this is the case, we will either must wait for warmer weather or find a garage that the staff at **It's a Sign** can come to. For Holiday Hullabaloo we are transporting between 8 – 14 participants per day.

3. Office We are looking forward to spending some time in the beginning of January to organize before we start our winter session.

I. No Other

XIII. **Closed Session** - pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) to discuss personnel & compensation

5:00pm Arnold/Sletten moved to go into closed session to discuss personnel & compensation. Motioned was approved

5:30pm Sletten/Arnold motioned to go out of closed session

XIV. Action following Closed Session Arnold/Sletten motioned the Board of Directors by Roll Call vote, approve the 3% merit increase for the Executive Director Birko as approved in the 2022 budget as discussed in the closed session. Voting yes: Fejt, Gruber, Iovinelli, Modrich, Wegrecki, Flaherty, Sladek, Arnold, Sletten, Collier, Malchiodi, Greifelt. Record shows unanimous approval.

XV. Adjournment Sletten/Wegrecki motioned to adjourn the meeting. Motion was unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko
Executive Director, mb/ Dec 21 minutes