

**West Suburban Special Recreation Association**

March 14, 2023

WSSRA

2915 Maple St, Franklin Park, IL

**DRAFT MINUTES**

I. Chairman Jackie Iovinelli called the **meeting to order** at 4:05pm those present included:

Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District

Jan Arnold Park District of Oak Park

Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park

Dan LoCascio, Park District of Franklin Park

Ted Gruber, Elmwood Park

Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside

Colleen Broderick, Village of N Riverside

Cynthia Hayes, Berwyn Park District

Annemarie Flaherty, Norridge Park District

Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District

Anna Wegrecki, Village of HH

**Others in Attendance:**

WSSRA staff: Annie Hart, April Michalski, Marianne Birko,

**Excused Absence:** North Berwyn Park District

II. **Approval of Agenda Iovinelli/Gruber to approve the agenda. The motion was unanimously approved.**

III. **Approval of the Consent Agenda Iovinelli/Hayes motioned to approve the Consent Agenda including the January 10, 2023, Minutes, January & February Financial Report, and Disbursements for January, February & March 2023. Roll call vote showed 11 yes votes, and the motion was approved**

IV. **No Public Comment**

V. **Under the Foundation Birko reported on behalf of the Foundation Board, The Foundation hosted their 2023 budget planning and goal meeting on February 1, 2023. They are excited to bring back the Family Bowl-a-thon this Saturday March 18 at Circle lanes from 1:00 – 3:00pm. Participants will bowl 2 games and raise money through sponsors. Planning has begun for the Annual Derby Gala on Saturday, May 6 to be held at D'Agostino's in River Grove. The Solicitation letter has gone out and donations and sponsorships have started to come in. Please consider donating and/being a sponsor and joining us at the event. The WSSRF will also host the John Lannefeld Bocce Tournament in September, Fall in for Our Stars in early November, the Holiday Concert is set for December 8, 2023, and will close the year with Giving Tuesday and the Holiday Solicitation. The group is also focusing on recruiting some new members and just had a new member join this last week, Betsy Lopez. A new WSSRA parent who wants to continue to support those who support her daughter in services! Thank you for your continued support of their ongoing efforts in supporting the WSSRA mission.**

VII. **Under Committee Reports**

A. **LoCascio reported the WSSRA Finance Committee headed by Jan Arnold met on Monday, March 6 to discuss the WSSRA hiring of the Finance Manager position and the WSSRA Re-organization plan. Staff reviewed in detail the progressive plan that will help WSSRA prepare for the current and future demands of the organization. The Committee approved the hiring and Re-organization plan as presented.**

B. **The Policy Committee headed by Annemarie Flaherty will meet in the next month to begin the process of reviewing the current Personnel and Board Policies.**

VIII. **Unfinished Business**

A. **Park District of Forest Park Building & Land purchase updates** Iovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park 2023 will be the planning year for the Harrison project. More information to come.

B. **No other**

IX. **Under New Business:**

A. **Approval of WSSRA Finance Manager Hire and Re-organization**

Birko reported that with the assistance of Jeff Murphy the Superintendent of Business with the Park District of Forest Park WSSRA posted and completed interviews and through this process WSSRA is recommending the hiring of WSSRA's Superintendent of Operations Annie Hart to the Finance Manager role. She has successfully been completing many aspects of the job since our previous Finance Managers departure, and we believe she is best suited for the role and will prepare us best for the future of WSSRA. To make this successful transition 40% of Hart's current job will be shifted to other staff and some of their responsibilities will then shift as well.

As a result, WSSRA is planning forward with a re-organization for this transition of responsibilities. Through this process WSSRA plans to hire a FT Driver to take over all aspects of Transportation from driving routes, hiring & training drivers and planning routes, all current responsibilities of Hart's. The expenses of this will be covered by the 2023 Finance Manager salary with a savings of \$5,357. Note, WSSRA's current FT Driver retires in December 2023 where the future cost of the position will be covered going forward. In January 2024 WSSRA will combine the salary of the Finance Manager position and PT Recreation Specialist position to create the FT Recreation Specialist. This transition will help manage the trickle down of responsibilities and offer more staffing stability as we plan forward for approximately \$10k.

➤ **Iovinelli/Lentz motioned the WSSRA Board of Directors approve by roll call vote the Re-organization plan to fill the Superintendent of Business (previously Finance Manager) position and complete the staffing changes as described for an additional cost of approximately \$10k which will be included in the 2024 budget.**

**B. No Other**

X. **Under Correspondence No Comments**

XI. **Under Board Reports: Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park's** Basketball season finished with 113 kids participating. Indoor pickleball starts in April and they are currently working on pool repairs. **Iovinelli reported for the Park District of Forest Park** "Where every day is a walk in the park..." and they are expanding walks through town through their four pocket park projects that they began leasing in late 2020. They just received an OSLAD grant for the second park and are expecting their first playground delivery in June. They will be awarding the bid for Reiger Park in April and are opening the Splash pad as soon as it is operational. They will have Easter events coming up and pool repairs as well. They are also excited to announce they hired a summer intern and their new Recreation Supervisor is doing great! **Wegrecki reported the Village of Harwood Heights** is taking part in "Kindness Day" by project "Playpen" and are collecting all baby care items including diapers, wipes, and all things babies. On April 13 they will be planting 40 new trees and the Recreation department is hosting a flower arrangement class, weekly Zumba and Flex and Stretch classes. **Hayes reported the Berwyn Park District** is excited to announce they have a new Executive Director, Cathy Fallon, formerly the Executive Director of Oakbrook Terrace. They are currently on a hiring spree and as a result the Recreation Department is finally fully staffed. They are finalizing their spring summer brochure with the help of their new Marketing Manager. Their Indoor Futsal program has 103 participants and they will host their Egg hunt on April 8th. **Lentz reported the Park District of Oak Park** is doing a deep dive searching for lifeguards. They currently have hired about 50% so far, spring pool pass sales are going well, they have 3 seats up for election that are uncontested and they are excited to announce the official opening of the CRC will be Sunday, May 21st including a ribbon cutting at 2:00pm. They are currently busy hiring and training staff. All of you are invited! **Broderick reported the Village of North Riverside** is conducting a spring break camp coming up at the end of the month. They are also busy planning summer camps, field trips and are making great strides in the hiring for summer camp. **Sletten reported the River Forest Park District** approved the playground installation bid of \$600,000 for the all-inclusive playground at Washington Park. They expect it to be a July 1st install. The Keystone project is ongoing, and the board is in the middle of the strategic planning process and will conduct a survey based on the plan. Their basketball session is wrapping up and baseball and soccer begin soon. **Stanczyk reported the Veterans Park District** is finalizing their summer program guide. They surrendered their DCFS license for Bulger Park and recently hosted an Open House in preparation for the 2023-2024 school year and recently hired the Full-Time lead instructor for early childhood.

**Flaherty reported the Norridge Park District** is totally immersed in all things pool as they have 3.5 weeks to finalize the pool plans and go out to bid by April 7<sup>th</sup>. The pool will open this summer and close on August 15 and they have contracted out the Aquatic Services this summer with Chicagoland Aquatics. **LoCascio reported the Park District of Franklin Park** staff are immersed in there 2023-2024 budget planning. They are replacing a walkway in front of the Center at North Park Banquet Hall and are getting ready for the Ice show on May19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> as well as getting ready for summer. **Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside’s** basketball is ending, soccer is starting, and their day camp registration started in February and is full and they are looking to expand if they can secure a location. They are hosting an egg hunt coming up and are finalizing plans for a 9-hole disc golf course. They recently hosted for the first time “The Great Puzzle Race”. Teams of five competed by completing a 500-piece puzzle within the 2-hour time frame. The first team finished in 44 minutes out of 11 teams who competed.

**XII. Executive Director’s Report- Birko Reported**

- A. **Byline Banking Updates** Staff have updated bank signatures to the WSSRA account to include the new Chairperson, Ron Malchiodi and Past Chairperson, Jackie Iovinelli for 2023 as required by the WSSRA Board Policies.
- B. **Staff attend IAPD Financial Sustainability Workshop** Based on the pending transition of Business Manager Annie Hart will be attending the IAPD sponsored Financial Sustainability workshop coming up at the end of March.
- C. **WSSRA will Co-Host the In-person Legislative Breakfast/Brunch on Friday, March 17, 2023, with the Park District of Forest Park.** This event is scheduled to begin at 11:00am. A formal invite was sent via e-mail to local Legislators & WSSRA Board Members and local town officials. Please extend this invitation to your board members and RSVP your attendance to Birko by March 10<sup>th</sup>. The Legislators that have committed to attend are as follows: **Senate President Harmon & Eileen Lynch, Chief of Staff, House Speaker Representative Chris Welch, Senator Kimberly Lightford, Senator Robert Martwick, Representative Elizabeth Hernandez, Representative Camille Lilly, Representative Abdelnasser Rashid**
- D. **WSSRA Derby Gala 2023** Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 6, 2023, when the WSSRA/WSSRF will host the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of this very successful event. We plan to once again be at D’Agostino’s in River Grove from 4:00 – 7:00pm. Mark your calendars and plan on attending!
- E. **Bi-monthly WSSRA Updates** Per your request for more information WSSRA has been sending Bi-monthly WSSRA Updates. Please share feedback if this is meeting your needs.
- F. **Partner Annual Presentations** Birko is scheduling Annual presentations to meet with your boards and share the Annual report and WSSRA updates. Call or email Birko with dates and times that work for you in 2023.
- G. **WSSRA Quarterly Board Training** As discussed in Birko will be presenting four training topics for the WSSRA Board Representatives and Alternates. These topics will include the following: WSSRA Program Structure and Staffing, Behavior Management and WSSRA Budget Planning. The first meeting will be conducted in early April via Zoom. All Board members are welcome to attend.
- H. **Staff Report: April Michalski, Superintendent of Recreation reported**
  - 1. **Winter 2023 Programs** Winter programs are going well. Several programs have waitlists due to staffing shortages; staff are working hard to hire additional seasonal part-time staff to add to programs. We added a second Track and Field program to accommodate the long waitlist. We also offered a second Powerlifting class to try to accommodate the waitlist, unfortunately the day and time did not work for most families, so we did not run the second class. Our Bobcats Gold basketball team is competing in the Special Olympics State Basketball Tournament on March 11-12 at Illinois State University

**2. Day Camp** Registration is underway. We currently have 81 participants registered for Summer Day Camp and 17 participants registered for our adult Community Cruisers Camp. Camp will be broken into two sessions running June 12-July 29. We are working on securing facility space for camp. So far, we have been approved to use space at the Park District of Forest Park, Cheney Mansion in Oak Park, Heritage School in Berwyn, Forest Park Middle School, and Kahl Park in Northlake and Irving School in Oak Park.

**3. Hiring Updates** WSSRA is working hard to recruit additional seasonal part-time staff. In February we presented to the Best Buddies group at OPRF High School in hopes to recruit staff and volunteers. Additionally, staff hosted a mini job fair at Ridgeland Commons on February 21- we had 5 individuals attend. Staff have attended several job fairs at local high schools. We appreciate everyone's support sharing our hiring posts on social media, please continue to spread the word. Applicants can apply online at [wssra.net](http://wssra.net).

**4. Inclusion** WSSRA is currently supporting 36 participants in 35 inclusive programs. Our Inclusion Manager has been doing several program observations and is working to fill staffing requests in a timely manner. We appreciate your continued patience and support as we work through staffing challenges.

**5. Imaginarium Sensory Room** Participation in our Imaginarium Sensory Room is picking up. We are offering private family play sessions 3 days per week. Sessions can be booked on our website at [wssra.net](http://wssra.net).

**6. Upcoming Events:**

- **Recognition Banquet** WSSRA held our Annual Recognition Banquet on Saturday, February 25 at Centre at North Park in Franklin Park. It was great to be back in person! We had 88 staff, participants, and family members in attendance. Thank you to the Park District of Franklin Park for hosting the event.
- **Flap Jack Bunny Hop-** WSSRA is hosting a pancake breakfast on Saturday, March 25 at the Carroll Center in Oak Park. Families will enjoy a visit with the bunny, crafts, games, an egg hunt, and a pancake breakfast.

I. **Staff Report: Annie Hart, Superintendent of Safety & Operations reported**

1. **WSSRA Marketing** WSSRA PR Coordinator, Nicole Walsh hosted a round table in February for all partners Marketing staff to attend. The main objective for this meeting was to inform of how our partners can help with communicating the importance of WSSRA to the families in each community and how we can better promote our programs and services. Seven individuals attended from six different partner districts. The meeting went well, and good discussions were had amongst the attendees.

2. **Office** WSSRA has successfully transitioned from the QuickBooks Desktop version to QuickBooks online. Hart spent time with the WSSRA accountant to learn a few new features that the online version has to offer. This will allow our accountant to do his monthly reconciliation remotely and come into the office on a quarterly basis. Our Front Office Assistant, Jenna Laskowski, has returned from her maternity leave. Jenna has modified her schedule to be in the office Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 12 – 5p. Ellen has agreed to stay with WSSRA continuing to work Tuesdays and Thursdays.

3. **Transportation** With Day Camp registration underway, WSSRA has another year left on the contract with Rich Lee. We currently have approximately 50 participants signed up for some form of Day Camp transportation.

XIII. **Adjournment** Gruber/lovinelli motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:57pm. Motion was unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko, Executive Director  
mb/ March 23 minutes