

West Suburban Special Recreation Association

March 11, 2025

WSSRA

2915 Maple St, Franklin Park, IL

MINUTES

I. Chairperson Jan Arnold called the meeting to order at 4:00pm those present included:

Jan Arnold, Park District of Oak Park

Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park

Dan LoCascio, Park District of Franklin Park

Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside

Joe Zerillo, Village of Harwood Heights

Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District

Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District

Cathy Fallon, Berwyn Park District

Kelly Diaz, North Berwyn Park District

Nate Brown, Norridge Park District

Katie Muellner, Village of River Grove

Jack Savage, Village of North Riverside

Ted Gruber, Village of Elmwood Park

Others in Attendance: WSSRA staff, April Michalski, Marianne Birko, WSSRF, Christine Nakatsuka

Approval of Remote Attendees meeting Qualifying Event: NA

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

III. Approval of the Consent Agenda Iovinelli/Fallon motioned to approve the Consent Agenda including the January 14, Minutes, January & February Financial Report, and Disbursements for January & February 2025. Roll call vote showed 13 yes votes, and the motion was approved

IV. Public Comment: No Public Comment

V. Under the Foundation Nakatsuka reported for the WSSRF: The Foundation reports the 2025 Bocce

Tournament took place February 1, 2025 at the Village of Elmwood Park's State-of-the-Art CRC Indoor Bocce courts. WE had a record-breaking turnout with 21 teams participating and over 100 guests and 40 raffle prizes for guests to win. None of this would have been possible without the support of Skip Saviano and Ted Gruber. Ted single handedly brought in 20 raffle prizes/50%! As a result, the Foundation doubled its profits, bringing in \$11,500. Thank you to Elmwood Park and Ted for your ongoing support of this event! The Foundation is also preparing for the 2025 Derby Gala planned for Saturday, May 3, 2025. It will take place at D'Agostino's in River Grove from 4 – 7:00pm. You can participate in a variety of ways. Be an Ad Sponsor, donate items to the Silent Auction such as Birthday parties, Pool & Ice-skating rink day passes, Bocce or Golf time or any other ideas that you might have. All donations are welcome. We would love to see you all there. Tickets and sponsorships and raffle tickets are available on the Derby Gala website. Go to wssra.net and click on the Derby Gala link. Thank you for being a part! **WSSRA hiring assistance** The Foundation is committed to support WSSRA in their search for staff for programs and summer day camp. Staff have been invited to present to various parent groups to help get the word out about WSSRA programs and staff support. **WSSRF once again thanks you for your continued support throughout the year!**

VI. Under Committee Reports LoCascio reported the Policy Committee will meet on April 8th to review updated PDRMA policies

VII. Unfinished Business Acceptance of the 2025 Chairperson & Vice Chairperson

A. **Park District of Forest Park Building Updates** Iovinelli stated there was no updated news to report.

B. **No Other**

VIII. Under New Business

A. **Transportation Update and Camera purchase** Birko shared due to the increase in aggressive behaviors exhibited on vehicles by participants, starting this winter season WSSRA has added a part-time support staff to every door-to-door route to help ensure the safety of all participants and drivers. In addition, WSSRA has researched putting cameras on the vehicles, as an added layer of protection, for a total cost of \$850 per vehicle including installation for a total cost of \$4,250. While this was not a budgeted line item, we feel it is a necessary purchase. Note, we plan to use the funds from the Minivan sale which will be \$6,225. Board members shared the pros and cons of having cameras. Birko clarified PDRMA recommended not doing transportation which Birko's response was that was not an option. PDRMA clarified they were not necessarily in favor of cameras, but other counsel thought it was an added benefit and deterrent as it recognizes both participant and staff responses to behavior. Birko is pursuing answers to the following questions:

1. How long are recordings stored?
2. Does it record audio?
3. What is in the camera view? Is it showing the driver?
4. Arnold recommended including that there will be video in language. Look at PDRMA's camera policy.

Sletten/lovinelli motioned for WSSRA to install cameras in vehicles at a cost not to exceed \$6,000 to help ensure the safety of passengers and drivers. A Roll call vote showed 13 yes votes and the motion was approved.

B. No Other

IX. Under Correspondence No Comments

- X. Under Board Reports** **Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside** will have the final report on the Master Plan in April. Riverside happenings include Basketball season is ending, they are dismantling the ice rink after a successful season and will be hosting the egg hunt on April 12th. **Stanczyk reported the Veterans Park District's** Summer program guide is going to print on March 17th, they are currently interviewing for camp and aquatics positions and are hosting 4 Easter events: Thursday, April 10 a Flashlight Egg and Candy Hunt at Gouin Park, Friday, April 11 an Egg Scrambler at Bulger Park, Saturday, April 12 an Egg and Candy Hunt at Trumbull Park and Saturday April 12, an "EGG"stravganza event at Grant Park. **Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park** is hosting Bocce with the Bunny on April 18, the event will include games, crafts, an egg hunt, and photos with the bunny. The Ice rink is coming down after a successful season with ice up to 50 degrees! They are now offering personal training at the CRC with a Full-time trainer. They have 12 clients and are growing. The Golf league is finishing up and they too received an OSLAD grant to install 4 pickleball courts in the Circle. **Muellner reported the Village of River Grove** is hosting a Spring Craft event on March 29, and hosting an Egg and Candy Hunt at Trumbull Park on April 12 with VPD. Their Spring Flag Football begins the first week in April. **Sletten reported the River Forest Park District** is wrapping up basketball and platform tennis. They will be hosting their Egg Hunt and VIP Bunny Experience on April 19, and they are selling a John Deere mower to Norridge Park District. **Zerillo reported the Village of Harwood Heights** is wrapping up soccer and indoor sports and are hosting a pizza party this Saturday to celebrate the end of the season. The Youth Commission is hosting an Easter Event on April 12 at the VHH Recreation Center. They will also be Co-hosting a Touch-A-Truck event this summer with Representative Brad Stephens and are busy planning their Annual Festival in August. **Diaz reported the North Berwyn Park District** will host their Star Wars themed party on March 15th. They will be celebrating the Easter holidays with an Easter Egg Hunt and parade and Easter Basket delivery on April 19. They are hiring Camp Counselors and Spray Pool Monitors too. **Brown reported the Norridge Park District** purchase a new mower from the River Forest Park District and they are very appreciative of the opportunity. They are hosting their Bunny Bonanza Easter Event on April 12. They are wrapping up basketball and collaborating with Leyden Township for flag football in the fall. They were very successful in securing 12-13 sponsors for soccer program and they are getting ready to open the pool. They are continually challenged with issues of electric scooters in the park. **lovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park** where every day is a walk in the park...They are excited to see lots of people back in the park with the nice weather. Day Camp registration opened and is full. They are hosting their Easter events starting with the Flashlight Egg Hunt on April 10th and their Egg Hunt on April 12th. Summer hiring is going well with all Lifeguard positions full and 85% of their seasonal positions filled. They are currently hiring for a Business Dept. Coordinator position, and they are waiting for the elections to be over on April 1st where they will fill 2 seats with 3 persons running. **Savage reported the Village of North Riverside** had 391 participants in basketball, soccer registration ends next Friday, and camp revenues have already surpassed last year. They added a couple camps and extended after school programs. They are excited to be hosting WSSRA's Flap Jack Bunny Hop event on April 5, they are also hosting their own Bunny Bingo April 11th. They have booked their summer concerts series and are bringing back movies in the park too. They are looking for grants for 15 passenger buses and are looking at bringing custodial services in-house instead of contracting out. **Fallon reported the Berwyn Park District** is finishing up winter, working on summer brochure, hosting their Easter event on April 12 and looking for grants to expand Proksa Park project. **LoCascio reported the Park District of Franklin**

Park hosted their Daddy daughter dance and had a great response, they also recently hosted the hockey championships at the Ice Arena. They will be hosting the Fitness and Wellness Fair on Sunday sponsored by Representative Norma Hernandez. And they recently went to bid for ice arena locker room project. **Arnold reported the Park District of Oak Park's** spring events are happening. They are currently hiring 2 Full time Parks staff, and they are hosting the Ice Show this weekend. Coming up they are collaborating with the Library and School District on a Multicultural event taking place on April 26 at Scoville Park. PDOP received an OSLAD grant for splashpad and playground at Anderson Park where renovations are commencing in April and 2 board members are up for reelection. The Rehm pool project got a late start, but they are still hoping for an on-time completion. They will be starting the geothermal project at Cheney Mansion shortly. Arnold reminded folks of the Parks and Recreation Profession promotional video she sent recently and asked that folks use it in their recruitment and training. "There is no better time to get people involved and interested in our profession by incorporating it in our seasonal training than NOW."

XI. Executive Director's Report Birko Reported

- A. **WSSRA Staff will attended the IPRA Annual Conference** Eleven Full-time staff attended the IPRA conference on January 23-25, 2025. All had great learning and networking opportunities. Conference summaries have been completed and are used for future training tools.
- B. **WSSRA Co-Hosted a Successful Legislative Brunch** A Big Thank you to the Park District of Oak Park for Co-hosting the Legislative Brunch on Friday February 28th. It was a great success thanks to the participation of all of you. We had over 50 guests present and 4 Legislators & Staff including Senate President Don Harmon and Chief of staff Eileen Lynch, Assistant Majority Leader, Representative Camille Lilly, and Chris Crisanti, Director of Policy & Legislation for Senator Mike Porfirio. Unfortunately, Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford had to call in sick and was not able to attend. Peter Murphy, Jason Anselment, and Maura Freeman from IAPD updated us on the forthcoming platform and other Legislative issues impacting all of us. Guests had the opportunity to have 1 on 1 conversations with those present and a delightful lunch was enjoyed by all. A special thanks to Jan Arnold and staff for their support and to all of you for being a part of this important event!
- C. **Successful 2025 Bocce Tournament** Was a huge success thanks to the generous hosts Skip Saviano, Ted Gruber, and the Village of Elmwood Park. It took place on Saturday, February 1 with 21 Teams participating. This event broke all kinds of records, the most teams and players, double the raffle prizes which in the end doubled the profits and raised over \$11,000. A huge thank you to Ted and his staff for all of their efforts to support us. See **Attachment D** for the results.
- D. **WSSRA 2024 Audit Update** WSSRA's 2024 Audit is being completed by Lauterbach & Amen. Pre-liminary work began in early February and the onsite visit was completed on March 5. It is scheduled to be completed and shared at the May 13th board meeting with formal approval at the July meeting.
- E. **WSSRA Derby Gala 2025** Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 3, 2025, when the WSSRA/WSSRF will host the 23rd year of this very successful event. We plan to once again be at D'Agostino's in River Grove from 4:00 – 7:00pm. The success of this event is totally dependent on your participation as a sponsor, auction donor and attendee. Mark your calendars and plan on attending! Attached find the solicitation letter and invite. Please pass it along!
- F. **Partner Annual Presentations** Birko began this year's presentations with River Forest Park District in February and will begin sharing the 2024 Stats and Snapshot starting with PDOP on Thursday, March 13. Please reach out to Birko to schedule a time and date that works for you.
- G. **WSSRA 2013 Minivan Sale** No WSSRA Partners bid so it went up on the Obenauf Auction site with closing bids happening Thursday, March 6th at 10:30am. The vehicle was sold for \$6,225.
- H. **Staff Report: April Michalski, Superintendent of Recreation reported**
 - 1. **Programs** Winter programs wrap up on March 22, and spring programs begin on March 31 and run through May 10. This spring, we are offering a variety of great programs, including Horsemanship, Yoga, Cooking, Golf, Softball, Gymnastics, Swim Lessons, Bowling and much more!
 - 2. **Day Camp** We held our summer day camp lottery and have accepted 99 participants into camp, with 12 participants remaining on the waitlist. The waitlist will be reviewed weekly, and campers will be added as we hire additional staff. Camp will be broken into two sessions running June 9 – July 25. We anticipate 7 running

camps, with sites being located at the Park District of Forest Park, Pershing school in Berwyn, Holmes and Longfellow Schools in Oak Park, Elmwood Elementary School, and Kahl Park in Northlake.

3. **Community Cruisers** We currently have 20 participants registered for our summer Community Cruisers program. The program will be held at the Cheney Mansion in Oak Park.
4. **Special Olympics** WSSRA has 10 athletes competing in the Special Olympics Regional Swim Meet on Thursday, March 20 at Metea Valley High School, Naperville, and 9 athletes competing in the Special Olympics Regional Powerlifting Tournament on March 29-30 at Marmion High School, Aurora. Gold medal winners from both events will advance to the state summer games in June.
5. **Hiring Updates** We are in the process of securing return staff for day camp and inclusion and have begun hiring for the summer. Applications are coming in steadily. Due to recent changes to child labor laws, we are adjusting our hiring age to 16 and older.
6. **Inclusion** Our Inclusion Manager will be hosting an Inclusion Workshop for our partner district Inclusion Liaisons on Wednesday, March 19, at the Park District of Forest Park from 10:00am-12:00pm. During the workshop, we will cover the inclusion process, available supports, the benefits of inclusion, and the positive impact it has on the community and planning forward for summer with the staff training schedule. While you may be well versed in the Inclusion process it is important to be in the know of current trends and how partners are problem-solving them. We will have a follow-up workshop in the Fall as well. We currently have 18 people registered to attend the workshop with our goal to have representation from each partner community.

7. Upcoming Events

- a. **Family Game Night** We are hosting a Family Game Night on Friday, March 14 at the park District of Forest Park. Families will enjoy an evening playing classic games, new games, and fun group challenges.
- b. **Flap Jack Bunny Hop** WSSRA is hosting our annual pancake breakfast on Saturday, April 5 at North Riverside Recreation Center. Families will enjoy a visit with the bunny, crafts, games, an egg hunt, and a pancake breakfast.
- c. **Sensory Sensitive Treats with the Bunny** The Park District of Oak Park and WSSRA are offering a sensory friendly spring event at the Cheney Mansion on Saturday, April 12. Families will enjoy crafts, treats, and a visit with the bunny!

I. Staff Report: Birko reported on behalf of Annie Hart, Superintendent of Business

1. **Marketing Round Table** WSSRA's Marketing Manager, Nicole Walsh, hosted a Marketing Round Table for all of our member districts. The meeting was held on February 20th at the WSSRA office. We had 10 people from 7 communities join us. Once again, Walsh received a lot of positive feedback and is planning to host another one later this year in the fall. Some of the topics discussed include WSSRA presence at partner events, everyone's brochure schedule, social media and how WSSRA can support your agencies as well as your agency supporting WSSRA, website information, hiring, and marketing trends, to name a few.
2. **Wide Format Printer purchase** WSSRA has had its HP wide format printer for 7.5 years and it recently stopped working. It was determined not repairable. The replacement printer is the newer version of this, an HP DesignJet Z6 which was \$400 cheaper than the original printer for a cost of \$4,784 including shipping. WSSRA has found this addition an invaluable resource for the Associations public relations efforts.
3. **Year End Wrap Up** Hart continues to work on the 2024 Audit. Hart has been gathering all requested materials and uploading them into the portal used by Lauterbach and Amen. WSSRA has been chosen to complete an IMRF Compliancy Review. Hart has been gathering and uploading documents to the IMRF portal, and the review will be completed within the next few weeks.

XII. Closed Session None

XIII. Adjournment Malchiodi/Iovinelli motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:46pm. Motion was unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko, Executive Director, mb/ March 25 minutes