

West Suburban Special Recreation Association

November 14, 2023

WSSRA

2915 Maple St, Franklin Park, IL

MINUTES

I. Chairperson Ron Malchiodi called the **meeting to order** at 4:07pm those present included:

Jake Worley-Hood, Park District of Oak Park
Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park
Dan LoCascio, Park District of Franklin Park
Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside
Anna Wegrecki, Village of Harwood Heights

Jeanmarie Hejjer-O'Connor, Village of N Riverside
Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District
Ted Gruber, Village of Elmwood Park
Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District
Cathy Fallon, Berwyn Park District

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

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/Fallon motioned to approve the Consent Agenda including the October 3, 2023, Minutes, October Financial Report, and Disbursements for October & November 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, Nakatsuka shared the Foundation is excited to share the Fallin For Our Stars Casino night event on Friday, November 10 was a huge success. The Cheney Mansion was filled with over 120 guests and magnetic energy. Anyone who attended found plenty of games to enjoy along with delicious food and plenty of spirits to keep the evening lively. The preliminary numbers show this event raised the second highest profit at \$24,084. A special thanks to all for your support in helping to secure raffle prizes, gift cards or certificates sponsorships and attending the event! And to the Park District of Oak Park for sharing their beautiful facility for all of our guests to enjoy. WSSRF will close the year with the Holiday Concert, which is set for Friday, December 8, 2023, held at the Trailside Forest Preserve Pavilion and are happy to announce the event tickets are already sold out! Lastly, the WSSRF will be sponsoring the Giving Tuesday and Holiday Solicitation. Please consider closing the year with a donation to WSSRF. The Foundation will be hosting their last Zoom meeting of the year this Thursday. WE will discuss final details on the last of the year's events and begin planning for 2024. Nakatsuka shared that at this time of Thanksgiving the Foundation is truly grateful for your continued support of their ongoing efforts to support the WSSRA mission.**

VI. **Under Committee Reports**

A. **Birko reported the WSSRA Finance Committee** headed by Chairperson Arnold cancelled the October meeting as the 2022 EAV's were still not available. The committee met via Zoom to discuss the updated 2024 partner shares with the 2022 EAV's on Thursday, November 9th. Details were discussed later in the meeting

B. **Flaherty reported the Policy Committee** met October 26th to continue the review and updates of the WSSRA Personnel Policy Manual.

C. **Nominating Committee** Iovinelli will be heading up the 2024 Nominating Committee for the WSSRA Board of Directors Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Iovinelli will share the slate at the December 2023 Board meeting and an approval vote will take place at the January 2024 Annual meeting.

VII. **Unfinished Business**

A. **Park District of Forest Park Building Updates** Iovinelli shared Birko and Iovinelli had a great meeting with Senate President Harmon's Chief of Staff, Eileen Lynch, and have a meeting scheduled with Speaker Emanuel Chris Welch on November 16 to discuss additional support. The school board has a special meeting on November 29 to discuss plans for Grant White School. The Park District board is approving the MOU on Thursday.

B. **Approval of the 2024 WSSRA Partner Shares** Birko shared the WSSRA Finance committee reviewed and Recommends a 4% increase in the 2024 Partner Shares to meet the demand for increased costs in providing services. This updated version includes the 2022 EAV's impacting the communities north of North Avenue due to the tri-annual Reassessment. Birko reminded folks of the 3-year Reassessment cycle and that partners south of North Avenue will be Reassessed in 2024 and to best prepare for a 12 – 15% increase due to the rise in EAV's. Birko also shared the 10-year

History look back chart and the comparison to what it would like if the increases would be flat. No other discussion occurred. **lovinelli/Gruber motioned to approve the 2024 Partner Shares using the 2022 EAV's. The roll call vote had 11 Yes votes and 0 No votes. The motion passed unanimously.**

C. Presentation of the 2024 Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative Review

Birko presented the 2024 budget & budget Narrative as recommended by the Finance Committee. Included in this discussion was the proposed 3.5% Merit for FT & RPT staff. The combined merit average between the partners & SRA's 3.78%. There were no questions. **Sletten/lovinelli motioned to approve the 2024 budget using the 2022 EAV's. The roll call vote had 11 Yes votes and 0 No votes. The motion passed unanimously.**

VIII. Under New Business

A. No Other

IX. Under Correspondence No Comments

X. Under Board Reports lovinelli reported for the Park District of Forest Park that they are halfway through Reiger Park Project despite the 6-month delayed start. They are starting to plan for the development of the final pocket park leased from the village. Events and programs going great. Getting ready for Holiday events. Looking forward to the meeting with Speaker Welch. **LoCascio had no report for the Park District of Franklin Park. Fallon reported the Berwyn Park District** is rolling out their new website and they should be LIVE by the end of November. They have started their Master Plan work and Events, and programming is happening again in Berwyn Park District! **Stanczyk reported the Veterans Park District** has their Winter/Spring catalog going to print and they are busy preparing for all of the Holiday events. **Wegrecki reported the Village of Harwood Heights's** Christmas party is coming up at end of the year and things are slowing down a bit. **Worley-Hood reported the Park District of Oak Park** had no report. **Heijer-O'Connor reported the Village of North Riverside Park District** will be hosting the Turkey Bingo coming up this Friday which is sold out with 180 guests. Coming up they will be hosting a snowless snow blowing and iceless ice rink in celebration of the holidays! **Flaherty reported the Norridge Park District** is redoing their website, working on the pool project, and planning holiday activities. Their Superintendent of Parks, Gerry Hernandez, is leaving for another opportunity which is a great loss to the district. They just posted the Superintendent of Parks position. **Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside** will hire a consultant to complete the 3-phase Master Plan which includes a community survey, needs assessment and a master plan. They will be completing the 2nd Annual Puzzle Race this coming weekend. So far, they have 8 teams competing. They are also gearing up for their holiday events which will begin with the Holiday Stroll on December 1st. **Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park Elmwood Park's** Halloween event was a great success with 1200 people in attendance, bocce continues with 88 teams with the Fall session ending and winter beginning, basketball is starting soon, and they will host their holiday stroll December 1st. They will also be hosting an indoor pickleball tournament in February with the date to be determined. **Sletten reported the River Forest Park District's** Master Plan has been approved and complimented the WSSRA staff and Foundation on the "Fallin For Our Stars" event. "You did a great job! My wife and I attended, and it was a lot of fun! "

XI. Executive Director's Report Birko Reported

A. 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.

B. Attend the WSSRF "Fallin For Our Stars Event" Birko invited all to support the WSSRF FFOS Casino night on Friday, November 10th from 7:00 until 11:00pm at the PDOP's Cheney Mansion. Guests will enjoy an evening of Casino gaming, food, drink, raffle, and outstanding LIVE Auction items to bid on. Not able to come then consider a donation or sponsorship. Participation by each of the WSSRA Partners is critical to this event's success. For more information go the www.wssra.net Thank you to all who supported through participation, sponsorship, and gift card donations!

C. WSSRA Attends Events Birko attended the IAPD "Best of the Best" Gala as a guest of the Park District of Forest Park. WSSRA's very own were recognized, Park District of Forest Park's Roy Sansone a Park Commissioner for 20 years, Sandy Lentz a Park District of Oak Park Commissioner for 10 years and former WSSRA Representative and Mark Sladek, North Berwyn Park District Commissioner for 25 years and former WSSRA Representative for 20years Congratulations to all for your continued dedication to our field. Birko & Hart attended the IAPD Legal Symposium and will be attending the upcoming PDRMA RMI training.

D. WSSRA Executive Director Annual Review Board Chairperson Malchiodi will be sending out the Executive Director Birko's Annual Review. Included in the evaluation will be her 2023 goals updated. Malchiodi requests the evaluation be completed by each partner and **returned to Malchiodi by December 1, 2023**, so a summary can be prepared for the

December 12, 2023, Board meeting.

E. **Reminder on Alternate Share Payment Schedule** Please accept this as your reminder of the process you must follow to request an alternate payment schedule. Per the Amended and Restated Articles of Agreement, “any partner, who has not received an alternate payment schedule for more than two consecutive years may request and alternate schedule for the payment of the Special Recreation Share. Such requests must be in writing, must describe the reason for the alternate schedule, and be received by WSSRA by December 1, 2023, The WSSRA Board of Directors will vote on the requests at the December 12, 2023, meeting. The alternate schedules can be granted only if all the schedules can be granted. All the schedules must be approved by a vote of two-thirds of those members of the Board voting on the issue at a regularly convened meeting of the Board of Directors. Interest will be charged on the alternate schedules as described in IV. C. Schedule for Payment of Shares of the Amended and Restated Articles of Agreement.

E. **Staff Report: April Michalski, Superintendent of Recreation reported**

1. **Programs** We are working on accommodating our waitlists. Our Food Critics program is very popular this season, we are adding three additional Food Critic program dates to accommodate the waitlist. **Programs** Fall programs are wrapping up this week. Staff are planning winter/spring brochure copy. We are excited to expand our Community Cruisers adult day program two days per week in the winter/spring on a trial basis. The goal of the program is to emphasize social interaction with peers through community outings, service projects and more.

2. **Special Olympics**

i. **Floor Hockey-** WSSRA has five athletes competing in the Special Olympics State Floor Hockey competition on November 18 at Northeastern University.

ii. **Basketball-** Bobcats Basketball is in full swing. Our three teams begin their game season on November 14.

iii. **Snowshoeing-** WSSRA is offering a Special Olympics snowshoeing program, we currently have 7 athletes enrolled.

3. **Hiring Updates** Our staff manager is continuing to hire for seasonal programs and inclusion. Staff attended Mother McAuley’s job fair on October 24 and recruited during lunch periods at Ridgewood High School on November 3. WSSRA is hiring a full-time Recreation Specialist, the position will oversee WSSRA’s Lekotek Toy Lending program and Imaginarium Sensory Room as part of the transition with the retirement of Luz Serrano our FT Driver/Lekotek Leader. For additional information or to apply, candidates can visit our website at wssra.net.

4. **Inclusion** We are currently serving 41 participants in 67 inclusive programs. Please continue to send Chris Sturm inclusion notifications as you receive registrations at chriss@wssra.net and allow for a minimum of 2 weeks for WSSRA to find any staffing support.

5. **Upcoming Events**

i. **Turkey Bingo** WSSRA is attending North Riverside’s Annual Turkey Bingo Event on Friday, November 17. We have 41 participants and family members registered. Families will play Bingo and could win a turkey or many other prizes.

ii. **School Days Out** Our school aged participants are visiting the Museum of Science of Industry on November 22.

iii. **Polar Express** WSSRA’s Annual Polar Express Story Time is taking place on December 9. We have 130 participants and family members registered. Families will enjoy a fun-filled train ride to the “North Pole” with a visit from Santa. The event is sponsored by Thumbuddy Special.

F. **Staff Report: Prepared by Annie Hart, Superintendent of Business**

1. **Safety** Carla Slotarski, our Safety Coordinator, completed WSSRA’s Slips Trips and Falls Self-Assessment to wrap up the next stage of the RMR. WSSRA is sending 7 staff to RMI on Friday, November 17th. The Safety Team has updated the Footwear policy in our Seasonal Staff Manual to specify “gym shoes” vs. “close toed” shoes. WSSRA was awarded a grant from the Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township which we are using to purchase 4 new CPR practice mannequins with lights, 4 practice AEDs and an additional AED to bring on long travel outings and overnight trips.

2. **Staff Update** Full-time Transportation Specialist/Lekotek Leader, Luz Serrano, is retiring this November 30th after 17 years of employment with WSSRA. Please consider joining us on November 30th at the Park District of Forest Park to celebrate Luz’s retirement. We will be sending out further details later in the week.

3. **Minivan Update** We are officially in possession of the 2023 Minivan Honda Odyssey. Next steps include finalizing the wrap design, wrapping it, and getting it on the road for upcoming programs and events.

G. **Other**

XIII. **Adjournment**Sletten/ lovinelli motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:49pm. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko, Executive Director
mb/ November 23 minutes