

## West Suburban Special Recreation Association

October 12, 2021

Zoom Meeting of the Board of Directors

Zoom Meeting from WSSRA Offices located at 2915 Maple Street in Franklin Park

### MINUTES

- I. Chairman Jackie Iovinelli called the **meeting to order** at 4:07pm those present included:

Sandy Lentz, Jan Arnold, PD of Oak Park  
Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park  
Al Schmidt, Village of Elmwood Park 4:11 arrival  
Carlene Greifelt, Veterans Park District  
Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District  
Joe Modrich, Dan LoCascio, Franklin Park  
Anna Wegrecki, Village of Harwood Heights

Sandy Fejt, Berwyn Park District attended remotely  
Annemarie Flaherty, Norridge Park District  
Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside  
Teresa Mrozik, Village of North Riverside  
Mark Sladek, North Berwyn 4:09 arrival

#### Others in Attendance:

WSSRA staff: April Ryan, Annie Hart, Marianne Birko

- II. **Malchiodi/Sladek moved to approve the agenda.** The motion was approved by roll call vote.
- III. **Modrich/Schmidt moved to approve the September 14, 2021, Regular Board Meeting minutes.** The motion was approved by roll call vote. Mrozik abstained.
- III. A. **Mrozik/Sletten moved to accept the September 2021 Financial Report.** The motion was approved by roll call vote.
- B. **Sletten/Sladek moved to authorize payroll.** The board, by roll call vote, authorizes payroll, prepaid disbursements #39997 and ending with check #40017 and authorizes payment of September payroll and disbursements debit charges and cash transfers totaling \$122,166.82 and authorizes payment of October 2021 disbursements #40018 and ending with check #40021 disbursements debit charges and cash transfers totaling \$11,241.32 pending the availability of funds. Roll call vote showed 12 yes votes and the motion was approved.
- V. **Public Comment** No Public present.
- VI. **Under the Foundation Report: Birko shared the report on behalf of the WSSRF. She reported the WSSRF is currently focusing on the remaining Three upcoming events: Fallin For Our Stars** WSSRF has moved to host this event virtually this year. This event is scheduled for Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. It will include the **FREE virtual casino games, virtual auction, and raffle prizes.** Look for the LIVE link to participate in this event through the mailed invite, the WSSRA.net or any email from WSSRA has a live link on the tag line. **Concert in the Park** WSSRF will be collaborating with PACTT once again hosting the "Sons of Chicago" Jazz concert in Thatcher Woods indoor pavilion on Saturday, December 11, 7:00 – 10:00pm. Mark your calendars and plan to celebrate this **Holiday Music Spectacular! ... Holiday Solicitation** The year WSSRF will close the year with its annual "Giving Tuesday" campaign and Holiday solicitation celebrating WSSRA's 45 years of providing recreational services to persons with disabilities to its community partners! The mailing will go out in late November. **The Foundation Board of Trustees thanks you for your continued support.**
- VII. **Under Committee Reports**
- A. **Finance Committee** Arnold reported the committee met on September 27 to continue discussions of the financial impact of COVID-19, Amending the 2021 budget, 2022 shares & budget planning. Details will be shared later in the agenda
- B. **No Other**

VIII. **Unfinished Business**

**A. Approve the 2021 budget amendments to reduce partner shares**

Birko reported due to Covid-19 WSSRA staff have made many cost cutting measures and expects to have a significant cost savings. As a result, the Finance Committee is recommending a 50% reduction in the last quarter payment of the 2021 partner shares. Schmidt/Sladek motioned **the Board by roll call vote approve the reduction of the last quarter of partner shares by 50%. These share savings should only be used to support the SRA as outlined in the Board Policies. Fund Balance Review & Acceptance. Roll call vote showed 12 yes votes and the motion was approved.**

**B. Approval of the Proposed Final 2022 Partner shares**

Birko reported the WSSRA Finance committee reviewed and recommends the Proposed 2022 Partner Shares with no rate increase and a reduction in shares by \$50,000 due to the slow return from COVID-19. Included in the share chart. She noted included in the shares chart is the \$27,116 that would have been allocated to the Clyde Park District; CPD if they were still in the consortium. Per Legal counsel's confirmation the CPD is not eligible to those funds per the withdrawal from the partnership as of December 31, 2020.

**The WSSRA Article VIII B Withdrawal from Partnership**

Any partner may withdraw from WSSRA effective January 1 of the next fiscal year, by submitting written notice of intent to withdraw to the Board of Directors, to be received not later than March 1 of the year proceeding the date upon which withdrawal will be effective.

- 4. A partner which voluntarily withdraws from membership shall have no claim against, right to or interest in any capital improvements, real property, or other assets of WSSRA.**

Birko noted based on this information the WSSRA Board can choose one of the following options

**Option 1:** Approve Attachment B shares and the \$27,116 will stay in the Fund Balance

**Option 2:** Approve Attachment C shares of the \$27,116 are distributed to the eligible partners based on the percent of the 2020 budget contribution without CPD.

**Option 3:** Approve Attachment B shares and return the \$27,116 to the CPD

Sletten requested the board consider Option 3 as he believes that CPD levied the dollars for 2020 and believes the dollars should go back to CPD as they were a part of the WSSRA consortium through December 31, 2020. Sladek felt it should go back to the partners and agreed with Legal counsel but would have to confer with Vallez with NBPD. All others agreed with Sletten. **Sletten/Lentz motioned by roll call vote to return the \$27,116 to Clyde Park District their portion of the 2020 carry-over dollars to be used only as described by the 5-8 levy for the purposes of providing recreation for persons with disabilities. 11 partners approved the motion and Sladek abstained**

**Lentz/Schmidt motioned by roll call vote to approve the 2022 Shares as presented in Attachment B. Roll call vote showed 12 yes votes and the motion was approved.**

- C. WSSRA Vaccine and/or Mandatory Testing Policy** Birko noted the challenges of these times require diligent efforts to keep staff and our consumers safe. The services WSSRA provides are dependent on it. WSSRA runs many programs in schools, afterschool and supports our partners in these settings as well. In order to be in compliance with the state mandate WSSRA is recommending a Vaccine Policy requiring those who are vaccinated to share this information and those who are not vaccinated to test weekly. Iovinelli requested feedback from each of the board members and **Lentz/Sladek motioned the Board of Directors approves the WSSRA Vaccine and/or Mandatory Testing Policy as reviewed by Legal Counsel. Roll call vote showed 12 yes votes and the motion was approved.**

IX. **Under New Business:**

- A. Tri-Annual Salary Range Review and approval** Birko reported in accordance with the WSSRA Board Policy we review the Salary Ranges for the Full-time positions that have Salary ranges. Annual the ranges are increased on the lower and upper end by the CPI to keep them current. Once this is done the staff compare the ranges with similar sized SRA's as noted in the chart. The recommendations are made based on these comparisons. Schmidt noted he would like to see the ED salary frozen. Sletten stated this discussion is not appropriate now and can be addressed at the appropriate meeting. Iovinelli stated it is critical to stay competitive during this time of staff shortages. Arnold agreed as she recently had to increase her entry level position to \$50,000 to be competitive. **Sletten/Schmidt motioned the Board of Directors approve the WSSRA Salary Ranges as recommended by the WSSRA Finance Committee for review every three years in accordance with the Board Policy. Roll call vote showed 12 yes votes and the motion was approved.**
- B. Recommended 2022 Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative Review** Birko presented the 2022 budget as reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee. The discussion included a review of the budget narrative and highlights including a 3% (1.4% + 1.6% merit) increase based on the survey of WSSRA partners and similar sized SRA's. The Board was asked to be prepared to vote to approve the 2022 budget at the November 9<sup>th</sup> board meeting.
- C. Accept New Board Alternate for the Village of North Riverside** **Sletten/Malchiodi motioned the Board of Directors accepts Nicole Collier as the new Alternate Board member for the Village of North Riverside. Roll call vote showed 12 yes votes and the motion was approved.**

X. Under **Correspondence**- No comments

XI. Under **Board Reports** – **Lentz reported the Park District of Oak Park** was proud to host the September 26<sup>th</sup> ribbon cutting of the newly renovated fully accessible Rehm Park playground. It boasts a fully accessible Zip line, merry-go-round, and more. Lentz stated it is why we do what we do to allow all to participate fully! Fall programs are going well. The Frank Lloyd Wright Run will be virtual and the heating and cooling project for Pleasant Home has begun. Recently they filled 3 Full-time positions with two more to be filled. Many holiday events are planned and already sold out. **Schmidt reported the Village of Elmwood Park's** new fitness center opened on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Doing the final build out of the skate park and they are hosting the second phase of the flu and vaccine shots on October 16<sup>th</sup>. **Greifelt reported the Veterans Park District** is currently hosting the Haunted on Hersh outdoor Halloween Event on October 22. They are also hosting the Veterans Day Observance event and luncheon for the VETS. They are also currently planning the Winter/Spring program guide. **Sladek reported the North Berwyn Park District's** Halloween weekend is coming up starting with House Decorating contest, Haunted Storytelling, Trick or Treat stations and a showing of Nightmare Before X-mas... **Sletten reported the River Forest Park District** recently hosted their Halloween event in Thatcher Woods and had an overwhelming response. They are currently working on the engineering of Keystone Park and board approval of the Liaison Policy. The RFPD board also declined to participate in the PDOP's CRC project. They are focusing on their efforts on the Priority opportunity. **Wegrecki reported the Village of Harwood Heights** recently hosted a very successful Craft Fair and are preparing for their Halloween festivities on October 23<sup>rd</sup> as well! **Fejt reported the Berwyn Park District** had a successful Brewfest and are currently working on their 2022 budget. **Flaherty reported the Norridge Park District** had a very successful Fall Fest October 1, 2, 3 main stage entertainment, carnival rides and food trucks and great weather! They are currently struggling with a computer shut down for the entire district. They are hosting Softball Tournaments the next 3 weekends and Halloween events on October 22. **Mrozik reported the Village of North Riverside's** wrapped up the "Back in Action" theatre production. They will also be hosting the Great Pumpkin Challenge for 150 kids and their family's including a costume parade, family pumpkin carving and a flashlight pumpkin hunt and a special visit from surprise guest Baby T-Rex, 16ft T-Rex, and Velociraptor. Be sure to join us for the Holiday Bizarre with 40 special vendors on October 24. **Modrich reported for the Park District of Franklin Park** hosted their annual Fall Fest parade on October 3 followed by their Pumpkin Fest which was very well attended. They are continuing the Timber, Hawthorne and Pearl Park updates and are optimistic with the positive return they are seeing in their parks and programs. **Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside** is finalizing their 2022 budget. They promoted staff into the recently vacated Program Coordinator's position and are now filling the Recreation Supervisor position. The VR will be hosting a drive thru Haunted House for Trick or Treating on

October 22 and hosting the Kinder Kids costume parade on October 29. Fall soccer and softball is wrapping up the year and they are still deciding the plan for the Annual Holiday Stroll event. **Iovinelli reported for the Park District of Forest Park**, where every day is a Holiday with their outstanding Recreation Team! They too are superseding all program numbers from in the past! Upcoming they have the Casket Races and Trunk or Treat to celebrate Halloween. They broke ground on the splash pad "The Land of Candy" for a planned opening of May 22, 2022. They are also working on their Pocket Parks and getting them up to standards. Forest Park would like to thank the PDOP for including them in their safe Zone conversations and finally, a special thanks to the RFPD team who joined Forest Park to win the IPRA Park Pursuit! They are currently sharing the trophy between districts!

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

- A. WSSRF's Fallin For Our Stars Virtual Casino Night** The WSSRF decided in the current COVID-19 climate to go Virtual with the Fallin For Our Stars Casino night. It will be held on Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup> and will include the opportunity to play free Casino Games live online. Guests will also bid on Silent Auction items and participate in the raffle for **2 UNITED AIRLINES TICKETS**. Raffle tickets can be purchased online \$25 each/5 for \$100. Please join us virtually from October 22 – October 29 at <http://bidpal.net/wssraffos2021>
- B. NBC FOIA request** WSSRA was contacted by Katherine Smyser of NBC Universal, for a FOIA request of Unclaimed Payments due to the Treasurer's Office since 2016. WSSRA answered the request which included a list of 2 wage checks, 3 refund program fees and a mileage check totaling \$380.60.
- C. Annual Visits** Birko is continuing her 2020 Annual visits presenting highlights of 2020. Visits can be done in-person or virtually. Contact Birko to confirm a date.

**E. Staff Report April Ryan, Superintendent of Recreation Reported**

- 1. Fall Programs** are going well. We currently have over 160 unique individuals participating in our fall programs. WSSRA is collaborating with several school districts this season to offer a variety of recreation programs. Collaborations include our **Brunch Bunch** program with the Village of Elmwood Park School District 401's transition students. The program focuses on socialization and cooking healthy recipes. WSSRA is also collaborating with Berwyn South School District 100 to offer **Monthly Specials** for students in Irving Elementary School's preschool classrooms. WSSRA will implement two lessons per month which will include sensory exploitation, arts and crafts and music activities. Lastly, we are collaborating with Ridgewood High School District 234 to offer a new weekly program called **CARE (Creative Art, Recreation, and Exercise)**. Program will incorporate art, fitness, and wellness activities.
- 2. Special Olympics**
  - WSSRA had 8 athletes compete in the Special Olympics Regional Bocce Tournament on September 18 and 3 athletes received gold medals and will be advancing to the State Summer Games in June.
  - WSSRA has 14 athletes participating in the Special Olympics Regional Bowling Tournament on October 17. Gold medal winners will advance to the State Tournament in December.
  - WSSRA participants and staff attended Opportunity Knocks' annual OK Classic event. WSSRA Bobcats played the OK Warriors in their annual softball game and WSSRA Bobcats won and are now undefeated for the fourth year in a row!

- A Big Congratulations to WSSRA's very own Chris Sturm who was selected to be the Special Olympics USA Games Powerlifting Team Head Coach which will be held in Orlando Florida in June of 2022!
- 3. Imaginarium Sensory Room** We are still in the process of installing equipment in our new space at the George A. Leoni Complex in Melrose Park, our goal is to open the room by the end of the month.

4. **Staffing** Our Staff Manager, Carla, is still hiring seasonal staff to work inclusion and fall programs. Staff are attending the Leyden Career Fair on November 3 and the Morton College Job Fair on November 10.

5. **Upcoming Special Events**

- a. **Turkey Bingo** WSSRA is attending North Riversides Turkey Bingo event on November 19. Participants will have the opportunity to win a turkey, ham, pie, and more.
- b. **WSSRA Santa Express** Families can register for an outdoor visit with Santa and his elves on December 11. Each participant will receive a gift, the event is once again being sponsored by Thumbuddy Special. We are so grateful for the annual donation of money for the gifts given to the participants.
- c. **Sensory Sensitive Treats with Santa** WSSRA is collaborating 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 with Santa.
- d. **Holiday Hullabaloo** WSSRA is offering 6 in-person events during winter break. Activities will include pottery, cooking, a magic show, bowling and more. Registration is currently taking place.

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

1. **Inclusion** Numbers continue to rise. We currently have 34 participants scheduled for fall programs and afterschool care. Our Inclusion Manager, Chris Sturm, is currently on FMLA through the first week in November. While he is gone Christina Fernandez will be your main contact, and feel free to contact Annie Hart as well. Christina is working closely with our Staff Manager, Carla Pakenas, to hire and place Inclusion Aides when needed.
2. **Transportation** We have expanded our transportation offerings to allow more passengers and offered for more programs. We are currently offering transportation for 13 programs as well as Holiday Hullabaloo and School Days Out. All passengers will need to continue to wear a mask and be able to get on and off the vehicle independently. WSSRA has officially received our Micro Bird Bus, which brings our fleet back up to 3. Staff has given positive feedback on driving the vehicle.

G. **No Other**

XIII. **Adjournment** Lentz/Fejt moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:20pm. A roll call vote was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko  
Executive Director  
mb/ Oct 21 minutes