

**West Suburban Special Recreation Association**

September 14, 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 4:01pm those present included:

Sandy Lentz, Jan Arnold, PD of Oak Park  
Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park  
Al Schmidt, Village of Elmwood Park  
Carlene Greifelt, Veterans Park District  
Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District  
Joe Modrich, Park District of Franklin Park

Joe Zerillo, Village of Harwood Heights  
Sandy Fejt, Berwyn Park District attended remotely  
Annemarie Flaherty, Norridge Park District  
Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside arrived 4:20

**Others in Attendance:**

Nicole Collier, Village of North Riverside Alternate Rep pending  
WSSRA staff: April Ryan, Annie Hart, Marianne Birko  
WSSRF Rocio Perez

**Not in Attendance:** Village of North Riverside, EA

II. **Sletten/Schmidt moved to approve the corrected agenda.** The motion was approved by roll call vote.

III. **Sletten/Schmidt moved to approve the July 13, 2021, Regular Board Meeting minutes.** The motion was approved by roll call vote.

IV. A. **Sletten/Lentz moved to accept the July & August 2021 Financial Report.** The motion was approved by roll call vote.

B. **Sletten/Schmidt moved to authorize payroll, July & August prepaid disbursements #39949 and ending with check #39987 and authorizes payment of July & August 2021 payroll and disbursements debit charges and cash transfers totaling \$360,794.07 and authorizes payment of September 2021 disbursements #39988 and ending with check #39996 disbursements debit charges and cash transfers totaling \$25,038.98 pending the availability of funds.** Roll call vote showed 10 yes votes and the motion was approved.

V. **Public Comment** Birko introduced the board to Nicole Collier, the future Alternate Representative of the Village of North Riverside. Nicole stated she was happy to be representing the VNR.

VI. **Under the Foundation Report: Birko introduced Rocio Perez a resident of BPD and consumer of WSSRA services for the last 30 years. Perez shared how important WSSRA is to Tony and her family. Perez reported the WSSRF is continuing to focus on the following events:**

**The Bocce Tournament Event** WSSRF's First Annual in-person Bocce Tournament was held at the Village of Elmwood Park's many indoor and outdoor Bocce courts this past Saturday, September 11 from 4:00 – 8:00pm. We were very excited to host 8 Teams in the Tournament who competed for Cash prizes. The event was a huge success thanks to the sponsors including the Village of Elmwood Park whom we owe a debt of thank you for hosting the event, Elmwood Park Union Tap for donating the bar for the players initial drinks, River Elm Properties, and Corporal Realty Group. The event brought in \$4,695 with a net of \$3,500 in profits and all who attended had a great time! The Foundation is excited to grow this event for next year. **Fall in 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 virtual casino games, auction, and raffle prizes. Watch for the LIVE link to participate in this event. **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. 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 the WSSRA Board for their continued support

VII. **Under Committee Reports**

- A. **Finance Committee** Birko reported the Finance Committee headed by Jan Arnold met on July 27 in person and virtually on August 23 & September 7 to continue discussions of the financial impact of COVID-19, Amending the 2021 budget, 2020 carry-over plans, 2022 shares & budget planning. Details will be shared later in the agenda.
- B. **No Other**

VIII. **Unfinished Business**

- A. **Facility Fund Update** Birko reported per the WSSRA Board's directive staff researched more centrally located office space and recommends based on this facility review that a WSSRA Office move would require significant funding for the move, build out costs and possible additional leasing expenses. In preparation the Finance Committee recommends staying with the Facility Fund Policy as is which allows for its growth to the \$750,000
- B. **Fund Balance Review & Acceptance** Per the previous Board meeting Birko clarified with the WSSRA Auditor, Lauterbach & Amen that the WSSRA Board can choose to keep the amount of \$24,478 which is over the 25% needed to meet the Fund Balances minimum or move it to the Building Fund. Arnold reminded the board the importance of continuing to build the Facility Fund so when the opportunity comes the Association is in a good position to take advantage of the opportunity. The WSSRA Finance Committee has reviewed the current WSSRA Fund Balance as outlined makes the following recommendations.

→**Recommendation: Lentz/Sletten motioned the Board follows the WSSRA Fund Balance Policy and split the \$360,813 dollars from the 2020 carryover funds; 50% \$180,407 to Facility Fund and 50% \$180,406 goes back to reduce the partners shares in the 2022 budget. By roll call vote Sletten, Schmidt, Zerillo, Flaherty, Lentz, Fejt, Modrich, Iovinelli, Malchiodi, and Greifelt voted Yes, there were 0 No votes. Motion passed**

→**Recommendation: Lentz/Fejt motioned the Board approves by roll call vote moving the balance of \$24,478 from the Fund Balance which has met the 25% minimum budget requirement, to the Facility Fund bringing the new total to the Facility Fund to \$364,884. By roll call vote the motion was approved by Lentz, Fejt, Modrich, Iovinelli, Malchiodi, Greifelt voting Yes and Sletten, Schmidt, Zerillo and Flaherty voting No. The Motion passed**

- C. **WSSRA Imaginarium has Moved!** Birko reported WSSRA has officially moved the Imaginarium Sensory Room from 218 Madison in Oak Park to its new location in the George A. Leoni Complex located at 800 N. 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Melrose Park. It is the perfect room to accommodate the equipment needs for this exciting play experience and storage too! A huge thank you to the Park District of Oak Park Board and Staff for helping us launch this dream and to the Veterans Park District for welcoming us into their space. WSSRA has agreed to pay \$250 per month/\$3,000 per year for the year-round use of this dedicated space.

D. **Other None**

IX. **Under New Business:**

- A. **Present the 2021 budget amendments to reduce partner shares** Birko shared due to Covid-19 WSSRA staff have made many cost cutting measures and expects to have a significant cost savings. As a result, the WSSRA staff and Finance Committee recommend a 50% reduction in the last quarter payment of the 2021 partner shares. **The Board was asked to take back to partners and plan to vote on these recommendations at the October 12, 2021 Board meeting.**
- B. **Present 2022 Preliminary shares** Birko shared the WSSRA Finance committee reviewed and recommends the 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 is the recommended reduction in shares as follows: \$50,000 reduction of the over-all shares, an additional reduction of \$180,407 from the 2020 carry-over audit, all population numbers reflect the 2020 Census. Birko stated all of these corrections are rare and are influenced not only by

COVID-19 but the addition of three new partners and the loss of one in the past three years. Note the overall partner shares have been reduced the last two years by \$125,000 due to the efforts of staff to reduce expenses in this current climate. Arnold noted as we return to normal levels of service and the increases in minimum wage go in affect, we will need to increase the shares accordingly. \*Per usual these are preliminary shares as we are waiting on final information from the Village of Harwood Heights overlapping properties. The formula at the bottom of the chart has yet to be updated. Any further corrections will be minor. **The Board was asked to be prepared to vote on the recommended 2022 shares at the October 12, Board of Directors meeting.**

C. **WSSRA Vaccine Mandate & Mandatory Testing Policy** Birko shared as with all of you, these challenging times require diligent efforts to keep staff and our consumers safe. The services we provide are dependent on it. WSSRA runs many programs in schools and afterschool and supports our partners in these settings as well. To follow 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. The board reviewed the policy and discussion included Sletten stating they have approved a policy to follow the state mandate requiring a vaccination by all staff, Arnold stated PDOP is still in discussions, Modrich shared concerns that this policy is a reach beyond our responsibility level. If we go here, where do we stop? The board agreed to wait until further information would be available.

D. **Other None**

X. Under **Correspondence**- No comments

XI. Under **Board Reports** – **Sletten reported the River Forest Park District's** They are amid their capital projects of redoing the tennis courts and batting cages at Keystone. The board is currently reviewing and updating board governance with staff. **Schmidt reported the Village of Elmwood Park** is hosting a Health Fair and offering the opportunity for COVID-19 as well as flu shots through Illinois Department of Public Health on Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. Anyone interested can schedule and appointment and walk-ins are accepted. They will be offering both Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer shots. **Collier reported the Village of North Riverside's** soccer season is in full swing, registration opening for the youth soccer league on Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. They will also be hosting the Great Pumpkin Challenge for kids. It includes cookie decorating, family pumpkin carving and a flashlight pumpkin hunt. This weekend is their Autumn Fest featuring the carving of a 150-pound pumpkin by a local artist. **Zerillo reported the Village of Harwood Heights** is moving along with Fall programs at the new Recreation Center. They are offering \$5 Zumba classes and all things sports are starting up as well. They are also busy planning for Halloween festivities as well! They will not have their Annual Village Festival, but Mayor Jezierny is making Big Plans for next year's 75<sup>th</sup> Village Anniversary! **Flaherty reported the Norridge Park District's** 60-year-old pool survived the summer! They recently hired the new Early Care Pre-School Coordinator, Amanda Carden. They are currently working on renovations to the ball fields in preparation for the three weekend tournaments they are hosting. They will also be hosting a Fall Fest October 1, 2, 3 and October 22 is their Trunk or Treat event. The Board is working on some long-range planning as well. **Lentz reported the Park District of Oak Park** I.GOV and the Village of Oak Park put together a sustainability symposium on 9/18 on-line. The Community Recreation Center Launch Party is on 9/18 from 3:30 -5:00pm. The party will give the Foundation an opportunity to do a final push for their Community Capitol campaign for the CRC. They are still on schedule to break ground in March of 2022 and opening in April 2024. Fall programs are up and running with great numbers. They are currently projecting a 3.4 million revenue surplus. The Frank Lloyd Wright race is now virtual, and they will also have the ribbon cutting for the NEW Rehm playground on Sat. September 26<sup>th</sup> coinciding with their Fall Fest. Six staff and Board members will be heading to NRPA to celebrate being a Gold Medal Finalist! **Modrich reported for the Park District of Franklin Park's** two park projects have been impacted by COVID with delays. They are currently working on the Children's Garden at North Park. They are finalizing their plans for Pumpkin Fest following the Annual October parade. They too are planning their Halloween events in stages. They had a great summer considering all that is happening. **Iovinelli reported for the Park District of Forest Park**, where every day is a Holiday! They broke ground on the splash pad "The Land of Candy" for a planned opening of May 22, 2022. Tennis Court resurfacing is underway, and programs are coming back! They are hosting the campout this weekend and staff and a few board members are heading to NRPA next week. They also had a Board member resignation, and they are in the process

of a new appointment. **Fejt reported the Berwyn Park District** is currently looking to fill two full time positions in recreation and a part time maintenance staff. They had a successful Fiesta Lan tix last weekend and are partnering with the Berwyn Public library to host the Fairytale Ball this Saturday and the Brewfest is on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Sports leagues have started their Fall programs. **Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside's** "Touch a Truck" event is this week and WSSRA will have a tent there. They will be co-hosting the Cross-Country event at RBHS. Fall softball league is full. Hiring staff is their biggest challenge specifically for before and after school program shifts. They have also expanded their Kinder Kids program due to demand as District 96 only has ½ day pre-school. They have expanded their hours to 5:30 to accommodate working parents. The VR will be hosting a drive thru Haunted House for Trick or Treating this year. **Greifelt reported the Veterans Park District** is currently planning a Walk Thru Block party. Currently the focus is on preschool and afterschool care. They too have experienced staff turnover but have filled the positions and are currently fully staffed. They are excited to be installing 4 drop down batting cages at the George Leoni Complex. They have also installed dimmer lighting in the Imaginarium room.

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

- A. **NRPA Update** Birko is not attending the NRPA conference in person this year. She hopes to attend in Phoenix in 2022.
- B. **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 Casino Games live online. Guests will also can bid on Silent Auction items and participate in the raffle. Watch for more details to come.
- C. **Annual Visits** Birko has begun her 2020 Annual visits presenting highlights of 2020. Presentations began in March with the Park District of Oak Park. Visits can be done in-person or virtually. Contact Birko to confirm a date.

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

- 1. **August Mini Session** We kicked off our August Mini session with Riverside's Riv-inia Concert on August 13. Participants enjoyed a variety of popular in-person and virtual programs and events during the month of August including Yoga in the Park, Karaoke, Bingo, a virtual cooking class and more!
- 2. **Fall Programs** Fall programs begin September 13-November 13. We currently have a little over 100 unique individuals registered for fall programs. We are in the process of evaluating our fall program offerings and making some adjustments based on program numbers. The following program have been cancelled due to low enrollment: Healthy Start, Outdoor Adventures, Food Critics and Show Time. We added some additional virtual and hybrid program offerings as many families have expressed interest in more virtual programs
- 3. **Special Olympics** WSSRA has 9 athletes competing in the Special Olympics Regional Bocce Tournament on September 18 at Grant Park in Northlake. Gold medal winners will advance to the Special Olympics Summer Games. Bobcats Basketball is back, and athletes are very excited to be back on the court. We anticipate two teams this season.
- 4. **Staffing** continues to be a challenge. Our Staff Manager, Carla, is still hiring seasonal staff to work inclusion and fall programs.
- 5. **Imaginarium Sensory Room** WSSRA's Imaginarium Sensory Room has moved to a new location, the George A. Leoni Complex in Melrose Park. Thank you to the Park District of Oak Park for making WSSRA's dream of opening a sensory room possible and thank you to Veteran's Park District for providing us facility space for our sensory room. Our new Imaginarium Sensory Room is scheduled to open in early October.
- 6. **Special Events**
  - a. **Splish Splash Summer Bash** Our annual pool party was held at the Forest Park Aquatics Center on Thursday, July 29. The event was a great success, we had over 250 participants and family members in attendance. A special **Thank You** to the Park District of Forest Park for hosting us!
  - b. **Dare2Tri Bike Event** WSSRA partnered with Dare2Tri and Berwyn Park District on August 14 for an adapted bike day at Proksa Park. The event gave participants the opportunity to try out a

variety of adapted bicycles and Dare2Tri gave families resources for grant and funding opportunities to purchase an adapted bike. Families were very appreciative of the opportunity.

- c. **Makin' Tracks Community Run/Walk** River Forest Park District is hosting their Annual Makin' Tracks event on September 17-19. All registered participants will complete a 5K virtually over the weekend. Please help promote this annual event that benefits WSSRA. For more information or to register, visit <https://rfparks.com/>

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. We too are challenged with finding staff, so your creative support is greatly appreciated!
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 Hullaballos. All passengers will need to continue to wear a mask and be able to get on and off the vehicle independently. WSSRA is currently waiting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> vehicle to be delivered to the office any day. Unfortunately, the day before dropping the vehicle to us, while CSBS was preparing all the documents, they discovered the Title is incorrect. Ford's title was not accurate – the VIN #s did not match. CSBS has been told that Ford is working on correcting the issue and hopes to have it done within the next few weeks.

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/ Sept 21 minutes