

**West Suburban Special Recreation Association**

September 12, 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

Colleen Broderick, Village of N Riverside  
Cathy Fallon, Berwyn Park District  
Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District  
Kelly Diaz, North Berwyn Park District

**Others in Attendance:** WSSRA staff: Annie Hart, April Michalski, Marianne Birko, WSSRF, Rocio Perez, remote

**Excused Absence:** River Forest Park District, Village of Elmwood Park, Norridge Park District, Village of Harwood Heights

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

III. **Approval of the Consent Agenda Iovinelli/Broderick motioned to approve the Consent Agenda including the July 11, 2023, Minutes, July & August Financial Report, and Disbursements for July, August & September 2023, the approval of 3-year Audit renewal proposal and the NBPB Board Representatives. Roll call vote showed 8 yes votes, and the motion was approved**

IV. **No Public Comment**

V. **Under the Foundation Perez reported on behalf of the Foundation Board, WSSRA/WSSRF hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual John Lannefeld Memorial Bocce Ball Tournament on Saturday, September 9th and it was a GREAT Day for Bocce with 60 guests enjoying the beautiful Village of Elmwood Park CRC. The event helped raise nearly \$6,000. There were a few less teams competing as we were competing with so many other activity conflicts on this day from Special Olympics to local events. Thanks to all who were able to support us and be a part of the event. A BIG thank you to Skip Saviano and Ted Gruber for hosting and doing everything possible to make it a success. All of us on the Foundation are so appreciative. The Foundation is also preparing for the Annual Fallin For Our Stars Casino night event on Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at the Cheney Mansion in Oak Park. We are busy securing raffle prizes, gift cards or certificates valued at \$25 or more and sponsorships. Please consider supporting us in some way and joining us for the event. It is a great night out for some gambling fun for prizes. There will also be live entertainment and a LIVE AUCTION. So don't waste a moment and get your tickets now! Go to wssra.net! Hope to see you there! WSSRF will close the year with the Holiday Concert, which is set for December 8, 2023, held at the Trailside Forest Preserve Pavilion, Giving Tuesday, and the Holiday Solicitation. The group continues to focus on recruiting new members and helping WSSRA recruit staff for seasonal programs! As always thank you for your continued support of their ongoing efforts in supporting the WSSRA mission.**

VI. **Under Committee Reports**

A. **Arnold reported the WSSRA Finance Committee** headed by Chairperson Arnold cancelled the July meeting and the committee met August 29 to review & accept the 2024 proposed partner shares as well as continued work on the 2024 budget and other topics to be discussed.

B. **Birko reported the Policy Committee** headed by Flaherty met July 20 & August 31st to review and update the WSSRA Personnel Policy Manual.

C. **Gruber reported the WSSRA Planning Committee** met June 21 to review and approve the updated Strategic Plan.

VII. **Unfinished Business**

A. **Approval of MOU with Park District of Forest Park Building** Iovinelli will share updates on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Park District of Forest Park collaborative and WSSRA. **LoCascio/Fallon motioned to approve the MOU with the Park District of Forest Park as presented. A roll call vote approved the MOU 8 Yes votes and 0 no votes. The motion passed unanimously.**

B **Approval of the 2022 Audit by Lauterbach & Amen** Iovinelli/Broderick motioned to approve the 2022 annual

**audit as presented by Lauterbach & Amen. The motion was approved by 8 Yes votes and 0 No votes. The motion passed unanimously.**

- C. **Approval of 2022 Audited Carry-over** Iovinelli/LoCascio motioned the WSSRA Board approve the 2022 carryover funds \$35,949. Dollars with; 50% \$17,974 goes to the Facility Fund and 50% \$17,974 goes back to reduce the partners shares in the 2024 budget. A roll call vote passed with 8 Yes votes and 0 No votes. The motion passed unanimously.
- D. **Approval of the WSSRA Board Policy Manual Updates** Sletten recommended taking out the bank names on page 29. Broderick requested a review of the SRA verbiage on pages 6, 7, 8 related to the Use of Special Recreation Levy. "Broderick believes that it could be viewed as too limiting as the current read requires the use of the funds being tied back to the SRA and the partners use on ADA projects and it requires the WSSRA Board to review and acknowledge. Broderick believes the funds belong exclusively to the partner and how they choose to use the funds." "Birko stated the current policy is not meant to be limiting but to serve as a reminder of the partners responsibility of how the funds should be used. Birko also stated that ultimately the responsibility of how the funds are used lies solely with the partner and their accountability to the tax payers." Birko recommended it go back to Committee to look at the language on pages 6,7 and 8 and report back to the WSSRA Board of Directors in October. The Board agreed.
- E. **Approval of the WSSRA 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan** Iovinelli/Stanczyk motioned to approve the 2023 – 2026 WSSRA Strategic Plan as presented. A roll call vote passed with 8 Yes votes and 0 No votes. The motion passed unanimously.
- F. No Other

VIII.

**Under New Business:**

- A. **Approval of WSSRA Mini-van Bid process** Birko reported the WSSRA staff researched, and test drove three mini-vans and recommend the Honda Odessey as the new minivan to lease and plan to proceed with the bid process. Iovinelli/Fallon motioned to approve the Mini-van bid leasing process with updated dates of a response bid by September 29<sup>th</sup> to WSSRA. The winning bid will be shared at the October 3, 2023, Board of Directors meeting. The motion was approved by 8 Yes votes and 0 Not votes. The motion pass unanimously.
- B. **Presenting the WSSRA 2024 Shares** Birko shared the 2024 WSSRA shares with a 4% increase to meet the demands for increased costs and participation numbers returning to more normal levels. Highlights included the following points:
  - WSSRA has not increased its shares since 2019. In 2020 there was a reduction due to COVID-19, 2021 \$75,000 reduction, 2022 \$50,000 reduction & 2023 proposed 0% based increase at the 2022 level.
  - Reminder the overall partner shares have been reduced in 2020, 2021 by \$125,000 due to the efforts of staff to reduce expenses during COVID. It was noted, when normal levels of service returned and with the increases in minimum wage going to affect, we would increase the shares accordingly.
  - Shares included the 2022 carry-over reduction of \$17,974. and the 2021 EAV's as the 2022 EAV's are not available until late October 2023.
  - All Population numbers reflect the 2020 Census
  - Per usual these are preliminary shares as we are waiting for final information from the Village of Harwood Heights overlapping properties. The formula at the bottom of the chart has not yet to be updated.

**Broderick wanted clarification of the cost of a 3% increase vs. and 4% increase. Birko shared the 3% increase is \$52,463 and the 4% increase is 69,950. A \$17,487 difference. There was no further discussion or questions.**

C. **No Other**

IX. Under **Correspondence** No Comments

X. Under **Board Reports:** Stanczyk reported the **Veterans Park District** is gearing up for winter/spring programming and the preparation of the program guide content. VPD will be hosting an Autumn Fest on

September 30<sup>th</sup> from 11-3pm at Gouin Park in Franklin Park and all are welcome! **Iovinelli reported for the Park District of Forest Park** just hosted their Fall Fest last weekend with over 1000 people participating, and all went well. Coming up is their Family Campout where over 200 people camp out on the softball field ~35 families. They will watch movies, cook s'mores, and have a bonfire! Summer Camps ended successfully with their highest numbers, and they still had to turn away up to 50 kids/week. They also had a successful pool season despite the ongoing challenges of patrons following the policies like wearing a swimsuit in the pool! They exceeded revenue by \$65,000 which is attributed to their updated systems and the addition of the new splash pad. PDOFP is currently considering a vacant District 91 School building, Grant White School to remodel for the collaborative Community Center project. The Park District was given the green light to walk through the building with an architect today and at first glance the building is in excellent condition. The architect, DLA will get a proposal back to PDFOP shortly. DLA has done a lot of school buildings and has converted schools to Park District buildings, and they come with high recommendations from fellow Park Districts. Iovinelli emphasized this option could cut the costs in half. **Malchiodi reported for the Village of Riverside** who had good participation in their Kids Triathlon event, with the most participants since it started in 2017. They currently have softball and soccer going on and recently finished their concert series and are starting a new partnership with Riverside Arts and coming up soon is the next Puzzle Race. Currently much of their time has been consumed with defending the addition of the 9-hole disc golf course that some residents are not happy about... Coming up is the "Touch A Truck" event being held on Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>. Next is planning for winter... **LoCascio reported for the Park District of Franklin Park.** Their Ice Arena is back up and running as they typically shut it down at the end of the summer session and re-open it back up the Tuesday after Labor day. Their Afterschool numbers are good, and they currently have 2 buses that Pick-up kids from the schools for their After-care program and the Fall Fest Parade is coming up on October 1<sup>st</sup>. **Worley-Hood reported the Park District of Oak Park** is finishing the Barrie Park construction project and hopes to be done by November. They are going to bid for their Master Plan project next month and are inviting everyone to be a volunteer at their upcoming Frank Lloyd Wright Races on Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup>. **Broderick reported the Village of North Riverside** will be hosting the Professional and People's Choice Chili Cook Off. They will be hosting their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala on October 20<sup>th</sup> and Riverside Golf Club and the North Riverside Players will be doing a song and dance production giving the history of the last 100 years. Fall programs started last week and will run throughout the month. They will begin Winter Fest at the start of December, and they will be moving to 2 brochures/year Sept – March and April – August. This went into effect starting now... **Diaz reported for North Berwyn Park District's** summer program went well, and they recently held their Annual Corrida del Mariachi 5K and reached their goal of 800 runners! Over 2000 people came to the after party to enjoy food, vendors, and music. Their next big event will be on Saturday, September 23 to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, the event will feature music, dancing, food, and vendors, at the North Berwyn Park District. Fall programs have officially kicked off this week. **Fallon reported the Berwyn Park District's** Fall programs started last week and they have over 215 kids in soccer. BPD will kick off their Master Plan work next week, and they will be hosting the Brewfest next Saturday September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1-5pm. They tripled the number of brewers to 6 this year. All are welcome! BPD is excited to announce they hired a new Superintendent of Recreation, Nicole Collier.

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

- A. **WSSRA 2023 WQDS Success** WSSRA hosted the Splish Splash Summer Bash & Annual Wacky Quacky Duck Splash at the Park District of Forest Park on Wednesday, July 19. It was the perfect night to enjoy the spectacular pool and State of the Art Splash pad. Over 300 WSSRA participants and friends attended the evening and enjoyed watching the 1200 ducks' race and helped us raise over \$4,500. A special thanks to the Park District of Forest Park for providing this tremendous opportunity for us annually.
- B. **WSSRA Quarterly Board Training** Birko will host the 4<sup>th</sup> and final training on "2024 shares and budget planning". It will take place on Wednesday, September 27 from 11:00 – noon via Zoom. The Zoom link was sent as a separate email.
- C. **WSSRA Orientation of WSSRA Board Representatives and Alternates** Birko has continued to conduct Board orientations for new members. This month she met with Kelly Diaz and Angel Avalos Jr, Board Commissioners from the NBPD and met with Jake Worley-Hood, PDOP Board Commissioner. The hour and one-half meeting is a great opportunity to share in depth details about the Association and how we conduct business as well as providing further

clarity on their role as a WSSRA Board Representative & Alternate. Birko will continue to conduct these meetings with those who were not able to attend.

- D. **Partner Annual Presentations** Birko is scheduling Annual presentations to meet with your boards and share the Annual report and WSSRA updates. She recently did her presentation for the Park District of Franklin Park. Call or email Birko with dates and times that work for you in 2023.
- E. **River Forest Park District's Color Run** Join us for our Inaugural 1-Mile Color Run around Priory Park! Volunteers will throw colored chalk as participants pass by a variety of colored stations. Medals will be awarded to the top 3 finishers in each age category. All participants will receive a white shirt, sunglasses, goodie bag, & certificate. Come for the Color Run and stay for the AFTER-PARTY with DJ, bagels, and Bloody Mary's. All net proceeds benefit the WSSRA! Thank you RFPD!
- F. **Staff Report: April Michalski, Superintendent of Recreation reported**
1. **Programs** Fall program programs begin on September 11-November 11. We currently have waitlists for several program and are working to hire additional staff to accommodate waitlist. Recently WSSRA participants and staff had a great time visiting Louisville, KY and Pigeon Forge, TN on August 27-31. Participants enjoyed a visit to the Louisville Slugger Museum and in Pigeon Forge they enjoyed a baseball, a jeep sightseeing tour and Dollywood! Check out photos from the trip on our social media!
  2. **Special Olympics**
    - Softball** Our Bobcats Gold Softball team is competing in the Special Olympics state softball tournament on September 8-9 in Springfield.
    - Golf** WSSRA had 13 athletes compete in the Special Olympics Golf Skill competition on August 2 at Springbrook Golf Course. Four of our athletes won a gold medal and will be advancing to the state tournament on September 8-10 in Decatur.
    - Bocce** WSSRA has 11 athletes competing in the Special Olympics Regional Bocce Tournament on September 16 at Grant Park in Northlake.
    - Basketball** Our Basketball season kicks off on October 3, we currently have 38 athletes registered and anticipate three teams this season.
  3. **Hiring Updates** Our staff manager is busy reaching out to local high schools and colleges to recruit seasonal staff. On September 12 we are attending Dominican University's Volunteer Service Fair and on September 20 we are attending East Leyden High School's Job Fair. We greatly appreciate referrals, interested applicants can apply on our website at [wssra.net](http://wssra.net). I am pleased to announce we have hired Danielle Bradel as a Full-Time Recreation Specialist. Danielle will be overseeing children and youth programming. She graduated from Aurora University with a degree in Therapeutic Recreation. Daneille has experience with other SRA's and park district programming. She is excited to bring her passion of swimming, gymnastics, tumbling, and coaching Special Olympics to the Recreation Specialist position.
  4. **Inclusion** We are currently serving 35 participants in 57 inclusive programs. Please continue to send Chris Sturm inclusion notifications as you receive registrations at [chriss@wssra.net](mailto:chriss@wssra.net).
  5. **Upcoming Events**
    - a. **Campfire at the Cabin** WSSRA is offering an end of the summer family campfire event at the Scout Cabin in Riverside on Friday, September 8 from 6:00-8:00pm. Families will enjoy an evening of outdoor games, campfire pizzas, smores and campfire songs led by a certified Music Therapist.
    - b. **River Forest COLOR RUN** River Forest Park District is hosting its first annual 1-mile COLOR RUN around Priory Park on Saturday, September 16. Participants will receive a white shirt and goodie bag. Come for the COLOR RUN and stay for the after-party with a DJ, bagels & Bloody Mary's. All net proceeds will go directly to WSSRA! For more information and to register, visit [Color Run \(rfparks.com\)](http://ColorRun(rfparks.com)).
    - c. **Boxability International Inc. Workshop** WSSRA is offering a Free boxing workshop on Thursday, September 21 from 6:00-8:00pm at the Oak Park Community Recreation Center. Participants will be joined by Boxability Founders Brian Roman and Coach Dino Spencer. Boxability International Inc. is a therapeutic program designed to build strong bodies, minds and build self-confidence. During this

workshop, participants will practice boxing techniques that can be modified for all ages and ability levels.

**D. Staff Report: Annie Hart, Superintendent of Business reported**

1. **Transportation** We have continued the search for a new minivan to add to our transportation fleet. Our Transportation Specialist, Jacob Kell, took some time to research and test drive several minivans. Jacob determined his top 3 vehicles then Hart along with 3 other staff went out and test drove them. We've determined that the Honda Odyssey is our first choice. WSSRA has hired a new part time driver to start this Fall season. Dan has been a limo driver for years.
2. **Safety** WSSRA has been working on our SMART goal of incorporating more Handle with Care training for all part-time and seasonal staff. The Safety Team is planning on spending more time at the seasonal Fall Staff Training covering; what are triggers, how can we identify them, and how can we prevent negative behaviors from happening.
3. **Finance** Hart is looking to switch from BMO Harris Purchasing card for staff to Ramp, which is directly compatible with QuickBooks online. Our Account Kaizen uses Ramp and has a lot of positive things to say about the system and the features it offers. Hart plans to keep the BMO account open and test pilot Ramp with 4-5 staff to determine if we like it before we close BMO account.

XII. **Adjournment Iovinelli/Stanczyk motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:37pm. Motion was unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko, Executive Director  
mb/ September 23 minutes