



PARK DISTRICT of OAK PARK

**Park District of Oak Park
Regular Park Board Meeting
John Hedges Administrative Center
218 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302**

Thursday, October 16, 2025

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Lentz, Onayemi, Wollmuth, and President Porreca. Commissioner Worley-Hood was absent.

Park District Staff Present: Jan Arnold, Executive Director; Mitch Bowlin, Director of Business Operations; Maureen McCarthy, Deputy Director of Recreation; Bill Hamilton, Superintendent of Properties & Planning; Ann Marie Buczek, Director of Marketing and Community Engagement; Roger Oney, Parks & Facilities Supervisor; Arlene Pedroza, Finance Manager; Janice Evans, Payroll Assistant; Joe Marrotta, Risk Manager; Chris Evans, Membership & Operations Supervisor - CRC, Patricia Williams, Marea Sydow Cordero Megan, and Karen Gruszka, Executive Assistant.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 5:0

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARD

Commissioner Porreca informed the attendees that the PDOP wanted to recognize and thank individual staff, who stepped in to help during a serious medical emergency and to express our deepest appreciation for their courageous and selfless quick responses. Commissioner Porreca awarded a PDOP Certificate of Recognition to Joe Marrotta, Janice Evans, Mitch Bowlin, Patricia Williams, Marea Sydow Cordero, Maureen McCarthy, and Arlene Pedraza.

III. VISITOR/PUBLIC - None.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Wollmuth and seconded by Commissioner Lentz to approve the Cash and Investment Summary and Warrants and Bills for the month of September 2025; approval of the Minutes from the Committee of the Whole Meeting from September 4, 2025, Regular Board Meeting from September 11, 2025, approval of the 2026 Committee & Board Meeting Calendar; and approval of Disposal Ordinance 2025-10-16. **The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 4:0.**

V. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Executive Director's Report** – In addition to the Executive Director Report (which is included in the Board Packet), Executive Director Arnold noted although there is a forecast for rain expected on Sunday, the FLW races will be held with approximately 2,350 runners signed up.



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The PDOP won their 10th Best Green Award as well as an Arts in the Park Award for their partnership with Festival Theatre. The awards will be handed out at the Best of the Best Awards in Wheeling, at the Chevy Chase Country Club on Friday, October 24. The Board was shown the award for CAPRA that was sent to the PDOP for their CAPRA achievement. The PDOP will be holding a celebration for staff on November 15 for all their hard work in achieving the Gold Medal. Currently, the Gold Medal plaque is on tour at our facilities to help educate the community on what it takes to be a Gold Medal Park District.

B. Updates and Information – Written report included in the Board Packet.

C. Revenue/Expense Status Reports – No questions asked.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Recreation and Facility Program Committee - Commissioner Lentz

B. Administration and Finance Committee - Commissioner Wollmuth

1. Budget and Appropriation Update* - Commissioner Wollmuth moved that the staff release the 2026 Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the 30-day public inspection period. Executive Director Jan Arnold reminded the Board of the budget Meeting held on October 9. Based on the discussion from the meeting last week and the Board's direction, staff went in and made adjustments to reduce the tax year 2025 levy to a 4.4% increase over the 2024 levy and covered the budget deficit in the Special Recreation fund by a fund balance transfer from the Recreation Fund. This change reduced the capital transfer from \$3 million to \$2.85 million annually from 2026 – 2030. Staff were asking the Board to put this out on the table for 30 days. The Board gave consensus and thanked staff for listening and taking this thought approach.
2. Audit Engagement Letter – Commissioner Wollmuth moved for the approval of L&A's proposal to extend auditing services for the years of 2025-2027. Executive Director Arnold reminded the Board of the information shared during the COW meeting and noted again that the Park District has used Lauterbach and Amen (L&A) as the auditor for fiscal years 2016-2021. The extension would be for the years 2025-2027 for a slight increase. The Board were happy with the understanding that a new partner would be assigned and that they have done a good job in the past. Commissioner Onayemi seconded to approve L&A's proposal to extend auditing services for the years of 2022-2024. **The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 4:0.**

C. Parks and Planning Committee

1. Cheney Mansion Geo-Thermal Contract Update – Executive Director Arnold informed the Board that the bid opening for the mechanical work for the geothermal project at Cheney Mansion had three firms respond to the bid announcement. Unfortunately, all three bids were more than \$1M against the \$450K budgeted amount. Staff met with Mark Nussbaum and discussed changes to the design keeping the boiler in place for additional heat, breaking out the three floors allowing staff to add/hold off on work and to allow for phases for the eventual full project completion. Updated plans will go out to bid in January with work starting to take place in February and March and finishing in December after a summer break. The Board discussed the increased cost for the project and were in consensus of the new approach.



VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. **REHM LOT** - The Board was informed that the PDOP was approached by the Fire Chief and Director of Public Works to discuss the possible use of an unused space on the Rehm lot at the south side of the fire house next to the Rehm pool. With the addition of an ambulance and additional staff located at this fire house, they were struggling with parking especially with shift changes. The Board discussed the exact location and whether there would be any impacts to the lot, during pool use, etc. and were assured it would not as it was an unused small section of land next to the fire house. The Director of Public Works has said the VOP will agree to make sure there are no MWRD impacts to PDOP property, will build a concrete sidewalk from the street to the apron for access, and would pay for all the costs associated with the project. The Board gave Executive Director Arnold consensus to work the PDOP attorney to create a legal document and bring it to the Board at a future meeting, this would most likely be a fall 2027 project.
2. **AUSTIN GARDENS TRUST** - Executive Director Arnold began by reminding the Board of Festival Theatre's update to them at the last meeting and the financial difficulties they face including increased payments to actors, camps, stipends for their apprentices, and their annual capital campaign which they did not reach their goal. We met with Festival Theatre for their new contract and one of the items they were requesting to change was the surcharge of \$1 per ticket sold paid back to the PDOP. The Board agreed that they meet their duties to the community for use of Austin Gardens with their community night, their camps, and apprenticeships, and agreed to the elimination of the surcharge. The other item needing attention is the sound system. As hearing is difficult for many attendees, loud cicadas, along with the older sound system that is used, the experience can be very difficult. Executive Director Arnold went on to explain the Austin Gardens Trust to the Board. She provided an update on where the Austin Garden Trust Fund stands and reminded them that the funds are used for upkeep of the park and arts that was set up by the former family and that the sound system would fall under the use of the Austin Gardens Trust. The Board then briefly discussed the upkeep that the fund would be used for in the park and the Austin Gardens center.

IX. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Lentz: Commissioner Lentz was excited for the Festival Theatre Partnership Award from IAPD and stated she loves seeing how this partnership develops and how it has grown and she will be attending the Best of the Best awards to receive the award with them.

Commissioner Wollmuth: Commissioner Wollmuth had no update.

Commissioner Worley-Hood: Absent.

Commissioner Onayemi: Commissioner Onayemi attended the IGOV meeting the discussion centered on each government bodies policies on ICE and terms of access into buildings, training for staff if they come into the buildings, etc. He was asked about putting signs up on our properties and he explained the policy prohibiting signs on the PDOP's properties to the IGOV attendees and mentioned that if they allowed signs on PDOP property, all signs from anyone/any group would have to be allowed which would not be good. Executive Director Arnold also assured him that staff had been trained already and have learned how to cope with situations from PDRMA with their recommendations and protocols. Commissioner Onayemi then went on to say that IGOV is



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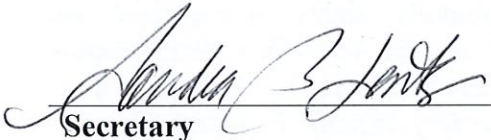
making a HUB to hold all the information IGOV has created through the years and the OPPL will house in in their cloud.

President Porreca: President Porreca noted that she and Executive Director Arnold attended the Council of Government meeting on September 10, and the same discussions took place there where she responded that she appreciates their passion and their desire for the signs but had responded that the PDOP could not discriminate against signs that went up and weren't allowed, so we must follow the PDOP policy with none in our parks. President Porreca also wanted to officially congratulate the Park District on winning the Gold Medal Award as this was the first meeting since the award. And finally, she wanted to thank the staff for how they had sprung into action and all worked together to save a person's life. Well done!

X. CLOSED SESSION – None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:13pm, the Regular Board Meeting was adjourned. **The motion was passed by a voice vote of 4:0.**

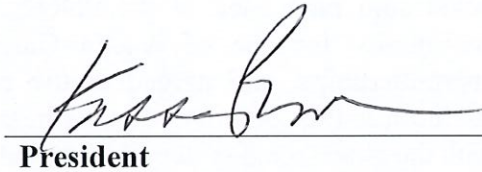


Secretary

Board of Park Commissioners

November 20, 2025

Date



President

Board of Park Commissioners

November 20, 2025

Date