PARK DISTRICT of OAK PARK

Park District of Oak Park
Board Retreat Meeting
Cheney Mansion
220 N. Euclid Street, Oak Park, Illinois, 60302
June 16, 2026

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 10:00am.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Lentz, Onayemi, Worley-Hood and President Wollmuth. Commissioner Porreca arrived at 10:09am.

Park District Staff Present: Jan Arnold, Executive Director; Mitch Bowlin, Director of Business Operations; Bill Hamilton, Superintendent of Properties & Planning; Maureen McCarthy, Superintendent of Recreation; Ann Marie Buczek, Director of Marketing & Community Engagement; and Karen Gruszka, Executive Assistant.

II. POOP BRANDING DISCUSSION

Ann Marie Buczek, Director of Marketing and Community Engagement, informed the Board that she had met with all the full-time staff to get their feedback and to provide their input on the 'why' of the POOP. All of these learnings; the groups, survey data, etc., will then be brought back to meet with Leadership to create the core statement which would then approved by you. She worked through various exercises with the Board to get to the core of what we want to understand 'why we do this'. The Board was reminded that we are not changing the mission statement nor values. It is looking for what the spark is that lead us in the POOP. This information will be brought back to the Board at a future meeting.

III. PDOP PROGRAM PRICING/TAX USE/REVENUE ALLOCATION (50/50}

Executive Director Arnold along Mitch Bowlin, Director of Business Opportunities, shared the practices/building blocks, needed to move forward with the agency. The conversation at last year's strategic plan discussions discussed how far we'd come and how we got here but also that we can only subsidize so much for so long. Staff has spent a lot of time going through our programs and venue inventory as well as service categories of open access in luding the CRC walking track, parks, dog parks, free events, concerts, movies, etc. acknowledging that without the margin there is no mission - knowing that you have to make some money to invest in anything. We worked on forming a financially literate team, looking at every asset, where, who runs it, then the price is considered last for fixed costs vs. direct/indirect costs. The Board was shown our financial sustainability strategy with the tax use/revenue generation strategy stating CPI is a poor proxy for our costs going up, as an example health insurance went up 10%, but health insurance cost is less than a percent of the CPI but is 7% of our budget. Another example of is the state's required minimum wage increases. The Board discussed how this information might be shown to the community for their knowledge and also discussed the scholarships increased use, program costs, rentals, new growth, subsidizing, and increased costs associated with WSSRA and unfunded mandates.

IV. PDOP SCHOLARSHIP DISCUSSION

Executive Director Arnold a reminder we have two financial assistance programs the scholarships and the Childcare Discount Memberships. The Board was presented with the increases in use of our financial assistance from 2023-2025, in both amounts and households. Next they were shown our funding sources during those years. Discussion took place on the information and how the Board wanted to move forward and a deeper understanding of expectations of the PDOP's Foundation's role and funding the gap and ways to achieve them.

V. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN DISCUSSION

Executive Director Arnold began by reminding the Board of the sources funding for the CIP including operating transfer funds, grants, as well as various revenue. An overview of the 2027-2031 projects were shown to the Board throughout the PDOP's locations, major projects, vehicle and technology updates, and non-site specific costs such as master plan reviews. The Capital Improvement Plan will be brought to the Board at the July Regular Board Meeting for their approval.

VI. BUDGET GUIDELINES

Executive Director Arnold reminded the Board of many of the discussions had at the retreat so far and the impacts of increasing costs that we need to manage. On Thursday, the Board would be approving the 2027 Budget Timeline and Guidelines. Staff will be recommending a total increase of 5.72%, a 2.7% increase to the levy plus an additional 1.5% increase to capture assessed valuation growth and an additional 1.52% to cover WSSRA costs. The Board was reminded of many of the capital improvement plan costs coming up for centers in the next 5-10 years and that we have to plan that far in advanced for future Boards to be able to upkeep our parks and facilities. In the near future, discussion may need to take place on sustainability and scholarships. We start our timeline now to be prepared for the Truth In Taxation Hearing in November. Total increase is estimated to be $6.60 per $100,000 of home value to help cover the increased minimum wage, as well as WSSRA's mandated increases. The Guidelines and Timeline will be looking for consensus from the Board on Thursday, June 18.

VII. ADJOURMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Lentz and seconded by Commissioner Worley-Hood to adjourn the meeting at 2:30pm. **The motion was passed with a voice vote of 5:0.**

Secretary **Board of Park Commissioners**	**President** **Board of Park Commissioners**
July 16, 2025 **Date**	July 16, 2025 **Date**