

**1. Call the Meeting to Order**

President Lange called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

**2. Roll Call**

At 6:35 pm roll call was taken.

**Board Members Present:**

Dorothy Lange – President  
Georgia Schroeder – Vice President  
Greg Stimpson – Treasurer  
Denice Sbertoli – Secretary  
Rick Pokorny – Commissioner

**Also Present:**

Matthew Ellmann – Executive Director, WDPD staff  
Karin Johns – Director of Administration and Finance, WDPD staff  
Carolyn Mondlock – Recording Secretary

President Lange announced this special meeting of Thursday, November 12, 2015, held at the Wood Dale Library District Programming Center, 520 N. Wood Dale Road, Wood Dale. She thanked the Commissioners and staff for attending the meeting.

**3. Retreat Introduction and Team Exercise – as read by President Lange:**

**Reason for retreat and goals for the evening**

Retreat Purpose: To build a strong and cohesive team and explore future plans

Goals:

1. To provide qualities that exists in a well functioning agency
2. To discuss and solidify board and director purpose and focus
3. To identify ways to improve process for board decisions making
4. To become aware of impediments to our success
5. To discuss future project plans and funding options
6. To have some fun and build camaraderie

**Team exercise** (focus on cooperation within a team – Drop the Ball exercise) –

Director Ellmann explained that teamwork better positions a team for long-term success. On a flipchart, he had the recipe for a Winning Team:

T – Trust  
R – Respect  
U – Understanding  
E – Enjoy

He led the Board to the adjoining room for an exercise. The group was given 18 straws and 18 inches of tape to build a container or “ball dropper bin” in ten minutes to catch a golf ball when dropped from about six feet. Working together as a team, the Board had three chances to drop the golf ball into the container they built. Working collectively a container was constructed and Commissioner Pokorny stood on a stool and dropped the ball testing their work. The group at first was successful however the ball tipped the container and rolled out. Despite the outcome, congratulations were expressed to all.

**Discussion and processing of exercise** – Initial thoughts by the Board:

- Visualizing what you had to accomplish – three different patterns were visualized before deciding on one (Vision is important.)

- Sharing resources and listening to each other's ideas.
- Director Ellmann noticed a cooperative experimentation, allowing the process to evolve with support coming from group.
- Leadership emerged, but not one person overpowered.
- The team gestured to high-five each other because they thought it was worth celebrating. As an agency, there needs to be time to celebrate successes.

Director Ellmann concluded the exercise by explaining that even when things don't seem possible, they can be achieved. As an organization, the Board is being faced with significant challenges. While some seem insurmountable at first, with effort, experimentation and leadership success can and will be realized.

#### **4. Discussion and Confirmation of Commissioner and Director Purpose**

**20 Qualities of an Effective Park and Recreation Agency** – Director Ellmann passed out the list of 20 qualities, of which several were reviewed. He feels these qualities are critical to being successful.

Commissioner Stimpson responded to No. 4, "Citizen and employee input is encouraged and accepted in most situations." He was asking how situations are elevated for he feels it is the Board's right to know if there is activity occurring. Currently, Board material, a common theme or occurrence, confidential matters, whether the Board is mentioned – these situations get elevated to the Board. However, Director Ellmann will work to create a clearer process so staff can make educated decisions as what to elevate so that the Board is more engaged.

**Team Vision** – what works, as voiced by the Board:

- Cooperation
- Open-mindedness
- Trust
- Results oriented
- Goals (having)
- Want to see success
- Recognition
- Fiscally responsible
- Efficient
- Fun-loving/humor

**Intended purpose for Commissioners** – Director Ellmann reminded the Board that the IAPD is an incredible resource and spends much time advocating on the behalf of park districts, helping Boards be successful by understanding what they can be most effective in doing and how to go about doing it. He distributed material from the IAPD handbook indicating the purpose and function of a park district board.

**Discussion and confirmation of core responsibilities** – Director Ellmann asked the Board to indicate what they felt were Board responsibilities versus the Executive Director's

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responsibilities. Flipchart lists were posted to the walls in the adjoining room, and the Board was asked to identify responsibilities using blue and red dots (stickers). Director Ellmann reviewed the lists with the Board. For the most part, he said responsibilities designated are what we are doing now, but the exercise results will be used as a reference tool moving forward.

## 5. Discussion and Confirmation of Board Meeting Expectations

**Board packets (composition, dissemination, timing, etc)** – The Board feels some of the department reports are too long. Director Ellmann explained that it is important to have the reports in the Board packet, but the Board does not have to rehash the material during the meeting unless there is something they want to discuss.

- What can be done to make our meetings better?
  - Redundant to review staff reports at meetings (but good to allow staff time before the board to hone their presentation skills)
  - Shorten recreation reports
  - Trend analysis wanted
  - Highlights
  - Rotate department reports

### **Meeting procedures (motions, voting, discussion, support for decisions rendered)**

- What can be done to help the board prepare for meetings?
  - One method of distribution of packet (pick up at recreation complex)
  - Mailbox at front desk
  - Thursday evening pickup with email notification
  - Motion in memo

## 6. Discussion of Board and Policy Manual Changes

**Ideas for new topics to be included** – Karin distributed the current table of contents of the Policy Manual and Board Manual. She requested comments from the Board before the Thanksgiving break. She is looking for any substantive changes, or even small changes or questions about any policy.

**Suggestions for specific policies to be altered** – She defined specific areas of scrutiny, one being changes in Department of Labor laws concerning vacation policies. Currently the district has a “use it or lose it” policy, but Federal law dictates vacation can be rolled over into the following vacation year. The Board was informed that they can adopt policies to control it such as set maximums for amount of time rolled. Karin is working to rewrite that part of the policy. Other Department of Labor changes will require some tweaking of other policies.

**Discussion of process and how to make it effective and productive** – The next topic Karin discussed was about bonus and service incentives being changed. She presented some ideas on how to reallocate those funds as follows:

1. Bring up salary ranges of four employees at the low end of the compensation range to the midpoint range over a five-year period. Because of turnover with newer staff, this idea enhances employee value. The bump over a five-year period is not guaranteed and would be based on performance.

2. A merit pool based on performance was suggested, using evaluations and weighted scales. Any type of bonus would be a lump sum payment.

Director Ellmann explained that these policies can be written to the Board's specifications. The purpose of rewriting them is to clarify them to Board and staff. He asked the Board how they want to review such policies and presented some options:

- Options:**
1. Full-scale review section by section in detail (pros & cons)
  2. One or two workshops dedicated to summary review (pros & cons)
  3. Hybrid of options (pros & cons)

The Board preferred the Hybrid option with the ability to review policies section by section. The Board inquired about how merit raises are budgeted, and Karin explained. Director Ellmann assured the Board that standards and systems can be put in place to control how raises are allocated.

## 7. **Review and Discussion of Central Park Concept Plan and Capital Budget**

**Review of Central Park Concept Plan and discussion of possible staging** – Director Ellmann spoke about the approved concept plan for Central Park. With the OSLAD Grant program being suspended, the district is in a holding pattern. He is asking the Board, should the district wait to see if the OSLAD Grant program reopens, explore some other grant opportunities, and/or start phasing in some development.

**Discussion of construction plan development approach** – In response to Commissioner Stimpson, Director Ellmann confirmed that the first step within the first phase is building a foundation infrastructure to support the plan. Costs need to be determined and phase #1 could include the infrastructure, a playground, and pathways. Other amenities would be included in phase two such as a basketball court, shelter, etc. Landscape architects can provide a range of costs and explore general ideas.

**Review of current fiscal year capital budget** – Forecasted for Central Park in 2016 is \$350,000, but that budget is not set. The Board agrees that some progress needs to be seen at Central Park.

## 8. **Discussion of Capital Project Funding Mechanisms**

**Current outstanding debt and payoff calendar** – Karin distributed the park district audit to the Board. The audit will be discussed with the auditor at the next meeting. Director Ellmann and Karin explained the history of the district's debt and payment schedule. Currently, based on the potential property tax freeze, and in light of the TopGolf facility potentially needing revenue, and then proceeding with Central Park, the district may be in the position of wanting to issue more debt prior to the tax freeze, which would be before the end of March 2016.

**Potential property tax freeze and its implications** – Karin explained that if the anticipated two-year property tax freeze takes place, there will be no increases in property taxes; so the district would not receive any incremental tax increases for inflation in those two years. In addition, no additional debt service can be issued during that time period.

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**Discussion of pro-active financing opportunities for exploration and consideration** – The Board discussed their views on accelerating the debt. They voiced concern with the TopGolf facility being a wild card. Director Ellmann said bond counsel could be invited to the next meeting to talk numbers, and the Board can make a commitment in the New Year, before the March deadline. At this time rates are low. Karin explained that issuing more debt would allow some cushion, enabling the district to contribute to general operating and capital funds as planned.

A long discussion took place about issuing bonds, what to allocate in next year's budget for projects, the anticipation of specific variables affecting budget forecasts, the importance of moving forward on Central Park, and investigating other potential grant programs.

Director Ellmann distributed a chart of capital projects for the Board's review and briefly explained some of the items.

**9. Commissioner Comments**

**IAPD Membership value** – moved to December's regular meeting agenda.

**Other items** – upcoming senior party.

**10. Adjournment**

It was moved by Commissioner Pokorny, seconded by Commissioner Stimpson, to adjourn this Special Meeting at 9:34 pm.

After a voice vote, President Lange declared the MOTION CARRIED.

The General Meeting of the Wood Dale Park District Board of Commissioners shall be held on Tuesday, December 8, 2015, at 6:30 pm.

Board Member Signatures:

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President

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Secretary