



**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF PALATINE PARK DISTRICT**  
 Village of Palatine, 200 East Wood Street in Palatine  
 Second Floor – Village Council Chambers  
 July 22, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.



These minutes are not a verbatim record of what was said during the meeting

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by President Ruff

Commissioners Present

Terry Ruff, President  
 Susan Gould  
 Joe Petricca  
 Greg Sammons

Commissioners Absent

Jennifer Rogers, Vice President

Staff Present

Benjamin Rea, Executive Director	Amy Vito, Superintendent of Parks
Andrea Fisher, Park Board Treasurer/Director of Finance	Katie Waszak, Supt. of Recreation Programming
Michelle Eckelberry, Director of District Services	Cheryl Lufitz, Communications & Marketing Mgr.
Colleen Palmer, Director of Recreation & Facilities	Lisa Allie, Park Board Secretary/Executive Assistant

Visitors and Citizens Present

Andrew Paine, Tressler LLP/Park District Attorney  
 See attached list

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Sammons moved, and Commissioner Petricca seconded that the agenda be approved. By a roll call vote, the agenda for the regular meeting of July 22, 2024, was approved as presented. The result of the voice vote follows:

AYE: Susan Gould, Joe Petricca, Greg Sammons, Terry Ruff  
 NAY: None  
 ABSENT: Jennifer Rogers  
 Motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The Board reviewed the previously distributed items posted on the consent agenda. Commissioner Petricca moved and Commissioner Gould seconded that the consent agenda be approved as presented. By a roll call vote, the following items on the consent agenda were approved: Regular Meeting Minutes of June 24, 2024. The result of the roll call vote follows:

AYE: Susan Gould, Joe Petricca, Greg Sammons, Terry Ruff  
 NAY: None  
 ABSENT: Jennifer Rogers  
 Motion carried.

President Ruff stated that we would be moving on to Visitors and Citizens’ comments which would be limited to 30 minutes and asked if anybody had a comment about anything other than the Stables. He also shared news of a fire at the Stables Caretaker’s apartment this morning.

## Visitors and Citizens' Comments

*Elle Haferkamp:* I was asked by the Barn to share some highlights of the recent horseshow. It was an extremely successful event, and we had multiple riders achieve top honors. I have a 10-page list here of what everyone placed. Financially speaking we brought in about \$43,000 and netted \$33,000 in one weekend which seems like a pretty good net to take in for one of your facilities. I'm trying to emphasize that this is making money year-round. The Board was invited to attend and not seeing much of an effort made is just really disheartening because that is what we've been trying to show and explain to you. When you come to the barn you can see what we're seeing and don't just have the opinions of what you're seeing on paper in front of you with the numbers. I understand when you see those repairs and everything it seems so costly but you're missing out on the essence of everything. Your presence and involvement are a necessary part of fulfilling your roles as advocates for the community's interest. We'd like to invite you to come by and see the barn in the heyday of lessons. Seeing the kids who are there, the volunteers who just want a chance to be around these horses, and to see what it is you are unfortunately voting against.

*Franklin Skorski:* This weekend I was at a party in Hinsdale IL and was shocked by the questions I was given regarding the Palatine Park District stable closing. People in DuPage County watch television; see what you guys are doing, and they are shocked. Hinsdale as wealthy as the community is has no stables. We're blessed with the stables and I say blessed because of everything you've heard for the last three or four meetings. The park district has one sole responsibility: create recreation for the children and adults within your district. I don't know what's motivating you guys, but I was again very disappointed with the fact that you would not give me the results of the PDRMA report. I believe that the PDMA report does not say there's any risk. Why won't you divulge what our risk management report says? This is because it may conflict with the agenda you're pushing. I know you are not going to answer me, but you've got to answer these people and the children here. The crowds getting a little smaller, and there's no TV here anymore, but we'll be here. We'll be here Christmas and next year when you guys run for re-election

*Sharol Gersic:* My daughter Maya first got invited to a birthday party at the stables when she was eight. That summer she attended pony camp and after two weeks of riding every day, we signed up for lessons. The school horses at Palatine Stables have dedicated their lives to teaching young children like my daughter how to ride. They go to work each day and in return, they trust us to take care of them, to give them love, and the occasional banana or carrot after a good ride. With this vote to close Palatine Stables, I have become increasingly concerned for the welfare of the school horses. I'm concerned the Board is being recklessly quick with very little planning regarding the future care that the school horses deserve. They have put their trust in us to take care of them, on a daily basis, as they in turn take care of our riders. I ask that you work with the experts at Palatine Stables to decide what's best for the horses who are aging, like Ronnie, Yeller, Misty, Windy, and Charlie. As they age and get ready for retirement, they have earned the right to trust that they can live the rest of their lives in the safety of the home they have grown to know and love at Palatine Stables.

*Jenny Yocum:* I'm just piggybacking on what Elle said, Josh was wonderful at our NIJHA show. I've never seen the park district there when we've had our horse shows. I got there at 6:30 and Josh was already there, so I really want to give a big thank you to him. Right after that show Anna took a bunch of these girls to an A-show which is a pretty big deal. You've got Olympic quality riders at the A-Shows and these girls all did fantastic. There was one jumper class where we took the top three spots. I think you are missing a fantastic opportunity to promote this barn and the quality of the athletes because these girls are athletes. Trust me you don't just sit on a horse. You have to work, and you have a bond; just watch the Olympics coming up. I know there was a swimmer that went to the Olympic trials; these girls, some of them one day could go to the Olympics. That's how good Anna is, that's how good our riders and some of our horses are. I just want you to consider that. Maybe start promoting the barn and what a wonderful facility it is, what wonderful staff is there, and what a wonderful show team we have.

*June Kellogg:* I've been a student at Palatine for the last 10 years. I believe that you didn't expect us to be back after the 8<sup>th</sup>, but we didn't take the revote as a sign to give up. We're back again and speaking of the revote I think that Sue and Greg deserve more of a chance. Sue has been with us from the beginning, she was the one who voted no originally and the rest of you claim to be listening to all of us. Greg Sammons was the only one who proved that by changing his vote. We're grateful for you guys, you've done a lot, you're members of this board and you deserve a chance. We expected more honesty and inclusion, that you were going to work with us. We've been suggesting solutions and fundraising. We offered to buy it, and or for you to give us until February 1<sup>st</sup>. Our horses are not going to be in danger staying here with some repairs going on; they'll be in more danger if forced to leave their home. They're gonna be scared and confused and who knows where they'll end up in five years. We don't want another three months or another year we want a forever and our horses need one.

President Ruff asked if there was anyone else who would like to make a comment.

*Monica Thoms:* My name is Monica Thoms, I'm an ophthalmologist in Arlington Heights and I live in Barrington. I drive past Palatine Stables every day, five days a week. I also have an alias, I am Mona Van Gilder, my daughters are Anna and Emma Van Gilder. They've been working their hearts out at the stables for the past 10-15 years. You will never have more dedicated or conscientious employees than you have with those two girls. I would like to thank the Board for listening to everyone's grievances because I think they're all real. I think it's hard for you guys to sit up there and get slammed and all that, but I'd like to say maybe you should make an impression with the public by saving our green spaces and saving the Palatine Stables.

President Ruff again asked if there was anyone else who would like to make a comment.

*Sharon Griffin:* My daughter Caitlin has been riding at the stables since she was eight. She's 26 now and we have two horses at the barn. There has been just a tremendous impact on my daughter's life and my life just being part of the barn. She had significant vision issues, sensory integration issues, occupational therapy was needed, all kinds of things. Through all of that, she has had vision issues corrected, silent brain seizures are done and she's off all meds. Every therapist and every doctor has said horseback riding did all of that. Not only that; the part that I think you can see here today is that they're building lifelong friendships. Caitlin is 26 now and she has best friends from when she was eight years old. It's a community, not only is it about the horses, it's about this lovely community that everybody feels a part of. I really hope you guys will consider all of that, and what this gentleman said is your job. To provide leisure activities and things to keep kids out of trouble and to keep them from making poor decisions.

President Ruff asked if there was anyone else; no other comments were made. President Ruff thanked everyone for their comments and, stated that we were moving on to the New Business presentation and acceptance of the 2023 Audit and Management Letter.

Director Fisher introduced Courtney Mohr of Lauterbach and Amen. Ms. Mohr started by explaining the purpose of the audit and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement Award. The park district has received this prestigious award every year since 2015 and will submit for this award with the 2023 audit. Ms. Mohr continued with the following highlights: overall the district's net position this year increased by about \$1.7 million which is about 2.2% from last year to this year, government wide revenues totaled about \$28 million and expenses totaled about \$26 million. At the fund level, your main operating fund (general fund) did report a decrease this year of about \$2,000,000 or 10.8% from last year. The other important piece I wanted to point out is that the park district did retire about \$1.5 million in debt and did not enter into any new debt this year. Ms. Mohr then reviewed the Management Letter recommendations and offered to answer any questions.

In response to Commissioner Sammons question about the man hours required to complete the audit, Ms. Mohr said the man hours are significant; from start to finish it takes about 8 to 10 weeks to get an audit pulled together.

### New Business

The Board reviewed a previously distributed board summary pertaining to the Acceptance of the 2023 Annual Audit and Management Letter. Commissioner Sammons moved and Commissioner Petricca seconded that the Board of Park Commissioners accept the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR audit) and Management Letter for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023, as presented to authorize the District to proceed with statutory filings and disclosure. The motion was approved by a roll call; the result follows:

AYE: Joe Petricca, Greg Sammons, Susan Gould, Terry Ruff

NAY: None

ABSENT: Jennifer Rogers

Motion carried.

### Department Reports

The Park Board reviewed the previously distributed written Finance Department report. Director Fisher shared the following: now that we have the approved audit, we will be filing that with the county, and uploading it to their website along with the 2023 Treasure's report. We hosted a budget kickoff meeting last Monday; with the purpose of inspiring staff to begin budgeting early, and to provide some budget guidelines and dates. The dates included in my report are key dates in the budget process. Director Fisher then reviewed the monthly financial report which included an update on the issues with Paycor and trying to get the payroll information imported into our financial software. Our June expenses are up about 27%, that's mostly due to our wages and benefits, our contractual expenses as well as our capital projects. Overall, we net those increases in revenues and expenses. We are seeing a 21% percent increase in overall net profit which results in a 21% increase in net profit, of \$896,000 net profit over 2023. President Ruff commented about the ongoing issues with Paycor; Director Fisher explained that the reorganization we had last year impacted a lot of our account numbers, especially in the payroll area. While we were rolling out the program, we were also making changes internally and it created a perfect storm for this backlog.

The Park Board reviewed the previously distributed written Recreation and Facilities Department report. Director Palmer shared the following highlights: June marked the start of summer programs and the numbers in many of our programs are up including camps by 14%, Sounds of Summer attendance by 7%, and pool attendance by 22% in the month. The facility staff was also busy with our programs shifting gears to accommodate the increase in summer traffic. Staff also continued to work on various maintenance and improvements in our facilities as time and traffic would allow including upgrading floors, lighting, and working through some gym and turf issues at Falcon. Commissioner Sammons mentioned the I-Compete bike check events that he's participated in and said that it was a great collaborative effort with a lot of people coming out on a very hot day.

The Park Board reviewed the previously distributed written Parks and Planning Department report. Superintendent Vito shared some project updates that have taken place since publishing the report; for Meadowlark Park, Jim is scheduled to meet with the contractor tomorrow for the first preconstruction meeting, the Celtic Park turf will have the final grading for the sub base wrapped up today with plans to start rolling out the new turf as early as next Wednesday, at Cedar Park we're officially in the permit process with the Village of Palatine. We also wanted to give a shout out to the Palatine Hills Golf Course for hosting of the US Senior Women's Open Qualifier on June 26<sup>th</sup>. We had several inches of rain that occurred the two days before and ended up delaying the start, but everything went well and three of the women qualified for the final tournament in August. Commissioner Sammons asked about the rainouts

and the process of dealing with that; Superintendent Vito replied that they have to let it subside and then staff will identify if there are any areas that need to remain closed off or have limited cart use to save the turf.

The Park Board reviewed the previously distributed written District Services Department report. Director Eckelberry reiterated that it's been a very busy month, while everything opened up in June we were still recruiting through the whole month. We had over 211 applications and we were able to hire 19 various individuals. We welcomed one full-time person in Finance, Marcy and we have been recruiting actively for the Athletics Coordinator position. We also been busy in our IT department, our camera servers have been refreshed, and has opened up an opportunity for us to start investigating different locations for other cameras. Risk Management also developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Work Comp processes even though we don't have many Work Comp claims. Items have been identified that need to be rolled out to the staff when they are injured and now, we have a packet that can be sent to them. Director Eckelberry also shared that during the month of June there was a thorough walkthrough of all aquatic facilities with PDRMA as part of their ongoing evaluation process. They made a few recommendations that we will start to implement. Communications and Marketing kicked off the summer season with promotions for Sounds of Summer, summer program registration, and the tropical pool party. Mariana was busy attending different social events like the Bright Point Summer block party, as well as the Sammy Summer's Park Quest event. We also saw some social media increase and we had over 20,000 views bringing our total for the month of June up to 1254 hits on our website.

#### Executive Director Reports

Executive Director Rea reported that the structural engineer reviewing the stables indicated they have some additional testing to complete. I'm hopeful that they'll be up there this week, they will coordinate with Director Holder when they need to be on site. We are hopeful to get the report in a timely fashion so that we can post it to our website and share it with the stables community as well as the public. Touching again on the fire this morning, Josh is out on the site waiting to meet with ServiceMaster. ServiceMaster will be out there to start the remediation after the fire. It is our goal again to get that remediated as quickly as we can so the family can get back into their apartment.

#### Commissioner Reports/Future Agenda Items

President Ruff thanked the staff for all their work at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. He also gave kudos to Josh and Anthony for their efforts after the fire this morning.

#### Executive Session

President Ruff entertained a motion to close the public portion of the meeting and convene in executive session under the Open Meetings Act for Section 2(c)(21) discussion of minutes of prior meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, for the purpose of review, approval or release of such minutes. Commissioner Sammons moved and Commissioner Petricca seconded that the Board of Park Commissioners go into closed session for Section 2(c)(21) discussion of minutes of prior meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, for the purpose of review, approval or release of such minutes. The motion was approved by a roll call; the result follows:

AYE: Greg Sammons, Susan Gould, Joe Petricca, Terry Ruff

NAY: None

ABSENT: Jennifer Rogers

Motion carried at 5:46 p.m.

Commissioner Gould requested a 5-minute break and President Ruff agreed.

Return to Open Session

Commissioner Ruff entertained a motion to come out of closed session and resume to the regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners; Commissioner Petricca moved, and Commissioner Gould seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call; the result follows:

AYE: Susan Gould, Joe Petricca, Greg Sammons, Terry Ruff

NAY: None

ABSENT: Jennifer Rogers

Motion carried at 6:09 p.m.

Action on Matters Considered in Closed Session

President Ruff said that the Board of Park Commissioners met in closed session to discuss Open Meetings Act Section 2(c)(21) discussion of minutes of prior meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, for the purpose of review, approval or release of such minutes. Considering items of Closed Session regarding Section 2(c)(21) discussion of minutes of prior meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, for the purpose of review, approval or release of such minutes. Commissioner Ruff entertained a motion to approve Resolution #24-09, the release of the minutes. Commissioner Sammons moved, and Commissioner Gould seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call; the result follows:

AYE: Susan Gould, Joe Petricca, Greg Sammons, Terry Ruff

NAY: None

ABSENT: Jennifer Rogers

Motion carried at 6:09 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Park Board on this date Commissioner Gould moved that the regular meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Sammons seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote; the result follows:

AYE: Greg Sammons, Susan Gould, Joe Petricca, Terry Ruff

NAY: None

ABSENT: Jennifer Rogers

Motion carried at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Allie  
Park Board Secretary

Attest:

Approved:

Lisa Allie  
Secretary

Terry Ruff  
President

<b><u>2024 Park Board Meetings</u></b>		
August 12, 2024	September 23, 2024	November 25, 2024
August 26, 2024	October 28, 2024	December 9, 2024
September 9, 2024	November 11, 2024	