

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
THE NORTHWEST SPECIAL RECREATION ASSOCIATION  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
ON THE 28 DAY OF JULY, 2021 AT 10:42 A.M.**

Chairman Fahnstrom called the meeting to order at 10:42 a.m. Recording Secretary Jessica Vasalos took roll call. The following members of the Board were present: Carrie Fullerton, Arlington Heights Park District; Rita Fletcher, Bartlett Park District; Ryan Risinger, Buffalo Grove Park District; Bob O'Brien, Hanover Park Park District; Craig Talsma, Hoffman Estates Park District; Jim Jarog, Mount Prospect Park District; Mike Clark, Palatine Park District; Christina Ferraro, Prospect Heights Park District; Bret Fahnstrom, River Trails Park District; Kevin Romjeko, Rolling Meadows Park District; Diane Hilgers, Salt Creek Park District; Tony LaFrener, Schaumburg Park District; Tim McCabe, Barrington Park District; Steve Muenz, Streamwood Park District; Jan Buchs, Wheeling Park District

Absent: Robert Dowling, Ben Curcio

Also present: Tony DiVittorio and Sheila Lullo from Clearbrook; Tracey Crawford, Executive Director Crawford; Darleen Negrillo, Superintendent of Administrative Services; Brian Selders, Superintendent of Communications and IT; Andrea Griffin, Superintendent of Recreation; Rachel Hubsch, Superintendent of Recreation; Cathy Splett, Superintendent of Development; Miranda Woodard, Accounting Manager; and Jessica Vasalos, Administrative Manager as recording secretary

Public Comment

None

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Fahnstrom asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda dated July 28, 2021. Trustee Fullerton made the motion and Trustee O'Brien seconded the motion. Upon voice vote the agenda was approved.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Chairman Fahnstrom called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda of July 28, 2021. Trustee Risinger made the motion and Trustee Buchs seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda dated July 28, 2021. Upon roll being called, the vote was as follows:

AYA: Carrie Fullerton, Rita Fletcher, Ryan Risinger, Ben Curcio (by proxy), Bob O'Brien, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Mike Clark, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Kevin Romejko, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrener, Tim McCabe, Steve Muenz, Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Correspondence

NONE

### Staff Reports

Superintendent Griffin reviewed all the successes PURSUIT has accomplished since opening as well as how undeniably outstanding the collaboration has been with Clearbrook. She also invited guests Tony DiVittorio and Sheila Lullo to address the Board on the needs of the participants and the financial struggle that Clearbrook as well as NWSRA endured during the pandemic. He thanked the Board for allowing NWSRA to take on some of the financial burden and allowing programs and services to continue during the pandemic. Sheila also thanked the Board for the support and outlined that PURSUIT was ahead of the trend and acknowledged that family's have choices for programming and are choosing PURSUIT and to wait for openings at PURSUIT. They both reported to the Board that the PURSUIT model is being copied by many programs and the PURSUIT program was actually mentioned at a meeting in Crystal Lake, and noted that they were trying to model our program. Ms. Lullo reported to the Board that many programs are downsizing to lower enrollment and part of the community. Participants want choices and employment. She also informed the Board that Clearbrook's larger programs are being modeled after PURSUIT, due to its large success. Mr. DiVittorio noted that they partner with many other places but the true collaboration with NWSRA is the highlight.

Superintendent Selders highlighted his Marketing and P/R report. He also indicated that Campfire Concepts will be compiling the data regarding the Strategic Plan with a final report in September. There were no questions. Trustee LaFrenere gave kudos to staff for using Campfire Concepts as they were very professional and made the process enjoyable.

Superintendent Splett highlighted the Foundations report. She thanked Trustee LaFrenere for allowing a Golf Outing to be hosted at Schaumburg Park District. She informed the Board that Tracey, herself and staff met with Lily Martini who provided a wealth of knowledge and reminded the Board that she was one of the original supporter of Kevin and his mission.

Superintendent Negrillo reviewed the financial reports with the Board. She reported on some of the line items that are not at budget or over budget. Trustee Talsma questioned the computer line item and if it was a contract. Superintendent Selders explained the line item included installation, support all five sites as well as the Administrative Offices, all payroll software and other software's previously approved, as well as all hardware replacement, and database and website hosting. He reviewed that budgeted line item with the Board. Trustee Talsma indicated he wanted clarification for the budget and what items were capital expenses. There were no further questions.

Superintendent Hubsch reviewed the agency goals with the Board. There were no further questions.

Executive Director Crawford reviewed her Directors Work Plan with the Board, highlighting senior programs, transportation services, fleet management and the collaboration with Clearbrook. She also included the breakdown of the group home model that currently exists and how NWSRA and Clearbrook can continue to provide services. She also outlined the COVID protocol that Clearbrook is conducting. Some discussion was had regarding COVID protocol at Park Districts and NWSRA. Director Crawford will keep the Board apprised of any COVID information. There were no further questions.

## Old Business

### Project Updates

Superintendent Griffin informed the Board that the sensory garden open house was held with the Hanover Park District. It was a huge success and an article was in today's Daily Herald. She also informed the Board that the 6<sup>th</sup> programming space is on track with a bid opening and with construction to start in the fall.

### Finance Task Force Update

Trustee Romejko reviewed the Task Force Update including the 5-year capital plan. Trustee Romejko asked for a motion to approve the 5-year capital plan as presented. Trustee LaFrener reported some concerns he and his Board had regarding programs and services that NWSRA provided during the COVID pandemic and addressed the moving of excess funds to fund the capital plan. He is concerned that staffing is not being addressed and the focus is on capital projects. He asked the Board to explain how a credit of funds, to member districts, is not on the table as NWSRA did not provide all services to districts and has a large net in their fund. Trustee LaFrener reported that he has no doubt that member districts will fund any needs of NWSRA, either by special assessment, raising the MDAA or other avenues, and not place financial burden on NWSRA. Trustee Buchs reminded the Board that what has been presented is just a plan and that plans can change at any time based on the climate. Trustee LaFrener reiterated that does not have issues with the plan itself, but the funding of the plan. He wants to remove the burden of the financial planning from staff and remind the member districts that the burden is on them. Trustee Talsma asked for clarification if the motion is just to approve the plan and nothing else. Chairman Fahnstrom informed the Board it is just to approve the plan. Trustee LaFrener made the motion and Trustee Buchs seconded the motion. Upon roll being called, the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Rita Fletcher, Ryan Risinger, Ben Curcio (by proxy), Bob O'Brien, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Mike Clark, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Kevin Romejko, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrener, Tim McCabe, Steve Muenz, Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

### Fund Balance Policy

Trustee Romejko reviewed the updated Fund Balance Policy discussions and recommendations made by the Finance Task Force. He asked for a motion to approve the Fund Balance Policy. Trustee Clark made the motion and Trustee Bucks seconded the motion. Trustee Fletcher asked for clarification from Trustee LaFrener his concerns. Trustee LaFrener explained that he is concerned with staff having to manage the funding of the capital plan, they are therapeutic rec professionals and he would prefer staff focus on our patrons therapeutic recreation needs. Director Crawford reminded the Board that she was tasked with developing a plan for the fleet and to plan out needs for NWSRA for the next 5 years. She reminded the Board that vehicles are as important as staff. Without transportation, there is no need for staff because NWSRA could not provide the necessary access to programs. She also explained what goes into the budget process. The MDAA is used to fund 65% of the overall budget, with the majority of the budget being staff costs, (including benefits, salary and retirement). Trustee LaFrener explained that he would prefer money held at Schaumburg and if NWSRA needs additional

monies, they can request additional funds. Director Crawford indicated that in the past, through the MDAA process increases have remained at approximately 1%, with a 2% ceiling installed in the formula. She also indicated that there might not be issues receiving additional funds from some member districts, however it would place a financial burden on others member districts to ask for additional funds above the MDAA. By approving the Fund Balance Policy, as it was presented, NWSRA can plan for large expenditures without having to place future larger financial burden on member districts. She reviewed how the MDAA process was developed and how the MDAA is calculated and presented to the Board for approval. The initial purpose of the development of the Fund Balance was to fund the NWSRA Capital Plan without having to ask each Member District to give additional funds after the MDAA was requested and approved. Trustee Clark reported that his Board prefers a stabilized payment, rather than having NWSRA coming back to member districts to request special assessments for capital needs. He also reported that he and his Board would prefer NWSRA to keep the Fund Balance and use it for the identified plans that were approved by the Board as well as addressing any future staffing needs. He reminded the Board that what currently seems like excess funds in the short term, is not excess funds in the long term. In fact, NWSRA will be drawing down on the funds for capital needs and presenting a very different picture in 5 years.

Trustee Talsma discussed his understanding of the budget including the capital plan and asked the Board to consider his understanding that every year money would be added to NWSRA Capital Fund. He reminded the Board that if the Board decided not to give NWSRA funds in the past that is a Board decision. This is also the policy with his Board at Hoffman Estates Park District. Trustee LaFrenere reiterated again that NWSRA should have a Capital Fund, but the fund should not include five years of funding. Trustee Fletcher asked Director Crawford how the net is attained. Director Crawford indicated it comes from budget cuts and being fiscally conscience for many years and following the current Fund Balance Policy. Trustee Clark reminded the Board that leaving NWSRA excess funds in the investment accounts allows for lower MDAA's in the long term as it earns interest. Trustee Fullerton suggested amending the "rolling average" wording from the Capital Plan and making it a strict spend down plan over five years. Trustee Talsma supported that amendment and recommended creating a reserve for the agency.

After a lengthy discussion by the Board and staff, the motion for the Fund Balance Policy was tabled. The Fund Balance Policy will be revisited by staff and brought to the Board for approval during the FY2022 budgeting process.

Rita Fletcher left at 12:28 pm

#### New Business

#### New Projects

Superintendent Griffin gave a brief overview of the Wheeling Sensory Room progress.

#### MDAA

Executive Director Crawford presented and explained the Member District Annual Assessment Packet for FY2022. The packet reflects frozen EAV's and Gross Population numbers resulting in the no change in payments billed to member districts.

Chairman Fahnstrom called for a motion to approve the MDAA at 0%. Trustee Clark made the motion and Trustee Fullerton seconded the motion. Upon roll being called, the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Ryan Risinger, Ben Curcio (by proxy), Bob O'Brien, Jim Jarog, Mike Clark, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Kevin Romejko, Diane Hilgers, Tim McCabe, Jan Buchs

NAY: Craig Talsma, Tony LaFrenerre

OBSTAIN: Steve Muenz

The motion carried.

Chairman Fahnstrom called for a motion to approve the MDAA at 0% to be brought to their perspective Board for approval by resolution no later than August 30, 2021. Trustee Risinger made the motion and Trustee Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll being called, the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Ryan Risinger, Ben Curcio (by proxy), Bob O'Brien, Jim Jarog, Mike Clark, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Kevin Romejko, Diane Hilgers, Tim McCabe, Jan Buchs

NAY: Craig Talsma, Tony LaFrenerre

OBSTAIN: Steve Muenz

The motion carried.

Action as a result of Closed Session

NONE

Adjournment

After no further business, Chairman Fahnstrom called for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Risinger made the motion and Trustee Buchs seconded the motion to adjourn the July 28, 2021, Board meeting at 12:53 p.m. Upon voice vote, the motion carried.



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Secretary