



1996 S. Kirk Rd. Suite 320  
Geneva, IL 60134

# Forest Preserve District Executive Committee

## Meeting Minutes

President Christopher Kious, President Pro Tem Mavis Bates, Treasurer Bill Lenert, Secretary Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Michael Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe

**Thursday, February 8, 2024                      8:30 AM                      1996 S. Kirk Rd. Suite 320 Geneva, IL 60134**

### **I. Call to Order**

The Forest Preserve District Executive Committee meeting was held Thursday, February 8, 2024. President Kious called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM at the Administration Offices located at 1996 S. Kirk Road, Suite 320, Geneva, IL 60134.

**PRESENT**                      President Forest Preserve District Chris Kious  
   Secretary Forest Preserve District Myrna Molina  
   Commissioner Dale Berman  
   Commissioner Anita Lewis  
   Commissioner Mavis Bates  
   Commissioner Michael Kenyon  
   Commissioner Cherryl Strathmann  
   Commissioner Vern Tepe  
   Commissioner Jarett Sanchez

**Also Present:** Commissioners Roth; Exec. Dir. Haberthur; Chief of Planning & Land Mgmt. Rooks-Lopez; CFO Petschke & staff Carrano, Wolff; Dir. of Comm. Affairs Metanchuk; HR Dir. Clough & staff Misner; Chief of Police & Dir. of Public Safety Burger; Exec. Assist. Figliozzi & staff Rafferty and Attorney Hodge.

### **II. Approval of Minutes from December 7, 2023 and January 4, 2024**

**RESULT:**                      **APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT**  
**MOVER:**                      Mavis Bates  
**AYE:**                              Mavis Bates, Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Mavis Bates, Michael Kenyon, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, and Jarett Sanchez

### **III. Public Comment (Each Speaker is limited to three minutes)**

*None.*

### **IV. Presentation and Approval of Bills and Commissioners' Per Diem from January 2024**

**RESULT:**           **MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE**  
**TO:**                Forest Preserve District Commission  
**MOVER:**           Michael Kenyon  
**SECONDER:**       Cherryl Strathmann  
**AYE:**             Chris Kious, Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Mavis  
                          Bates, Michael Kenyon, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, and  
                          Jarett Sanchez

## V. Finance and Administration

### **TMP- 23-1744** Resolution Approving Revisions to the Employee Handbook 2024

*HR Dir. Clough presented the updated Employee Handbook. Modifications in the handbook included compliance items due to state acts and safety. Dir. Clough noted minor grammatical errors were corrected since the last presentation that was scheduled for the Finance and Administration Committee. Best practice in Human Resource Management is to review employment policies on an annual basis. The Human Resources Department has completed a full review of the Employee Handbook, which was most recently revised in 2022. Overall, the intention of the review was to prepare revisions that reflected state and federal statutes, and that clarified policies for ease of interpretation. In addition, updates were made to policies to ensure alignment with current practices. Below is a summary of the recommended revisions for 2024:*

#### Format Changes

- There are no substantive changes to the format of the Handbook

#### Policy Changes

- Updated the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement and practices to reflect additional recognized protections and to include accommodations for religious practices
- Revised the use of district vehicle procedures to include additional language as recommended by PDRMA, the District's risk management services provider
- Incorporated additional language in the Identity Protection Act policy that clarifies protection in the use and disclosure of employee social security numbers
- Added information on the District's pre-tax transportation benefits to comply with new state statute
- Clarified language on the Holiday policy to reflect current practices in compensation, and added Election Day as a recognized holiday
- Added leave benefits to the District's Bereavement policy for miscarriage and other pregnancy and fertility related diagnoses, consistent with applicable law
- Updated the Blood Donation Leave to include organ donation, consistent with current law
- Revised the VESSA Leave to include circumstances surrounding the death of a family member in a crime of violence
- Added language to further define the District's Modified Duty Program, consistent with PDRMA practices
- Included additional protections under the Anti-Harassment policy
- Modified the Disciplinary Action policy to remove in-person appeals of employment termination decisions based on labor counsel recommendations

New Policies

- Added a Whistleblower policy to comply with the Safe-T Act, providing measures to protect identities, safeguard confidential information, and provide reporting guidelines
- Introduced the Paid Leave for All Workers policy, replacing the District's former Personal Leave policy, to comply with new state statute

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**RESULT:** **MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE**  
**TO:** Forest Preserve District Commission  
**MOVER:** Dale Berman  
**SECONDER:** Jarett Sanchez  
**AYE:** Chris Kious, Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Mavis Bates, Michael Kenyon, Cheryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, and Jarett Sanchez

TMP-24-1839 Resolution Approving Rate Adjustments at Paul Wolff and Big Rock Campgrounds

*Chief of Planning and Land Mgmt. Rooks-Lopez provided a PowerPoint presentation of the District owned campgrounds noting the recommended increase would be spread over two years, \$3 increase for 2024 and \$3 increase for 2025. The camping rates charged at Paul Wolff and Big Rock Campground have not been increased since 2018. Staff researched neighboring Forest Preserves and Conservation Districts in the Chicagoland area that offer camping to compare current rates. Staff found that the current rates were typically lower than other campgrounds within our region. The increase in fees will help offset rising costs associated with operating the campgrounds while keeping the District's rates competitive with the surrounding public campgrounds. Based on the total occupancy at both campgrounds in 2023, the proposed increase in fees could add an additional \$93,996 to camping revenue. This revenue would be split in the General Fund based on actual account numbers Big Rock Campground, Paul Wolff Campground.*

*DISCUSSION: Commissioner Kenyon commented that the recommendation from staff is an example of another year of improvements. He noted that the District provides many services to residents and non-residents visiting. There was brief discussion regarding the equestrian campsites. Commissioner Bates commented that she was not in favor of the increase. She felt that camping is the one inexpensive amenity families can do.*

*Exec. Dir. Haberthur commented that one of the results from the camping surveys from the public was that the District was not charging enough to cover usage of amenities such as the electric hook ups. Chief of Planning Rooks-Lopez stated that capital improvements are needed at the campgrounds, specifically at Big Rock. Campers are requesting to move away from limestone, which makes it difficult to camp on grounds that are not solid. Another complaint/request from the public was the internet/Wi-Fi service. Many people utilize the campgrounds during remote work.*

*Staff's recommendation to increase revenues will allow for the capital improvements and much needed maintenance of the campgrounds. Commissioner Tepe discussed occupancy; he felt that the District should increase the rates fully, not in increments. Commissioner Molina stated that an increase has the marketing value of providing a*

*better service, a quality product. She felt that the District should increase the rates all at once as well, not twice, as it may negatively influence the public.*

*Commissioner Lewis agreed with the rate increase, also all at once to cover maintenance. Commissioner Strathmann agreed with the recommendation to increase fully, including an increase to the equestrian sites as that is a unique service. Dir. Rooks-Lopez noted that the equestrian sites are minimally utilized. Commissioner Berman agreed with staff recommendations.*

*Commissioner Kenyon commented that the increase would be favorable for the maintenance and felt that the camping was still a bargain. Commissioner Sanchez stated that camping rates were reviewed a long time ago, noting that online fees and online registrations are increasing everywhere. Commissioner Sanchez was in favor of the onetime full increase, stating it was more palatable.*

*ED Haberthur provided information regarding upgrades to security. The Public Safety Department installed cameras for the safety of the public staying on the grounds. Commissioner Roth felt that one raise was more presentable.*

*Commissioner Tepe moved to amend the motion on the floor to increase the rates all at once rather than staggered. Commissioner Sanchez seconded the motion.*

**RESULT: AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION**  
**MOVER:** Vern Tepe  
**SECONDER:** Jarett Sanchez  
**AYE:** Myrna Molina, Anita Lewis, Michael Kenyon, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, Jarett Sanchez  
**NAY:** Dale Berman  
**ABSTAIN:** Mavis Bates

**RESULT: MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE (7-1)**  
**TO:** Forest Preserve District Commission  
**MOVER:** Michael Kenyon  
**SECONDER:** Cherryl Strathmann  
**AYE:** Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Michael Kenyon, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, Jarett Sanchez  
**NAY:** Mavis Bates

## **VI. New or Unfinished Business**

**TMP-24-1878 Resolution Ratifying the Emergency Purchase of One Ford F-150 Police Interceptor Truck for the Public Safety Department**

*Chief of Police Burger presented the emergency purchase of the Ford F150 police responder. The two vehicles that are being considered for replacement are Squad #223: a 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe with over 130,000 miles, and Squad #227: a Chevrolet Tahoe with over 149,000 miles. A determination of which Tahoe will be replaced will occur after an evaluation by a certified mechanic. These vehicles were originally approved for replacement in 2022 through Resolution No. FP-R-22-02-2930, and again through Resolution No. FP-R-22-11-2992. They were not purchased due to supply shortages through the Enterprise leasing program. These Enterprise leased vehicles would have been approximately \$61,000 for each vehicle with aftermarket upgrades.*

This emergency replacement will be a 2023 Ford F-150 Police Responder 4WD Super Crew with cost for the vehicle and delivery of \$50,930. The truck will require additional aftermarket upgrades for Public Safety standards. This vehicle was ordered through the State contract with Morrow Brothers Ford Inc., Greenfield, Illinois.

This specific vehicle became available to the District on short notice, and there was no guarantee for a hold to allow the Board to approve it through the normal committee process. President Kious and Executive Director Haberthur approved this requisition under "Section 4.7.2 Emergency Affidavit" of the procurement manual.

**DISCUSSION:** *Commissioner Bates asked why the purchase was considered an emergency. ED Haberthur responded that in order to hold the vehicle, the decision had to be made to purchase prior to the meeting being held. It was not guaranteed that it would still be available if the proper committee cycle dictated the timeframe. This is due to the issue with Enterprise's lease agreement failure to deliver vehicles. This purchase has been budgeted.*

**RESULT:**           **MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE**  
**TO:**                 Forest Preserve District Commission  
**MOVER:**           Michael Kenyon  
**SECONDER:**       Dale Berman  
**AYE:**              Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Mavis Bates, Michael Kenyon, Cheryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, Jarett Sanchez

TMP-24-1883 Resolution Authorizing an Agreement to Acquire Real Estate Subject to Conditions and Grant of Authority to Determine Whether Conditions Are Adequately Met

*Attorney Hodge presented the following resolution, explaining that this specific acquisition was subject to concurrence from the Village of Huntley with added stipulations from the sellers. A portion of the acquisition was in the Village of Huntley's development plan. The purchase agreement includes municipal easements for future development. In addition, the District requested a portion of oak trees remain on the development parcel. Attorney Hodge noted that the negotiations had been ongoing as there were many moving parts. ED Haberthur explained the quality of this parcel included untouched land, waterfowl and turtles. This is a high quality piece for the District to acquire and protect.*

**DISCUSSION:** *President Kious stated that this was an exceptional piece. Commissioner Kenyon commended staff for their efforts and pushing forward to acquire this high quality land. Attorney Hodge noted that the District has gained approval, the agreement is pending, due to the number of members involved in the closing, it has been challenging.*

**RESULT:**           **MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE**  
**TO:**                 Forest Preserve District Commission  
**MOVER:**           Anita Lewis  
**SECONDER:**       Mavis Bates  
**AYE:**              Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Mavis Bates, Michael Kenyon, Cheryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, Jarett Sanchez

## **VII. Closed Session to Discuss Land Acquisition, License Agreements, Potential Litigation and Personnel**

The Committee moved into Closed Session at 9:24 AM to discuss land acquisition and a personnel matter.

**RESULT: APPROVED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**  
**MOVER:** Mavis Bates  
**SECONDER:** Cheryl Strathmann  
**AYE:** Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Mavis Bates, Michael Kenyon, Cheryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, Jarett Sanchez

The Committee returned to Open Session at 10:05 AM on a motion by Strathmann, second by Kenyon. Roll Call vote was taken, unanimous vote.

**VIII. Communications**

*Comm. Affairs Metanchuk presented the winning photos from the winter online photo contest. Online registration is now live for the District's environmental education programs. Commissioner Lewis asked about the plant sale. Dir. Metanchuk responded that the annual Native Plant Sale is coming soon, the official date will be released shortly including online and in person sales. Commissioners were invited to The Conservation Foundation Annual Membership and Awards luncheon on February 15 at 11:30AM.*

**IX. President's Comments**

*Commissioner Bates promoted the Aurora Fest in June, looking for volunteers.*

**X. Financial Reports**

*Reports A-C were moved together*

- A. Bond Investment Analysis Report through December 2023
- B. Cash & Investment Report through December 2023
- C. Income Statement through December 2023

**RESULT: APPROVED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**  
**MOVER:** Dale Berman  
**SECONDER:** Mavis Bates  
**AYE:** Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Mavis Bates, Michael Kenyon, Cheryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, Jarett Sanchez

**XI. Adjournment**

*The meeting adjourned at 10:12 AM*

**RESULT: APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE**  
**MOVER:** Michael Kenyon  
**SECONDER:** Cheryl Strathmann  
**AYE:** Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Mavis Bates, Michael Kenyon, Cheryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, Jarett Sanchez

Christopher Kious, President  
Forest Preserve District Executive Committee  
Forest Preserve District of Kane County

Respectfully Submitted,

*Gabriella Figliozzi*

Gabriella Figliozzi  
Recording Secretary