



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

Forest Preserve District Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

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

Thursday, August 8, 2024

8:30 AM

3rd Floor Board Room

I. Call To Order

The Forest Preserve District Executive Committee meeting was held Thursday, August 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 Anita Lewis
Commissioner Michael Kenyon
Commissioner Cherryl Strathmann
Commissioner Vern Tepe
Commissioner Jarett Sanchez (Remote)

ABSENT Commissioner Dale Berman
Commissioner Mavis Bates

Also Present: Commissioners Allan (Remote), Roth; Exec. Dir. Haberthur; Chief of Planning & Land Mgmt. Rooks-Lopez; CFO Petschke & staff Carrano, Marano; Dir. of Comm. Affairs Metanchuk; HR Dir. Clough; NRM Dir. Chess; Dir. of Ops. Jensen; Chief of Police & Dir. of Public Safety Burger; Exec. Assist. Figliozzi & staff Rafferty; Attorney Hodge and members of the public.

II. Approval of Minutes from July 3, 2024

RESULT: APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

MOVER: Vern Tepe

AYE: Anita Lewis, Michael Kenyon, Myrna Molina, Cherryl Strathmann, Jarett Sanchez, Vern Tepe

ABSENT: Mavis Bates, Dale Berman

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

None.

IV. Presentation and Approval of Bills and Commissioners' Per Diem from July 2024

RESULT: MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE

TO: Forest Preserve District Commission

MOVER: Michael Kenyon

SECONDER: Anita Lewis

AYE: Myrna Molina, Anita Lewis, Michael Kenyon, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, and Vern Tepe

ABSENT: Dale Berman, and Mavis Bates

V. Finance and Administration

TMP-24-2680 Presentation and Approval of the Compensation and Classification Study

HR Dir. Clough presented the comp and class study, she answered questions that were brought up at the Finance and Administration Committee meeting. The first question asked was the percentage of employees below the "step 1" in the step schedule, she indicated that just over 66% of employees are below the step 1 in the report. The second question was regarding the annual merit increase, Dir. Clough stated that 3.3% was the average employees received since FY2017/2018. The third question regarding postponing implementation would cause the District to use old data, as it was originally obtained by the District's consultant in late 2023. This would require a 3-5% adjustment to be current with the market as it continues to change. Lastly, the additional cost to bring all employees into the step schedule at the step that coincided with their years of service in their current position would be an approximate \$182,000 additional in the first year of implementation. Dir. Clough reminded the committee that the ordinance for salary approvals is brought forth every year, the change this year is moving from a range to a step schedule.

Dr. McGrath of McGrath Human Resources Group provided a PowerPoint presentation of the compensation and classification study.

Employee surveys and exit interviews conducted in recent years have frequently cited financial compensation as a primary motivation for gaining or seeking other employment. Non-financial compensation like paid time off and flexible work schedules have helped defer some turnover, but pay is often at the top of the list of employee concerns. Best practices in public sector human resources recommends the completion of a third-party, professionally administered compensation and classification study every three to five years. This ensures an organization is being financially responsible in its operations and to its employees. Competitive salary ranges that align with the market allow the District to recruit and retain quality personnel.

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County's last compensation and classification study was coordinated in-house in 2017. In 2023, the District updated only its salary schedule to include the assignment of new, reclassified, and retitled positions to existing salary ranges as well as increasing part-time seasonal wages for campground attendants. The modifications were the first since the last update approved by the Commission in 2017.

These changes did not make any adjustments to the District's salary ranges or practices. Since that time, the workplace and employee recruitment challenges have continued to evolve. Recognizing the importance of evaluating the District's employee compensation program, the Board approved funding in the FY2023-2024 annual budget for a compensation and classification study. The Board of Commissioners subsequently approved a contract with McGrath Human Resources Group of Jamestown, Tennessee in November of 2023 to complete the scope of the project. In further support of the establishment and maintenance of a competitive, equitable, and compliant compensation plan, the Board cited the need to fund the recommendations of the study as a primary reason to approve both new construction and CPI increases for the 2023 property tax levy. As a result, the FY2024-2025 annual budget includes an increased amount of \$465,389.00 in full-time salaries intended to implement the study outcomes for a total budget not to exceed \$5,473,399.00 in total full-time salaries.

McGrath completed an external market analysis of current, regular full and part-time District staff positions and an internal analysis to review internal equity. For these same purposes, union positions and those positions whose compensation and conditions of employment are negotiated by contract, namely full-time police officers and the District's

Executive Director, were included in the study and placed on the schedule. The study also included an analysis of total compensation, an examination of job duties and descriptions, a review of the impact of a proposed new compensation system, and recommendations for maintaining the compensation system into the future. Finally, the consultant performed a limited review of the District's staffing level.

DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Tepe asked about the presentation and staff's recommendation. Exec. Dir. Haberthur responded that the approval would be for this year's budget cycle. Commissioner Lewis asked about the positions and if any employees would be upset with the change. Dr. McGrath responded that in the past, all the increases were merit based, leaving room for some employees to have a significant increase and others not, however government has traditionally been step schedules. This trend is returning due to the majority of employees wanting to have a more long-term predictable future. This does not however allow for specific individuals to stand out. She explained that there have been some changes to the labor laws, this includes changes to FLSA exempt and nonexempt status, therefore changes would be made to some positions due to this alone.*

Commissioner Kenyon noted that government agencies have to have some incentives, such as paid days off to compensate the competitive pay at private companies, he asked who the direct competitors were. Dr. McGrath responded that park districts are direct competitors second to the neighboring forest preserves. Commissioner Tepe asked if the levy does not pass approval, would the District have the funds to support the increase. Exec. Dir. Haberthur responded that the District has the funds for this fiscal year, each year would be dependent on the approved levy and budget.

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

TMP-24-2679 Ordinance Amending "An Ordinance Setting the Salary Ranges of Employee Positions of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County"
HR Dir. Clough presented the ordinance to set the salary ranges for the District's employees. Staff recommends the Committee review and approve the modification to the ordinance setting the salary ranges of employee positions. Staff further recommends the Committee authorize a one-time retro-payment for actual hours worked in fiscal year 2024/2025 so that this increase can be effective on July 1st 2024 as budgeted.

Staff recommends all changes be implemented from the McGrath Compensation & Classification study, with the following modifications:

1. The "economic factor adjustment" should occur at the same time as eligible employees receive their step increase. This change is primarily for ease of budgeting, and allow the Commission to know the annual levy amount prior to setting the amount of this factor and budget accordingly.
2. The recommendations contained within Appendix B: Benefit Analysis-Supplement should be exempted from approval. These recommendations are independent of the compensation component of the consultant's study and require further analysis and design. These may be brought before the Commission in the future for consideration and approval as warranted.

DISCUSSION: None.

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

TMP-24-2714 Resolution Authorizing an Amendment to the Executive Director's Employment Contract

HR Dir. Clough presented the amendment to the Executive Director's contract to be in line with the compensation and classification study.

The 2022 Employment Contract grants "Any salary or other adjustment or modification made during the life of this contract shall be in the form of a written amendment and shall become a part of this contract, but such adjustment or modification shall not be construed as a new contract with the Employee, nor as an extension or change in the termination date of this contract". The District just completed its first compensation and classification study since an in-house study in 2017. Recognizing the importance of evaluating the District's employee compensation program, the Board approved funding in the FY2023-2024 annual budget for a compensation and classification study, the District hired McGrath Human Resources Group to conduct the compensation and classification study. The parties agree that the 2022 License is hereby amended as follows:

1. The annual salary for each of the remaining years during the balance of the contract term shall be: effective July 1, 2024 and start at \$162,177.60 per year.
2. Annual raises shall occur on July 1 of each subsequent year and be a percentage commensurate with the average total realized for full-time staff during the same year. This shall be a 2.5% percent increase (if and only if this "merit-step" is also budgeted for full-time staff salaries) plus the annual economic factor (if and only if this is also budgeted for full-time staff salaries)."

DISCUSSION: None.

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

VI. Land Acquisition

TMP-24-2644 Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement With the Plato Township Road District to Allow Compensatory Storage for Bahr Road Improvements Within Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve

Exec. Dir. Haberthur presented the IGA with Plato Township Road District. The Plato Township Road District has been working with WBK Engineering to develop roadway improvement plans for Bahr Road. The area of concern is about 500 feet east of the northern entrance to Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve, which experiences significant flooding and standing water annually. The proposed plan will raise this section of road to help reduce the extent and frequency of flooding. However, because this section of Bahr road is located within the floodplain it will require additional compensatory storage

1.5 times the volume of the floodplain fill to be provided. This storage cannot be provided within the existing right of way along Bahr Road. After reviewing the topography with Kane County's Department of Water Resources, it was identified that the ideal location for the compensatory storage would be on the south side of Bahr Road on the northern edge of Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve.

The proposed IGA will allow the Township to excavate an area of approximately 7,500 square feet adjacent to Bahr Road within Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve to provide the necessary compensatory storage. The Township will be responsible for all construction, permitting and restoration of the area. Staff has reviewed the proposed site and there are no plants of concern in the area that would be impacted.

DISCUSSION: *None.*

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

TMP-24-2664 Resolution Approving a Grant of Easement to the City of Aurora for Stormwater Management Improvements at the Chicago Premium Outlets

Exec. Dir. Haberthur presented the grant of easement. The City of Aurora is currently working with HRGreen Engineering to design improvements for the stormwater control system at Farnsworth Avenue and Bilter Road. During the preliminary design it was discovered that some existing structures installed as part of the Chicago Premium Outlet development, were not placed within a stormwater control easement granted to the City. The attached grant of easement seeks to expand the existing stormwater control easements to include these structures. By placing the structures within the easements, the City of Aurora will be responsible for the costs of maintenance and repairs and relieves the District from current maintenance responsibilities.

DISCUSSION: *There was brief discussion of the construction location and the surrounding area.*

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

TMP-24-2667 Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental License Agreement Between the Forest Preserve District of Kane County and the Village of Virgil for the Installation of a Tornado Siren Within Virgil Forest Preserve

Ops. Dir. Jensen presented the license agreement with the Village of Virgil. The Village of Virgil was recently awarded a grant for the purchase and installation of the community's first tornado siren. The proposed intergovernmental license agreement will allow the Village to install a tornado siren within a small 15'x15' area within the Virgil Forest Preserve directly north

of the Great Western Trail near the intersection of Sauber and Illinois Route 64. The location is ideal for the Village as it is central to the town while not directly next to residences. Should the Village determine that the siren is no longer needed, the Village is responsible for the removal of the improvements and restoration of the site to its original condition.

DISCUSSION: None.

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

VII. Planning & Utilization

TMP-24-2626 Resolution Approving a Bid for the Construction of a Shelter at Campton Forest Preserve

Ops. Dir. Jensen presented the bid for the Campton shelter. He explained that the shelter was renovated in 2023, however it sustained fire damage and deemed total loss due to a vehicle accident. PDRMA will be reimbursing the District for reconstruction.

The initial component of Campton Forest Preserve was purchased in 1972, and was 166 acres of the current total of 377 acres. In 1980, Shelter #1 was constructed atop a hill that overlooks the surrounding woodland and grasslands. Parking lot improvements and an equestrian parking area were added in 2007 to create the existing footprint. Shelter #1 had just completed a renovation in 2023, but it was deemed a total loss due to fire damage it sustained. Campton Shelter #1 receives year-round use, from supporting picnic reservations and scout group events to serving as a resting place for equestrian and winter time sledding activities.

This project will include the removal of the existing concrete foundation and for the purchase and installation of a new shelter and concrete pad, connecting to existing ADA access points from the parking lot and restroom. The bid was publicly advertised, with 6 responding bidders. Hargrave Construction Company of South Elgin, IL was the lowest, qualified bidder with a cost of \$183,910.00. Additionally, we are recommending a 10% contingency allowance to cover any unforeseen costs that may arise during the engineering and construction process of \$18,391.00, for a total cost not to exceed \$202,301.00.

DISCUSSION: None.

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

TMP-24- 2663 Resolution Approving Bids for Tree and Brush Clearing at Portions of Dick Young, Pingree Grove, Hannaford Woods/Nickels Farm and Bliss Woods Forest Preserves

NRM Dir. Chess presented bids for the tree and brush clearing at various preserves.

The objectives of these projects are to remove non-native brush and small mesic trees in degraded oak woodlands, as well as from large scale tallgrass prairie restorations.

Woody invasive species, such as common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.), are some of the other primary threats to biodiversity in Kane County's forests. These species create a thick mid-story cover that prevents light from reaching native understory plants. They also grow very well in shade; oak saplings do not. This adaptation prevents the regeneration of native trees. Grassland invasive species, like callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), have similar impacts to prairie communities by choking out the native grasses and forbs. Mechanical removal of these invasive species, combined with chemical follow-up, will help to restore the ecosystems to a healthier condition. This, in turn, will provide better habitat quality for the entire suite of wildlife that these preserves support. In particular, the habitat value for birds is greatly enhanced with the removal of these invasive shrubs. Native insects don't feed on buckthorn, so their coverage decreases the concentration of caterpillars across the sites. Additionally, their plentiful berries are nutrient poor and cause a laxative effect that makes them a starvation food. Contractors were sought to bid on clearing projects across four heavily infested forest preserves.

DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Kenyon commented that brush removal is an ongoing maintenance, noting that the District does not have enough staff take care of all the natural areas. Commissioner Roth asked how long the clearing would last. Dir. Chess responded that each year it is an ongoing, however the initial clearing happens first and treatments will begin in spring. The goal is to keep on top of the re-sprouts, additional mitigation such as burning helps. Exec. Dir. Haberthur noted that the District's stewards and volunteers are vital to the upkeep and maintenance.*

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

TMP-24-2668 Resolution Approving a Bid for the Construction and Replacement of a Drain Tile at Otter Creek Forest Preserve

Dir. of Planning and Land Protection Rooks-Lopez presented the bid for construction of a drain tile at Otter Creek Forest Preserve. In 2023 the District was contacted by a resident of Creekside subdivision and the City of Elgin concerning a potential drain tile failure within the Otter Creek Forest Preserve. The suspect tile was assessed by Huddleston engineering and determined to need full replacement. The District conducted a formal bid process for the improvements. Bids were publicly advertised, with six (6) bidders responding. Hartstrand Water Solutions LLC. was the lowest qualified bidder with a base bid of \$40,129.00. Additionally, \$8,000.00 shall be set aside as contingency to cover any unanticipated additional costs, that may arise during construction for a total project amount of \$48,129.00.

DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Strathmann asked about the tile being replaced. Dir. Rooks-Lopez explained that the shore line has eroded. The Army Corps. of Engineers were involved to allow permitting. Commissioner Roth asked the age of the drain tile. Dir. Rooks-Lopez responded that it was original to the farmers.*

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

ABSENT: Dale Berman, and Mavis Bates

VIII. New or Unfinished Business

TMP-24-2710 Presentation and Approval of the Closed Session Minutes
Exec. Dir. Haberthur presented the release of closed session minutes for approval. The Executive Committee of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, Illinois has reviewed the minutes of Closed Sessions pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2.06 and has made a determination as to whether the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of those minutes which have not been fully made public.

The Committee has determined that the need for confidentiality still exists as to the Closed Session minutes of 11/06/2020, 02/4/2021, 07/08/2021, 10/05/2023, 02/08/2024. The Committee has determined that there is no longer a need for confidentiality as to all or part of the Closed Session minutes of 06/01/2007, 07/06/2007, 03/02/2018, 04/06/2018, 08/05/2021, 01/06/2022, 02/03/2022, 04/07/2022, 06/09/2022, 07/07/2022, 08/04/2022, 09/08/2022, 10/06/2022, 11/03/2022, and 02/09/2023.

DISCUSSION: None.

RESULT: **APPROVED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**

MOVER: Cherryl Strathmann

SECONDER: Anita Lewis

AYE: Myrna Molina, Anita Lewis, Michael Kenyon, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, and Vern Tepe

ABSENT: Dale Berman, and Mavis Bates

IX. Closed Session to Discuss Land Acquisition, License Agreements, Potential Litigation and Personnel

The Committee moved into Executive Closed Session at 9:52AM to discuss license agreements.

RESULT: **APPROVED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**

MOVER: Myrna Molina

SECONDER: Cherryl Strathmann

AYE: Myrna Molina, Anita Lewis, Michael Kenyon, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, and Vern Tepe

ABSENT: Dale Berman, and Mavis Bates

The Committee returned to Open Session at 10:30AM on a motion by Tepe, second by Strathmann.

X. Communications

None.

XI. President's Comments

None.

XII. Financial Reports

Reports A-C were moved together.

A. Bond Investment Analysis Report through June 2024

B. Cash & Investment Report through June 2024

C. Income Statement through June 2024

RESULT: **APPROVED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**

MOVER: Anita Lewis

SECONDER: Michael Kenyon

AYE: Myrna Molina, Anita Lewis, Michael Kenyon, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, and Vern Tepe

ABSENT: Dale Berman, and Mavis Bates

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:36AM.

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

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabriella Figliozzi

Gabriella Figliozzi
Recording Secretary