Government Center
719 S. Batavia Ave., Bldg. A
Geneva, IL 60134

Forest Preserve District Commission

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 12, 2026 **8:30 AM** **Auditorium**

I. Call to Order

The Forest Preserve District Full Commission meeting was held Tuesday, May 12, 2026 at the Kane County Government Center located at 719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva, IL 60134. President Lenert called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

II. Roll Call

Remote Attendance Approval

Commissioner Williams

PRESENT President Forest Preserve District Bill Lenert
Secretary Forest Preserve District Mo Iqbal
Commissioner Jennifer Abbatacola
Commissioner Deborah Allan
Commissioner Alex Arroyo (Arrived in person at 8:36AM)
Commissioner Mavis Bates (Arrived in person at 8:38)
Commissioner Jon Gripe
Commissioner Michelle Gumz (Arrived in person at 8:36 AM)
Commissioner Leslie Juby
Commissioner Chris Kious
Commissioner Anita Lewis
Commissioner Michael Linder
Commissioner Myrna Molina
Commissioner Ted Penesis
Commissioner Bill Roth
Commissioner Jarett Sanchez (Arrived in person at 8:38AM)
Commissioner Cherryl Strathmann
Commissioner Clifford Surges
Commissioner Bill Tarver
Commissioner Vern Tepe
Commissioner David Young
Commissioner Kim Young

REMOTE: Commissioner Rick Williams

ABSENT: Commissioner Sonia Garcia

Also Present: Exec. Dir. Haberthur, CFAO Petschke; Dir. of Planning and Land Protection Rooks-Lopez; HR Dir Clough; NRM Dir. Chess; Ops. Dir. Jensen; Dir. of Comm. Engagement Metanchuk & staff Kovach; Chief of Police Burger; Attorney Price; Exec. Assist. Figliozzi, KCIT staff Peters and members of the public.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

President Lenert asked Landscape Architect Zach Tegge to lead the pledge.

IV. Public Comment (Each Speaker is limited to 3 minutes)

Ginger Romano, resident of Kane County spoke in regards to the Burlington Forest Preserve

Bison project. She expressed her discontent with the rerouting of the trails as well as the increase of public in the preserve due to the popularity of the bison. Romano appreciated the choice of limestone over asphalt for the trail noting that it is better for the horses. (Commissioners Arroyo and Gumz arrived in person at 8:36AM)

V. Presentation and Approval of the Minutes from April 14, 2026

RESULT: **APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT**
MOVER: Chris Kious
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

VI. Presentation and Approval of the Bills and Commissioners' Per Diem of April 2026

RESULT: **APPROVED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Jon Gripe
SECONDER: Deborah Allan
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

VII. Presentations

None.

VIII. Finance and Administration

FP-O-26-05-0628 Ordinance for the Annual Budget Appropriation Fiscal Year 2026-2027

CFAO Petschke presented the balanced budget for fiscal year 2026/2027. He highlighted revenues and expenditures, and grants awarded. He discussed the funding from the referendum bond and allocations in the general fund.
DISCUSSION: *None.*
RESULT: **ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Bill Roth
SECONDER: Ted Penesis
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

IX. Land Acquisition

FP-R-26-05-3218 Resolution Authorizing the Sale of a District Owned Parcel on Jericho Road at Big Rock Forest Preserve

Dir. of Planning and Land Protection Rooks-Lopez provided a brief presentation. The Breon residence is located along Jericho Road, south of the Big Rock Campground. The District purchased the parcel and home in 2022 as part of the Breon acquisition. At the time of purchase, the District planned to remove the home and surrounding outbuildings. During the demolition permit process, it was discovered that the core of the home was one of the original

Big Rock Welsh Settlement homes likely constructed around 1834. A demolition permit was approved for the outbuildings, but not the home. Estimates to stabilize and remediate environmental conditions within the home are approximately $80,000.00

Local preservation groups have expressed an interest to acquire the property and restore the home. If the Commission approves this parcel to be auctioned, notice would be given to potential bidders concerning the historic nature of the property and restoration requirements. An appraisal was performed and the property with home and restrictions is valued at $65,000.00 (PIN #13-35-100-016). The appraisal did not include an inside inspection of the home and does not reflect negative environmental conditions in its valuation. Due to the high costs associated with restoring the home, it is staff's recommendation the property be auctioned on the public surplus online auction website without a reserve. If approved, staff will contact local government agencies to offer right-of-first-refusal to maintain the land for public use. If no agencies are interested, local property owners and local historic preservation groups will be notified prior to a public auction being held.

DISCUSSION: *None.*

RESULT: **ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Alex Arroyo
SECONDER: Deborah Allan
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

FP-R-26-05-3219 Resolution Authorizing the Sale of District Owned Parcels Between Tower Hill Road and the Chicago & Northwestern Railway in Freeman Kame-Meagher Forest Preserve

Dir. of Land Protection Rooks-Lopez presented the sale of District owned parcels in Freeman Kame- Meagher Forest Preserve. The District owns a narrow strip of land between Tower Hill Road and the Chicago & Northwestern Railway on the east side of Freeman Kame-Meagher Forest Preserve. The two parcels are approximately fifty (50) feet wide are currently of limited habitat value and provide limited public access or potential use for the District. An appraisal was performed, and the parcels were valued at a $500.00 per lot. Lots will be sold through the District's Public Surplus online auction website with notices mailed to nearby property owners. Local Government agencies will be contacted first, prior to sale by auction, and offered a first right- of-refusal to maintain the land for public use. Proceeds from the auction are expected to be approximately $1,000.00 and will be directed to the Land Acquisition Fund. The Committee may approve the sale of the two District parcels of land within Freeman Kame-Meagher Forest Preserve as presented if desired.

DISCUSSION: *None.*

RESULT: **ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Deborah Allan
SECONDER: Chris Kious
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, David Young**,** Kim Young
NAY: Rick Williams
ABSTAIN: Clifford Surges

ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

FP-R-26-05-3220 Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement Between the Village of Campton Hills and the Forest Preserve District of Kane County Concerning Annexation and Regulatory Development of Certain Property

Exec. Dir. Haberthur provided a brief update on the current agreement with the Village of Campton Hills.

DISCUSSION: *None.*

RESULT: **ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Deborah Allan
SECONDER: Kim Young
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

X. Planning and Utilization

FP-R-26-05-3221 Resolution Approving a Bid for the Renovation of Glenwood Park Forest Preserve

Landscape Architect Tegge presented the renovation project at the Glenwood Forest Preserve. Glenwood Forest Preserve is located in Batavia along the eastern edge of the Fox River and adjacent to the Fox River and Prairie Path Trails. Glenwood is a riverine preserve situated between the City of Batavia and Fox Valley Park District (FVPD)-owned Lippold Park. The Fox Valley Park District plans to construct a multi-use bridge over the Fox River between Les Arends Forest Preserve and Lippold park in late summer 2026. Once the bridge is installed, staff anticipate a significant increase in visitors to Glenwood Forest Preserve. The current shelter and parking lot were installed in 1984, they are not ADA compliant and are in need of renovation. If approved, this project will:

- Make the site ADA-accessible
- Increase parking by providing eight (8) additional stalls
- Update the shelter and restroom
- Restore the asphalt roadway surface from the parking lot to the entrance.

The District conducted a formal bid process for the improvements. Bids were publicly advertised, with six bidders responding. The responsible, lowest bidder was Obsidian Asphalt Paving, with a base bid of $497,950.11. Additionally, $49,795.00 (10%) shall be set aside as contingency to cover any unanticipated additional costs, that may arise during construction for a total project amount of $547,745.11.

DISCUSSION: *None.*

RESULT: **ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Mavis Bates
SECONDER: Cherryl Strathmann
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

FP-R-26-05-3222 Resolution Approving a Bid for the Phase II Construction of an Electric Bison Fence at Burlington Forest Preserve

Dir. of NRM Chess provided a brief presentation, he mentioned the new calf that was recently born. The District fenced in a 32-acre pasture at Burlington Prairie Forest Preserve in 2024 and a small herd of six bison were released into the enclosure in December 2025 marking the triumphant return to Kane County prairies for the first time in approximately 200 years. In order to provide ample space for the existing herd to continue to expand and graze at an appropriate rate, the District is currently seeking to construct a second phase of fencing which would enclose 52 additional acres. This space will be critical in the future as the herd begins to breed. *(Commissioner Lewis returned at 9:56AM)* The District bid out the construction of this second phase of fencing, comprised of 7,067 linear feet around 52 acres of prairie. The lowest qualified bid was received from KP Fencing LLC dba FencePeoria of Wenona, Illinois in the amount of $142,000. Staff additionally recommends a contingency of $14,000 to cover any unforeseen costs that may arise during this project. Funds totaling $305,000 were approved in FY25/26 for the Bison Reintroduction project. Of that total, $39,167.33 remain. An additional $150,000 is proposed in the District's FY26/27 budget. That total of $189,167.33 would be sufficient to cover the $156,000 expense ($142,000 bid plus $14,000 contingency). Staff recommends the Committee approve the contract for the construction of an electric fence for the purpose of expanding a bison grazing pasture provided by KP Fencing LLC dba FencePeoria of Wenona, Illinois for a total not to exceed $156,000.

DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Gripe asked what would happen if an outage occurs due to a storm. Dir. Chess responded that the electric fence is solar powered, however staff has completed hardwiring power to the pump house which will become the new primary power source, and solar will be the backup.*

RESULT:	**ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER:	Chris Kious
SECONDER:	Cherryl Strathmann
AYE:	Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT:	Sonia Garcia

FP-R-26-05-3223 Resolution Authorizing a Bid for Trail Resurfacing on the Illinois Prairie Path-Batavia Spur

Dir. of Ops. Jensen provided a brief presentation. The District maintains over 45 miles of linear, multipurpose trail throughout Kane County. A preventative maintenance practice began in the early 2000's to resurface a portion of these trails annually. Trails are inspected twice annually for surface condition. Small repairs are conducted immediately and any overall deterioration is noted and prioritized for resurfacing. A 1.4 mile stretch of limestone trail on the Illinois Prairie Path-Batavia Spur from the Kirk Rd bridge to Kane/DuPage County line is in need of resurfacing. The Batavia Spur connects to the Illinois Prairie Path- Aurora Spur and the Fox River Trail and is a popular place to walk, jog, and bike ride. This project was advertised using the District's online bidding platform with four responding bidders. The qualified lowest bid was Arthur J. Lootens & Son, Inc. of West Chicago, IL at a cost of $63,567.00. Additionally, staff is requesting a 5% contingency to cover any unforeseen costs during construction, for a project total not to exceed $66,745.35. Funding for this project was approved in the FY26 budget totaling $75,000. Sufficient funds of $75,000 are available to cover the bid and 5% contingency cost of $66,745.35.

DISCUSSION: *None.*

RESULT:	**ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER:	Bill Tarver

SECONDER: Mavis Bates
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

FP-R-26-05-3224 Resolution Accepting the Bid for the Replacement of a Restroom at Big Rock Forest Preserve

Ops. Dir. Jensen presented the bid for the restroom replacement project. The District currently maintains 75 restroom facilities across our holdings. Different styles of restrooms have been utilized throughout our history. Currently three different types of restrooms exist in over 40 Forest Preserves. In order of age, "Romtec" branded prefabricated plastic units, custom-built block vault toilets, and our current precast concrete units can be found throughout the preserves. The District is currently using the CXT (LB Foster Company) precast concrete units for their mix of aesthetics, durability, and low long-term cost of maintenance. Big Rock Forest Preserve has 5 restroom facilities; 3 located within the Big Rock Campground and 2 located in the southern access. The southern facility located nearest to Siegler Lake is a single-vault plastic Romtec unit that was installed in 2003. Staff are recommending the replacement of this with a double-vault CXT unit to accommodate the increase in popularity of this area for fishing, hiking, biking, and horseback riding. Additionally, in 2025, the District completed a RTP (Recreation Trails Program) grant-funded trail extension whose trailhead aligns with this restroom facility. This project was advertised using the District's online bidding platform with three responding bidders. The qualified lowest bid was Midwest Excavators of Wasco, IL with a cost of $138,992.00. Additionally, staff is requesting a 5% contingency to cover any unforeseen costs during construction, for a project total not to exceed $145,941.60. Funding for this project was approved in FY 26 budget totaling $80,000. In addition to the budgeted funds, sufficient savings are available from other completed projects to cover the additional costs of $65,941.60.
DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Gripe asked about the longevity of the structure. Dir. Jensen responded that the estimate can be between 10-20 years with proper maintenance.*

RESULT: **ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Deborah Allan
SECONDER: Mike Linder
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

XI. Executive

FP-R-26-05-3225 Resolution Approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the Forest Preserve District of Kane County

There was an amendment to the title on the floor, to replace the word "Between" to "With." HR Dir. Clough briefly highlighted the mutually agreed upon collective bargaining contract. She noted, no retroactive wages would be due. The terms are set for July 2026 during the beginning of the fiscal year. President Lenert indicated that all parties were pleased with the outcome.
DISCUSSION: *None.*

RESULT: **AMENDED RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Jon Gripe
SECONDER: Deborah Allan
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates,

Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young

ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

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

None.

XIII. New or Unfinished Business

Commissioner Surges provided an update on the concerns of the silt in the river in downtown Carpentersville. He stated that the water levels are lower, however no signs of silt are apparent.

XIV. Communications

Dir. of Community Engagement Metanchuk provided an update on the current District events. The Kane Foundation's annual native plant sale was a success, selling out at the in-person sale. The Campgrounds officially open as of May 1, 2026 for the camping season.

XV. President's Comments

President Lenert thanked District staff and volunteers for all of their hard work at the District.

XVI. Department Reports

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT**
MOVER: Chris Kious
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

XVII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15AM.

RESULT: **APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE**
MOVER: Bill Roth
SECONDER: Mo Iqbal
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Sonia Garcia

Bill Lenert, Chairman
Forest Preserve District Commission
Forest Preserve District of Kane County

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabriella Figliozzi _____