



FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF KANE COUNTY

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The Forest Preserve District Finance and Administration Committee meeting was held Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 2:00 PM at the Administration Offices located at Kane County Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave., Bldg. A, Geneva, IL 60134. The meeting was opened by Chair Dale Berman at 2:00 PM. Remote=*

Members Present:

Attendee Name:

President Chris Kious
Chair Dale Berman
Commissioner Mark Davoust
Commissioner Ron Ford
Commissioner Drew Frasz
Commissioner Mo Iqbal
Commissioner Bill Lenert
Commissioner Vern Tepe
Commissioner Cheryl Strathmann

Status:

Present*
Present*
Present*
Present
Present
Present*
Present*
Present*
Present*(via zoom @ 2:08 p.m.)

Others Present:

Commissioners: Bates*, Brown*, Gumz*, Kenyon*, Martin*, Molina*, Sanchez, Wojnicki; Exec. Dir. Meyers; CFO Stanish* & Staff Petschke*; Chief of Planning Anderson Jr.*; Dir. of Ops Goreth*; NRM Dir. Haberthur* & Staff Rodeghero*; Dir. of Comm. Affairs Metanchuk; HR Dir. Yee*; Chief of Police Gilloffo; KC Sheriff Hain & Undersheriff Gengler; Attorney Hodge; Recording Secretary Figliozzi; Forest Preserve Police staff Marroquin, Holmes; KCIT Peters and members from the public including Kandy Jones*, James Plonczynski, Mary Ochsenschlager, Shauna Wiet, and Drew Gollias*.

II. Approval of Minutes from February 23, 2021

RESULT:	APPROVED BY ROLL CALL VOTE [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Ron Ford, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Bill Lenert, Commissioner
AYES:	Dale Berman, Mark Davoust, Ron Ford, Drew Frasz, Mo Iqbal, Bill Lenert, Vern Tepe
ABSENT:	Cheryl Strathmann

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

Public comment was held after item 4B on the agenda; Kane County Sheriff's Presentation for the potential integration of the Forest Preserve Police Department.

IV. Reports and Presentations

A. Presentation of the 2020 Campground Season Report

Dir. of Operations Goreth presented the 2020 Season Campground Report. Highlights included the overview of the financial revenue comparisons and the effects on revenues from the state mandated requirements in response to the pandemic Covid-19. The Memorial Day weekend and the month of May for both Big Rock and Paul Wolff in past years, have been a high volume camping weekend, however the report reflected the decrease in numbers due to the stay home order. Goreth noted the increase of local residents camping in 2020 since travel was at a minimum. The total revenues combined for 2020 were \$320,482 a decrease from 2019 with \$219,092 total expenses. (Strathmann arrived via zoom @ 2:08 p.m.) Goreth indicated that this year, 2021 is projected to return to the normal revenue rate. The Campground Satisfaction Survey results for 2020 were provided. Pictures of campers were shared.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Davoust commented on the fair adjustment to the stay rates, Dir. Goreth stated that staff contacts neighboring private and local campsites to keep the rates even and fair.

President Kious asked about the percentage of campers; Goreth responded that 89% capacity is typical during holiday weekends and occasionally, the campsites have reached maximum capacity.

Exec. Dir. Meyers discussed the decrease in revenues was indicative of the mandated closure during the month of May, that would have been a significant revenue stream. Meyers anticipates a lot of activity for the 2021 season with local residents wanting to go on vacation, due to limited travels this is an amenity. She encouraged the committee to read the full use and financial report.

B. Presentation by the Kane County Sheriff for the Potential Integration of the Forest Preserve Police Department

Kane County Sheriff Hain provided a PowerPoint presentation addressing the integration of the Forest Preserve Police Department. This topic was brought forth by County Board members as a result of the Forest Preserve Chief of Police retirement.

Sheriff Hain discussed an overview of position changes and financials/payroll indicating elimination and creation of current positions within the department. An organizational chart was included outlining the department structure. Hain presented an estimated total savings in payroll, automotive equipment, and estimated total increases in operational costs including the implementation of body cameras. Comparable counties that have a Forest Preserve Police Department included Cook, DuPage, Lake, McHenry and Will. Sheriff Hain defined the intergovernmental agreement points with a tentative proposal that included operational budget sharing and retention of all full time staff with the exception of the Public Safety Director position as well as some of the part time staff.

Executive Director Meyers provided a PowerPoint presentation noting the importance of the mission and the state requirements of the Forest Preserve District that is mandated by the Downstate Forest Preserve Act. Key points included partnerships with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Federal and State. Meyers explained that the Forest Preserve Police Department is not focused on 911 calls, rather a community based operation with detailed knowledge of the preserves and the protection of natural areas and preserve users. This type of training is vital to search and rescues within preserves including poaching and protection of wildlife. Exec. Dir. Meyers noted changes from the current District department structure, payroll and retirement program to the Sheriff's department would result in different accountability structure, payroll and retirement program. Kane County follows a different pension plan including union based plans. The Forest Preserve District's Police Department are not union based.

DISCUSSION:

Forest Preserve District of Kane County Chief of Police Mike Gilloffo spoke on behalf of the District. He expressed the excellent work that the Kane County Sheriff and the Sheriff's Department does. He explained that the potential elimination of the part-time officers would be a tremendous loss. The training and the specialized detail in learning the preserves are what makes this critical. Training in the ATV's and snowmobiles are vital in reaching the public when they are in trouble. Chief Gilloffo noted that this is a particular change in the sense that the savings. Financially, everything stays the same in terms of costs, the only change is the salary of the Chief of Police. Other benefits outweigh the minor cost savings.

Commissioner Davoust spoke highly of Sheriff Hain, noting the County has gained a tremendous asset as the Sheriff has worked hard and helped save money for the tax payers. Davoust discussed that for the Forest Preserve, there is always costs and values, and the return of the investment is a vital portion of this topic. The image that has been carried through a number of years is due to the care and hard work that the Forest Preserve Police Department has accomplished. Davoust stated he was reluctant to change what has worked well for so long.

Drew Gollias, Kane County resident of South Elgin commented in favor of keeping the Forest Preserve Police department. He stated that he chose to live in this county because of the care and safety in the Forest Preserves. He felt that removing the staff that know the preserves well would diminish the quality and safety.

Kandy Jones, resident of Hampshire and part-time Mounted Ranger spoke in favor of the Forest Preserve Police Department. She stated that as part-time Mounted Ranger, they work as the eyes and ears while patrolling the trails, because of this opportunity, they can see the other issues and dangers that others do not see daily. We know about all the illegal activity and dangerous animals and have been involved in searches. She stated that the District needs to have their own police force.

Kevin Holmes, retired Aurora Police officer and Forest Preserve Part-Time Officer since 2014, discussed the value of the department. He talked about patrolling the preserves, noting that

there would not be enough time to patrol and take care of the criminal calls throughout the County as well. Patrolling is part of knowing the area in detail to be able to monitor the areas to avoid any potential crime or people hurting themselves. He noted that being present allows for a safer area.

Victor Marroquin, Forest Preserve Part-time Officer has been with the District for 20 years. He spoke in favor of keeping the Police Department, he stated that the officers have worked hard to keep this positive model, working closely with volunteers.

James Plonczynski, Kane county resident for over 40 years spoke in favor of keeping the Forest Preserve Police Department, stating that the Forest Preserves are one of the greatest assets of Kane County and we should protect our open spaces. He stated that the protection of the land was his concern. Plonczynski noted that the Forest Preserve Police dedicates training specific to the land and they patrol year round. They are well versed in the outdoor and trails. This is an investment that the residents rely on and should remain in the guidance of the Executive Director.

Mary Ochenschlager, Kane County resident stated she had been involved with the Forest Preserve District since 1977 noting that her extensive history with the District has allowed for observation in the many challenges of the arrangement having County Board Members also be the Forest Preserve Commission. These agencies with different missions occasionally conflict. She spoke in favor of keeping the Forest Preserve Police Department and provided written comment.

Shauna Wiet, Chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission spoke in favor of the Forest Preserve Police Department. She stated that the Forest Preserve has been successful for many years noting that referendums, at times when schools and libraries failed, they had over 54% support. Wiet stated that this is a taxing body that has always been supported. Wiet commended Sheriff Hain on a job well done, however if the Forest Preserve Police Department gets consumed into a larger department, the attention the Preserves get currently will diminish. Once the perception dwindles, if the safety is not kept as it is, it will be very difficult to get that back.

Chairman Berman read additional written comments aloud. (3 comments total)

Commissioner Frasz asked when the Police Department was formed. Exec. Dir. Meyers stated that it had been established prior to her stating in 2004. Frasz stated that he would be supporting to keep the Forest Preserve Police Department.

Commissioner Brown commented that he had inquired about the Sheriff Department and potentially absorbing the Forest Preserve Police Department. He stated that his intension was not to potentially eliminate anyone's job, the question was if the Sheriff Department could do the job and what would the benefit be to the tax payers.

Commissioner Martin stated that the presentations occurred because of the question that was brought forth. He noted that change is always a difficult task. These conversations should always be brought forth to make sure we are absolutely certain that we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. In this particular situation we should stay as we are with what we have in place. He felt comfortable that we are doing the right thing and supports keeping the Forest Preserve Police Department as is.

President Kious thanked Chief Gilloffo for all of his hard work over the years and thanked both Sheriff Hain and Executive Director Meyers for their detailed presentations.

Further discussion continued, Chair Berman ask for consensus to keep the Forest Preserve Police Department as is, unanimous vote.

V. Bids and Proposals

A. Presentation and Approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement Renewal with Kane County Division of Transportation for the Sub-licensing Use of the Cartegraph Asset Management Software

The Cartegraph software subscription is structured with KDOT as the main subscription holder and the District is a secondary subscription holder. The District's portion of the 2021-subscription fee is \$21,743.40, 2022-subscription fee is \$22,395.71, and finally 2023-subscription fee is \$23,067.58. KDOT will continue to be the hosting agency for the Cartegraph software. The 2021 subscription fee is \$21,743.40. The 2022 subscription fee is \$22,395.71. The 2023 subscription fee is \$23,067.58. These fees will cover all software maintenance, updates and technical support. With the approval of this agreement, staff will include the funds for the subscription fees in the next fiscal year budget. Staff recommends the Committee approve the Intergovernmental Agreement Sublicense with KDOT for the sublicensing of the Cartegraph software for an additional three-year period.

DISCUSSION: None.

RESULT:	MOVED FORWARD BY ROLLCALL VOTE [UNANIMOUS]	Next: 4/1/2021 8:30 AM
TO:	Forest Preserve District Executive Committee	
MOVER:	Bill Lenert, Commissioner	
SECONDER:	Mark Davoust, Commissioner	
AYES:	Dale Berman, Mark Davoust, Ron Ford, Drew Frasz, Mo Iqbal, Bill Lenert, Cheryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe	

VI. Closed Session to Discuss Land Acquisition, Contracts, Litigation and Personnel

None.

VII. Communications

None.

VIII. Chairman's Comments

None.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

RESULT:	ADJOURNED BY VOICE VOTE [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mark Davoust, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Vern Tepe, Commissioner
AYES:	Dale Berman, Mark Davoust, Ron Ford, Drew Frasz, Mo Iqbal, Bill Lenert, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe

Dale Berman, Chairman
Forest Preserve District Finance and Administration Committee
Forest Preserve District of Kane County

**Adjournment until: Tuesday April 27, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via zoom
and in person at the Kane County Government
Center Bldg. A, 2nd fl. Geneva, Illinois 60134**

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabriella Figliozzi

Gabriella Figliozzi
Recording Secretary