

BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
FEBRUARY 25, 2019

Commissioners present: Hogan, Ludwig, Patterson, Vincer.

Commissioners absent: Conry.

Staff present: Brunner, Gerke, Henkel, Herman, McCammond, Schlupp, Snodgrass, Taylor, Tucker, and Whetsel.

Guests present: Kris Baker, citizen.

The meeting was called to order at 7pm.

Shawn noted an addition to the agenda under New Business to include authorization to add Matt Henkel to the PrairieView Golf Fund accounts. Todd noted that Executive Session 2(C)(5) was not needed unless the Board had something to discuss.

LUDWIG MOVED AND VINCER SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. LUDWIG – YES, PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, CONRY – ABSENT, AND HOGAN – YES.

PATTERSON MOVED AND LUDWIG SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 2019. PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, CONRY – ABSENT, LUDWIG – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

The correspondence was noted.

LUDWIG MOVED AND VINCER SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR JANUARY 2019. VINCER – YES, CONRY – ABSENT, LUDWIG – YES, PATTERSON – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

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There was no President's Report since Strategic Plan Update is now listed on the agenda under Unfinished Business.

President Hogan opened the floor Board Secretary Commissioner Ludwig. Commissioner Ludwig presented a report to the board outlining the amount of revenue and expenditures for the golf course since 1992. The report also included how much money the District has spent on purchasing land. These figures were researched and pulled from the District audits since 1992. It was recognized how much is actually spent in capital funds and operational funds to maintain the golf course. It was also noted that more money is spent on maintaining the golf course than purchasing land. Further discussion followed.

President Hogan opened the floor to District Department Heads to present their Staff Reports. Todd Tucker, Administrative Services-7:12-7:30 pm-He updated the board on the status of the Clean Energy Grant that he's working on to purchase the Lenz property next to the Bald Hill Preserve. He informed the board that the District will not offer a recycling bin after May due to Ogle County discontinuing the program. He stated that the District will be researching other options for recycling. He updated the board on the new minimum wage law and discussed the impact it will have on the District. He will be bringing a 3-year capital project proposal to the board that includes the Toptracer golf project, renovating the lower level of the Jarrett Prairie Center, and purchasing more land. Mark Herman, Education Department-7:30-7:35pm-He informed the board

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that the date for the Big Tree Event has been changed to May 11<sup>th</sup> from 10am-2pm. He showed an example of interpretive signage that is being developed for Bald Hill and other preserves. He stated that his department is also working on the new trail maps for the District's preserves. Russell Brunner, Restoration/Maintenance Department-7:35-7:41pm-He reported that the 9-miler run that took place at the District's main preserve had 150 runners. He stated that local runners love the District's preserves. He reviewed the burn plan. He stated that his department is preparing to get ready for the Maple Syrup Festival coming up on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Matt Henkel, Golf Operations Department-7:41-7:52pm-He introduced his new staff and each of them talked about themselves and what they've been doing so far. Lauren Taylor, Prairie Grass Pub Manager/Assistant General Manager has been updating forms, cleaning the facilities, and scheduling and organizing upcoming playdays and events. Julie Whetsel, Food and Beverage Manager has been cleaning, preparing new menus, and ordering equipment. Andrew Schlupp, Proshop Manager/PGA Professional has been organizing merchandise and looking forward to doing some new things at PrairieView. Trent Snodgrass, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Superintendent of Golf Maintenance is a state championship golfer who decided to get involved in turf maintenance and is very excited about the upcoming season since he grew up playing at PrairieView.

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President Hogan stated that Pam Clark Reidenbach of the Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence will be at the March meeting to present the final strategic plan for the District. Commissioner Ludwig thanked everyone for putting in a lot of time and effort to compile this plan. He noted that hiring a marketing manager is one of the items suggested in the strategic plan. Director Tucker stated that the board and staff would need to see where another new position could be budgeted.

VINCER MOVED AND LUDWIG SECONDED A MOTION TO ADOPT THE BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022 AS PRESENTED. CONRY – ABSENT, LUDWIG – YES, PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

Commissioner Vincer informed the board that he had a request regarding the District installing a disc golf facility. Director Tucker said that the District has had this request in the past. The only place it could possibly be installed is at the He-Leo Two Rivers Preserve but it still may not be enough space.

Commissioner Vincer wasn't aware that this topic had been previously discussed. He noted that he also relayed the suggestion to the Byron Park District to consider. Brief discussion followed.

President Hogan opened the floor to Matt Henkel and his staff to present information regarding the proposed install of Toptracer golf technology at PrairieView. He stated that this technology along with food and beverage service

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is what could change things at PrairieView. Developing people is how PrairieView is going to succeed and to always remember that the Forest Preserve District is first and golf is part of it. During the strategic plan process, many comments from the citizens were to find ways to make money. Matt's ultimate goal is to not use taxpayer dollars to maintain the golf course. He stated that with the new minimum wage law, we need to get our ducks in a row before 2025 so we can survive those changes. With all of that being said, Toptracer attracts 18-34 year-olds, 51% of those are non-golfers. Along with golfers spending money, we would now have non-golfers spending money at PrairieView. Season passholders would be allowed to use the facility at no cost.

The Toptracer technology would be leased. The District would have to build the building itself for Toptracer. The building would have eight bays. The cost for the District is \$225 per month per bay. Toptracer would maintain the technology. It would be used all year long. During the winter months, the clubhouse could be shut down and the Toptracer facility would be operational, bringing in revenue during the off season. Director Tucker stated that the cost of building the facility would be approximately \$1.3-\$1.5 million and the goal would be to open by November 1, 2019. It would be a municipal lease over three years so approximately \$500,000 per year. Currently, no money is made at the golf course from November until March. With this facility, PrairieView will be making money during those months.

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Director Tucker stated that this would currently be the only course in Illinois with this technology. The facility that staff visited in Wisconsin is already expanding their facility from 18 bays to 36 bays. Commissioner Vincer stated that we should build our facility with expansion in mind. Director Tucker asked Kris Baker (guest) what his thoughts were since he's a golfer. He stated that his concern would be having a growth strategy. If this takes off and others are built, how does that affect our facility? Will business drop off? Matt responded that much of the business is from non-golfers so there will always be non-golfers to use the facilities. Discussion of generational trends followed. Trent was asked his opinion since he's a millennial. He plays Topgolf at other facilities. He stated that his generation likes to do something that isn't boring and this isn't boring. He said that when they played it at the facility in Iowa, the accuracy "blew his mind." President Hogan stated that he didn't play golf once last season because of the amount of time it takes to play. With this new facility, he could bring his family and spend time with them while playing. Since there are different options to play, it will be attractive to a wide range of players. Andrew stated that there several options of play. You can play at actual courses like Pebble Beach, you can play other golf games, or you can play in range mode.

Commissioner Vincer questioned the possibility of something better than Toptracer being introduced. Director Tucker noted that since the technology is an annual lease, we could move on with different technology if we choose.

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President Hogan noted that having year-round consistency will be key for the success of PrairieView. Being open regardless of weather and having an ongoing menu available will be key in becoming an option for the community on a regular basis.

Commissioner Vincer stated that the board generally agrees with moving forward with the Toptracer technology and building a facility in which to operate. This will be on the March agenda for approval.

PATTERSON MOVED AND LUDWIG SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE 19-1, AN ORDINANCE LEVYING TAXES IN 2018 FOR ALL FOREST PRESERVE PURPOSES FOR THE BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT, OGLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2019, AND ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2019. LUDWIG – YES, PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, CONRY – ABSENT, AND HOGAN – YES.

LUDWIG MOVED AND VINCER SECONDED A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT TO ADD ANDREW SCHLUPP AND JULIE WHETSEL TO MATT HENKEL'S DISTRICT CREDIT CARD ACCOUNT AND TO REMOVE ANDY GRAMER AND SARO COSTA FROM THE ACCOUNT, TO ADD LAUREN TAYLOR TO TODD TUCKER'S DISTRICT CREDIT CARD ACCOUNT, AND TO ADD ANDREW SCHLUPP, LAUREN TAYLOR, JULIE WHETSEL, AND MATT HENKEL TO THE PRAIRIEVIEW

GOLF CLUB BANK ACCOUNTS AND TO REMOVE ANDY GRAMER AND SARO COSTA FROM THE ACCOUNTS. PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, CONRY – ABSENT, LUDWIG – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

President Hogan opened the floor to Commissioner Ludwig to discuss the benefits that commissioners receive from the District. He stated that he's grateful for the benefits but it seems unfair to the staff because the board is expecting the staff to make money and the commissioners are "soaking up" benefits. He asked for input from the other commissioners. President Hogan agreed that the benefits should be reduced to help with the revenue production. He stated this would also assist with deterring citizens from running for the board just to get free golf. This will be on the agenda for more discussion at the March meeting.

The new minimum wage law schedule was noted and briefly discussed.

LUDWIG MOVED AND VINCER SECONDED A MOTION AT 9:48 PM TO CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER SECTION 2(C)(1) OF THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION OF THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, DISCIPLINE, PERFORMANCE, OR DISMISSAL OF SPECIFIC EMPLOYEES OF THE DISTRICT OR LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE DISTRICT, INCLUDING HEARING TESTIMONY ON A COMPLAINT LODGED AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE OF THE DISTRICT OR AGAINST LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE DISTRICT TO DETERMINE ITS VALIDITY AND UNDER SECTION 2(C)(11) OF THE OPEN



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MEETINGS ACT FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION OF LITIGATION, WHEN AN ACTION AGAINST, AFFECTING OR ON BEHALF OF THE DISTRICT HAS BEEN FILED AND IS PENDING BEFORE A COURT OR ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, OR WHEN THE DISTRICT FINDS THAT AN ACTION IS PROBABLE OR IMMINENT, IN WHICH CASE THE BASIS FOR THE FINDING SHALL BE RECORDED AND ENTERED INTO THE MINUTES OF THE CLOSED MEETING. VINCER – YES, CONRY – ABSENT, LUDWIG – YES, PATTERSON – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

LUDWIG MOVED AND VINCER SECONDED A MOTION AT 10:25 PM TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION. CONRY – ABSENT, LUDWIG YES, PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

PATTERSON MOVED AND VINCER SECONDED A MOTION AT 10:26 PM TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. LUDWIG – YES, PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, CONRY – ABSENT, AND HOGAN – YES.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Ludwig, Secretary  
Board of Commissioners

JL/mg