

BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
MINUTES OF MEETING
SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

Commissioners present: Auker, Brooks, Conry, Hogan, and Ludwig.

Commissioners absent: none.

Staff present: Brunner, Gerke, Herman, McCammond, and Tucker.

Guests present: Sheri Dimond, citizen.

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm.

LUDWIG MOVED AND AUKER SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. BROOKS – YES, CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – YES, AUKER – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

CONRY MOVED AND LUDWIG SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF AUGUST 17, 2015. CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – YES, AUKER – YES, BROOKS – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

The correspondence was noted and discussed briefly. Director Tucker commended Janet Dahlberg and her summer camp staff on a successful summer.

AUKER MOVED AND LUDWIG SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR AUGUST 2015. Commissioner Brooks noted that the advertising and dumpster fence line items are over budget. Director Tucker and Shawn noted that hiring the Chartwell Agency was charged to advertising. The dumpster fence was upgraded to a lower maintenance material so it will be more cost effective in the long run. Shawn reported that the Golf Fund is still doing very well and should end the season

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with \$60,000 or so. LUDWIG – YES, AUKER – YES, BROOKS – YES, CONRY – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

President Hogan reminded the commissioners of State Conference coming up in January 2016 and to let Michelle know if able to attend or not. He also reminded them of the upcoming special meeting on October 5, 2015, to approve the tentative budget and appropriation ordinance.

President Hogan stated that he would like to discuss the potential tax freeze and how it could affect the District. He wants to hear each commissioner's opinion before the special budget meeting scheduled for October 14, 2015. He opened the floor for discussion.

President Hogan stated that to maintain the District's current standard of service, it would be better to raise the ceiling and then bring it back down to where the District is now. This would protect the District's long term budget.

Commissioner Ludwig stated that if this current board doesn't adjust it, future boards will only be able to levy what is being levied right now. Raising the levy will give future boards room to raise taxes if necessary. By not raising the ceiling, the board is gambling with the future of the District.

Commissioner Brooks stated her concerns with announcing a time limit around raising the levy if that's what the board decides to do. There shouldn't be any promise of a time limit to the taxpayers.

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Commissioner Conry stated his concerns regarding convincing the taxpayers that the District is going to raise taxes even though it may not be needed at this time but then drop the levy back down. He suggested having a town meeting if this is what the board decides to do. Director Tucker stated that it would be difficult to completely explain the District's finances to the public at just one meeting. Shawn McCammond stated a public hearing is held in November for the bond sale.

Commissioner Auker stated that he talked to the Illinois Association of Realtors and they believe that the Governor won't sign the bill because both sides are so entrenched that an agreement can't be reached. Regardless of what the board does, if the tax freeze passes and it's not enough for the District 10 years from now, the board at that time could put out a referendum for the people to decide. Discussion followed regarding the politics behind this bill.

President Hogan asked Director Tucker to get an opinion on this situation from Jason Anselment, Attorney for the Illinois Association of Park Districts.

Director Tucker stated that District is Capital Fund "rich" and General Fund "poor." The District can build buildings but buying toilet paper and cleaning the buildings can be difficult. The District is in pretty good shape right now and should be for about four more years. If the plant is re-assessed at a higher valuation, the District will not get extra money if the tax rate is frozen where we are now. Further discussion followed.

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President Hogan reminded the board of the upcoming Ogle County Zoning Board meeting. He will be attending and will read the statement that the board approved regarding the expansion of the Byron-Oregon Sportsman's Club shooting range.

The Bike Path Committee progress was discussed. Commissioner Brooks noted her concerns with lighting along some areas of the path. Commissioner Ludwig stated that three lights will be installed soon.

President Hogan opened the floor to District Department Heads to present their Staff Reports. Todd Tucker, Administrative Services Department-7:55-8:03 pm-He discussed the policy manual revisions. He is proposing changes to the nepotism policy, the grievance policy, and the layout of the manual itself for board approval. Museum planning is moving along and he will be contacting corporate sponsors like John Deere regarding sponsorship of a portion of the museum. Mark Herman, Education Department-8:03-8:09 pm-Museum planning meetings went very well with local educators. The District will be part of the community's anniversary celebration of the Byron Civil War Monument. It will be 150 years old next year. Russell Brunner, Restoration/Maintenance Department-8:09-8:15 pm; Todd Tucker, PrairieView Golf Operations (for Matt Henkel and Andy Gramer)-8:15-8:16 pm-He has heard many great comments about the condition of the course and programs and events at the course. The golf team is also doing very well.

The Oaktober proclamation was noted and briefly discussed.

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LUDWIG MOVED AND CONRY SECONDED A MOTION AT 8:17 PM TO CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER SECTION 2(C)(5) OF THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION OF THE PURCHASE OR LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR THE USE OF THE DISTRICT AND UNDER SECTION 2(C)(11) OF THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION OF PENDING, OR PROBABLE AND IMMINENT, LITIGATION AGAINST, AFFECTING OR ON BEHALF OF THE DISTRICT. AUKER – YES, BROOKS – YES, CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

BROOKS MOVED AND AUKER SECONDED A MOTION AT 8:29 PM TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION. BROOKS – YES, CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – YES, AUKER – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

BROOKS MOVED AND LUDWIG SECONDED A MOTION AT 8:30 PM TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – YES, AUKER – YES, BROOKS – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Ludwig, Secretary
Board of Commissioners

JL/mg