

**Lake County Forest Preserve District
Operations Committee Meeting Minutes - Monday, February 3, 2025**

The Operations Committee of the Lake County Forest Preserve District met on Monday, February 3, 2025 at the District's General Offices, 1899 West Winchester Road, Libertyville, Illinois.

- 1.0 Call to Order** – With a quorum physically present, Chair Knizhnik called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and confirmed electronic attendance for member Esiah Campos due to employment purposes, with no objections.
- 2.0 Roll Call** – Committee Secretary Shelton called the roll, and seven committee members responded: Chair Sara Knizhnik, Vice Chair Adam Schlick, Member Esiah Campos (Zoom), Member Carissa Casbon, Member Mary Ross Cunningham, Member Kevin Hunter and Member Paras Parekh.

Also Present:

Jessica Vealitzek, <i>President</i>	Alyssa Firkus	Debbie Boness
Alex Kovach	Mary Kann	Kim Mikus
John Nelson	Rebekah Snyder	Nataly Garcia Campos
Ron Davis	Dan Stearns	Jessica Chong
Alex Eichman	Pati Vitt	Maureen Shelton
		Matt Norton, <i>Corporate Counsel</i>

- 3.0 Pledge of Allegiance** – Member Carissa Casbon led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4.0 Addenda to the Agenda** – None
- 5.0 Approval of Minutes** - Motion by Member Cunningham, second by Vice Chair Schlick to approve minutes from the January 6, 2025 Operations Committee meeting. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were circulated for signatures.
- 6.0 Public Comment** – None
- Commissioner Sandy Hart requested agenda item #11 be moved up on the agenda. Motion by Member Cunningham, second by Vice Chair Schlick, unanimous consent was given by the committee to move this item up on the agenda.

Miscellaneous Business (11.0) - Commissioner Hart requested that the committee consider no smoking on trails. A general discussion ensued. A request was made to add a question on this matter to the upcoming Countywide Awareness, Attitude, Interest, and Usage survey. With consensus of the committee, staff was directed to bring a policy direction on this topic to a future Operations committee meeting.

- 7.0 Executive Director Comments** – Executive Director Ty Kovach highlighted items from his report and he and staff responded to questions on:
- 2024 had the highest total dollars raised from the *Horizon's* remittance envelope;
 - Preservation Foundation's 2024 results and endowment update;
 - Recent properties the District has closed on;
 - Highest number of participants for the 2024 Hike Lake County results;
 - The success of the Bob Ross exhibit that closed on January 20th;
 - Successful Profiles In Excellence event;
 - Horizons magazine saw a 20.4% increase in distribution from 2019 to 2024;

- Social media reports indicate significant growth across all platforms;
- Successful advertising for holiday golf gift cards;
- The District's recent IPRA and AVA Digital Awards;
- Two new invasive fish species that have entered Lake County;
- Working on getting a Federal Lobbyist and status of current Federal Grants.

A discussion ensued regarding Federal Grants. President Vealitzek requested information on what grants are tied to the Inflation Reduction Act and/or the Green New Deal. Rebekah Snyder, Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships to follow-up on that.

Chair Knizhnik and Member Cunningham thanked staff for the Profiles in Excellence event.

8.0 Correspondence – None

9.0 Unfinished Business – None

10.0 New Business

- 10.1 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract to Arends Hogan Walker, LLC in the Contract Price of \$55,437.59 for the purchase of a John Deere 1575 TerrainCut with ComfortCab Commercial Front Mower with snow blower and broom attachments. Motion by Vice Chair Schlick, second by Member Cunningham to approve the recommendation. John Nelson, Chief Operations Officer introduced the recommendation. Director of Facilities Dan Stearns summarized the recommendation and responded to a question. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full board for approval.
- 10.2 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract to Sutton Ford Inc. in the Contract Price of \$59,243.00 for the purchase of a 2025 Ford F150 Lightning PRO CC 4x4 Pickup Truck. Motion by Member Casbon, second by Member Hunter to approve the recommendation. Director Stearns summarized the recommendation and responded to a question on the cooperative agency's contracts. Vice Chair Schlick voiced his concerns about the Ford F150 Lightning and that Ford paused production of the vehicles. Mr. Nelson addressed his concerns and explained how these vehicles are fitting the district's needs and that they are the greenest option that we have. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full board for approval.
- 10.3 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract to National Auto Fleet Group in the Contract Price of \$70,278.85 for the purchase of a 2025 Ford Super Duty F350 Pickup Truck. Motion by Member Hunter, second by Member Parekh to approve the recommendation. Mr. Nelson summarized the recommendation. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full board for approval.
- 10.4 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Five-Year Contract for the lease of Axon Taser 10s and Related Components to Axon Enterprise, Inc. in the amount of \$106,920.00 amortized over five years. Motion by Member Cunningham, second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Mr. Nelson summarized the recommendation. Director of Public Safety, Ron Davis, responded to questions about the lease and explained that Axon updates the equipment and provides training, as well. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the Finance Committee for approval.

- 10.5 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract to City Electric Supply for the Purchase of New Museum Lighting Products in an amount not to exceed \$61,055.65. Motion by Member Cunningham, second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Mr. Nelson introduced the recommendation. Director of Education, Alyssa Firkus summarized the recommendation and responded to a question about available grants, noting that staff did explore grants, but none applied to the special track lighting that is needed for the museum. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full board for approval.
- 10.6 Recommend Approval of a Resolution Awarding a Contract to aQity Research & Insights, Inc. for Research Services for a Countywide Awareness, Attitude, Interest, and Usage Survey in the Contract Price of \$39,000.00. Motion by Member Casbon, second by Member Cunningham to approve the recommendation. Director Snyder summarized the recommendation. Committee members requested additional questions added to the survey regarding smoking and safety issues. A general discussion ensued specifically on the safety issue of smash and grabs. Director Davis provided statistics and noted that these types of incidents are down approximately 50% to the previous year due to increased social media posts, new signage and additional patrolling at the preserves. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full board for approval.
- 10.7 Recommend approval of an Ordinance approving Amendment #2 to the farm license agreement with Terry Brothers Grain Farm at Dutch Gap Forest Preserve to renew the term of the license through December 12, 2025, and waiving compliance with Section II.B of the District's Farm Management Program Policy regarding public bid process. Motion by Member Hunter, second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Mr. Nelson introduced the recommendation. Director of Natural Resources, Dr. Pati Vitt summarized the recommendation and explained the reason for the extension of this agreement. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full board for approval.

11.0 Miscellaneous Business – Moved to after Agenda item 6.0.

Member Campos left the meeting at 12:17 p.m. before the roll call vote to go into closed session.

12.0 Closed Session – Motion by Member Cunningham, second by Member Casbon to go into closed session for the purpose of reviewing approved closed session minutes for release or retention and deletion of verbatim recordings. Roll call vote being had, the motion passed by a vote of: AYES: 6, NAYS: 0. The committee went into closed session at 12:18 p.m. and returned to open session at 12:24 p.m.

13.0 Potential Action Following Closed Session – None

14.0 Adjourn – Chair Knizhnik noted that the next meeting is a Joint Committee Meeting on Thursday, March 6 at 1:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maureen E. Shelton
Committee Secretary

Date Approved: March 31, 2025