

**Lake County Forest Preserve District
Operations Committee Meeting Minutes - Monday, April 6, 2026**

The Operations Committee of the Lake County Forest Preserve District met on Monday, April 6, 2026 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 stated that we received request for electronic attendance from member Mary Ross Cunningham due to personal illness and Vice Chair Adam Schlick because of employment purposes, there were no objections.
- 2.0 Roll Call** – Secretary Shelton called the roll and four committee members responded: Chair Sara Knizhnik, Member Esiah Campos, Member Carissa Casbon and Member Kevin Hunter. Absent: Vice Chair Adam Schlick, Member Mary Ross Cunningham and Member Paras Parekh.

Also Present:

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| Jessica Vealitzek, <i>President</i> | Mary Kann | Kim Mikus |
| Gina Roberts, <i>Commissioner (Zoom)</i> | Steve Neaman | Mike Zahalka |
| John Nelson | Rebekah Snyder | Maureen Shelton |
| Ron Davis | Dan Stearns | Nataly Lara |
| Alyssa Firkus | Pati Vitt | Jessica Chong |
| Kevin Kleinjan | Jim Hills | Matt Norton, <i>Corporate Counsel</i> |

- 3.0 Pledge of Allegiance** – President Vealitzek led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4.0 Addenda to the Agenda** – None
- 5.0 Approval of Minutes** - Motion by Member Hunter second by Member Casbon to approve the minutes from the March 5, 2026 Joint Committee meeting. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.
- 6.0 Public Comment** – None
- 7.0 Correspondence** – None
- 8.0 Unfinished Business** – None
- 9.0 New Business**
 - 9.1** Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a three-year Contract to Blackbaud, Inc. for constituent management and financial management software in an amount not to exceed \$92,998.85. Motion by Member Casbon, second by Member Campos to approve the recommendation. Chief Operations Officer, John Nelson, introduced this item. Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships, Rebekah Snyder, provided information on the three-year contract. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the Finance Committee for approval.
 - 9.2** Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding Contracts for the Purchase of Trees and Shrubs for a five-year period (2026-2030) for Multiple Preserves to Majestic Oaks Nursery in the Contract Price of \$181,370.15; and to Possibility Place Nursery in the Contract Price of \$103,522.40. Motion by Member Hunter, second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Mr. Nelson introduced this item noting that typically this was an annual contract and that this five-year contract for restoration and native plant sales is a way to communicate with the vendors what our future needs are going to be. Dr. Pati Vitt, Director of Natural Resources, provided further details on the structure of the contract and how it aligns with our 10-year CIP referendum funded restoration projects. Director Vitt noted that doing a multi-year contract also allows the vendor to know for certain the number of trees of each species that will need to be produced rather than overproducing and losing money. Responding

to questions Director Vitt mentioned that this process gives us the opportunity to get the species that we really want. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the Finance Committee for approval.

- 9.3 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract for Reforestation Watering at Multiple Forest Preserves to TGF Enterprises, Inc., in the Contract Price of \$33,035.00. Motion by Member Hunter, second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Director Vitt summarized the recommendation and responded to questions on the bidding process. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full Board for approval.
- 9.4 Approve Change Order No. 2 to the Contract with Native Restoration Services, Inc. for the Lake Plain Invasive Plant Strike Team Project, increasing the Contract Amount by \$72,135.03. Motion by Member Hunter, second by Member Campos to approve the recommendation. Using a map, Director Vitt pointed out the location and provided details on this project. She explained the reason for the change order and responded to questions on communicating the importance of this project to neighboring communities. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full Board for approval.
- 9.5 Approve Updated Farm Management Program Procedures. Motion by Member Campos, second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Director Vitt introduced Jim Hills, the district's newest restoration ecologist, who will be managing the Farm Management Program. Mr. Nelson noted that the Farm Management Policies were recently approved by the Board and that the approval of the procedures is delegated to the Operations Committee. Director Vitt reviewed all the changes in the procedures. President Vealitzek requested that moving forward the red-lined version with the changes be attached or a clean version with notes. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.
- 9.6 Termination of the Farm License Agreement with Crane Grain Farms, LLC at Prairie Stream Forest Preserve. Motion by Member Hunter, second by Member Casbon to terminate the License Agreement between the Lake County Forest Preserve District and Crane Grain Farms, LLC for the parcel commonly known as Prairie-Stream Row Crop, dated January 1, 2023, and to terminate the Licensee's right to possession of the licensed premises and approve the recommendation.

Mr. Nelson introduced this item and explained that the reason for the termination is because the Licensee has not paid their license fees and applicable taxes. Director Vitt provided more details on the licensee's payment history, noting that the District received a partial payment in 2024 and no payment of taxes. In 2025 no license fee or taxes were paid to the District. The licensee was put on notice and default letters were sent. Mr. Nelson and Director Vitt responded to questions. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

- 9.7 Recommend approval of an Ordinance approving a Farm License Agreement with Terry Brothers Grain Farm, LLC at Prairie Stream Forest Preserve for a term of April 15, 2026 through December 31, 2026. Motion by Member Hunter, second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Director Vitt summarized the recommendation noting that Terry Brothers is assuming the new license at Prairie Stream. The license is for one year and it will be bid out as part of the 2027 Farm Program. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

9.8 Recommend approval of an Ordinance approving a Farm License Agreement with Duane Beelow at Ray Lake Forest Preserve for a term of April 15, 2026 through December 31, 2029. Motion by Member Hunter, second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Director Vitt 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.

10.0 Miscellaneous Business – None

11.0 Closed Session – None

13.0 Potential Action Following Closed Session – None

14.0 Adjourn –Chair Knizhnik noted that the next committee meeting will be May 4, 2026 and then adjourned the meeting at 11:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen E. Shelton

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Date Approved: 5/4/2026