Lake County Forest Preserve District
Operations Committee Meeting Minutes - Monday, August 3, 2026

The Operations Committee of the Lake County Forest Preserve District met on Monday, August 3, 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.

2.0 Roll Call – Secretary Shelton called the roll and three committee members responded: Chair Sara Knizhnik, Member Esiah Campos and Member Carissa Casbon. President Jessica Vealitzek attendance made a quorum. Member Paras Parekh arrived after roll call at 11:02 a.m. Absent: Vice Chair Adam Schlick and Member Kevin Hunter.

Also Present:

Jessica Vealitzek, *President*	Mary Kann (Zoom)	Kim Mikus
Alex Ty Kovach	Steve Neaman	Mike Zahalka
John Nelson	Rebekah Snyder	Maureen Shelton
Ron Davis	Dan Stearns	Nataly Lara
Alyssa Firkus	Pati Vitt (Zoom)	Betsy Gates Alford, *Corporate Counsel*
Ken Jones	Debbie Boness	

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Knizhnik dispensed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

4.0 Addenda to the Agenda – None

5.0 Approval of Minutes - Motion by Member Campos second by Member Casbon to approve the minutes from June 1, 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 an Annual Support and License Agreement for MUNIS Financial Software to Tyler Technologies, Inc. in the Contract Price of $155,552.90. Motion by Member Casbon, second by Member Campos to approve the recommendation. Director of Finance, Steve Neaman summarized the recommendation. Director Neaman responding to a question informed the committee that there was a 5% increase over last year. 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 a Contract for the Purchase of one new Articulating Boom Lift with Trailer to Alexander Equipment Company, Inc. in the Contract Price of $112,172.00. Motion by Member Casbon, second by Member Campos to approve the recommendation. Chief Operations Officer, John Nelson, introduced this item. Director of Facilities, Dan Stearns, provided details of the equipment. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

9.3 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract to ILF1, LLC d/b/a Elmhurst Ford, for the Purchase of Three New Fleet Vehicles (two 2026 Ford F-350 Super Duty Dump Trucks with plow and spreaders and one 2025 Ford F-350 Mechanic Truck with crane) in the Contract Price of

$336,215.00. Motion by Member Casbon, second by Member Parekh to approve the recommendation. Mr. Nelson introduced the item, reminding the committee that Staff previously received board pre-approval (under the updated purchasing policy) for 11 replacement vehicles in the year's fleet plan. Eight came in underestimate and contracts were awarded. These remaining three trucks came in over the per-vehicle estimate, so the item has returned for the operations committee/board approval. The overall fleet replacement budget is still not exceeded.

Director Stearns provided additional details on the vehicles. Responding to questions he and Mr. Nelson explained the upfitting on these specialized heavy-duty vehicles and said that an EV option is not currently available. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

9.4 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract to Hey and Associates Inc., for Professional Services for a Wetland Restoration Project at Grassy Lake Forest Preserve, in the Contract Price of $54,000.00. Motion by Member Casbon, second by Member Parekh to approve the recommendation. Mr. Nelson summarized the recommendation. He explained the project at Grassy Lake and the stormwater management commissions reimbursement and role in the process. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

9.5 Recommend approval of an Ordinance establishing fees and charges for District permits, programs, services and facilities (Annual Fee Ordinance). Motion by Member Campos, second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Mr. Nelson introduced the recommendation and explained that the Director responsible for each section of the fee schedule will present the respective fee recommendations.

Director Neaman discussed how the Annual Fee Ordinance aligns with the District's budget process. He noted that, for the proposed 2027 budget, the District's health insurance costs are projected to increase by anywhere from 17% - 20%, while property liability insurance costs are also expected to experience a double-digit percentage increase. He explained that, in addition to carefully reviewing departmental expense budgets, the District has evaluated its fee structure. As a result, several fee increases are being recommended this year, many of which have not been adjusted in several years.

Director of Education Alyssa Firkus presented the proposed programs and education fee changes and responded to questions from the Committee. She noted that the program and education fee changes will take effect on August 12, 2026, to align with the start of the upcoming school year.

Director Stearns provided details and responded to questions in the administrative section specific to vendor permit changes.

Mr. Nelson presented the preserve use section. He explained that the fee structure maintains a standard picnic shelter rental fee as the base rate for groups of up to 50 people at most of our picnic shelters. For the 2027 season, the base fee will increase to $100 for residents and $200 for non-residents for the first 50 attendees. For each additional group of up to 10 people, there will be an added charge of $20.

Currently, shelter rental fees are $80 on weekdays and $90 on weekends. Under the proposed structure, the fee will become a flat $100 per event, regardless of the day of the week. The last fee increase occurred in 2019. Prior rates were:

- 2013: $60 weekdays / $70 weekends
- 2017: $50 weekdays / $60 weekends
- 2019: $80 weekdays / $90 weekends

Mr. Nelson provided a comparison with neighboring agencies that indicates that the proposed fees remain competitive and that overall, the proposed fee increases reflect the rising costs of labor, waste collection, and facility maintenance while keeping rental rates competitive with comparable agencies in the region.

Mr. Nelson then reviewed and responded to questions on the horse trail and off-leash dog areas use permits. For the horse trail permit it has been 12 years since the last time these fees were looked at. For the 2027 season, staff is proposing to increase it from $50 to $60 for a resident, and from $100 to $120 for non-resident. The daily would be going from $5 to $10, and for non-residents from $10 to $20.

Staff proposed increases for the off-leash dog area permit fees are as follows:

- Resident annual permit: $50 to $60
- Each additional resident dog: $20 to $30
- Non-resident annual permit: $150 to $180
- Each additional non-resident dog: $75 to $90

Notably, staff estimated that the average annual permit holder visits an off-leash dog area approximately 40 times per year, based on traffic counter data and permit sales. As a result, anyone visiting more than four times annually generally realizes savings by purchasing an annual permit.

The next section, facilities, was presented by Director Stearns. Mr. Stearns provided the changes in rates at Greenbelt, ThunderHawk, Independence Grove (IG) and Fox River Marina. During the IG section Director Stearns provided an update on this year's IG concert series.

Lastly, the golf fees section. In the absence of the Director of Golf, Alex Eichman, Mr. Nelson explained that golf fees have remained unchanged for the past two years, with only modest increases proposed for the upcoming year. Greens fees for an 18-hole round will generally increase by $1–$2. Mr. Nelson responded to questions on Season Passes and Juniors golf. Director Eichman to follow-up with the committee on the Junior Golf programs.

Roll call vote being had, the motion passed by a vote of Ayes: 3, Nay: 1 (Campos), and the recommendation was forwarded to the Finance Committee for approval.

9.6 Recommend Approval of an Ordinance Adopting a Social Media Policy. Motion by Member Campos second by Member Casbon to approve the recommendation. Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships, Rebekah Snyder summarized the recommendation. Responding to a question, Director Snyder said that during the policy review process, staff clarified language regarding blocking users. The policy specifies that individuals will not be blocked from participating on district social media platforms, even if they have previously posted comments that violate the policy. Instead, comments that are obscene, pornographic, or otherwise violate the guidelines may be hidden or removed, while users retain the ability to participate in future discussions. Staff explained that only spam or fake accounts may be blocked, with documentation maintained to support those decisions and to allow for reversal if an account is later determined to be legitimate. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously, and the recommendation was forwarded to the Finance Committee for approval.

10.0 Miscellaneous Business – None

11.0 Closed Session – None

12.0 Potential Action Following Closed Session – None

13.0 Adjourn –Chair Knizhnik noted that the next committee meeting will be Monday, August 31, 2026, and then adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen E. Shelton

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Date Approved: 8/31/2026