

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT – REGULAR FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES**  
**FEBRUARY 11, 2026**

The Board of Commissioners of the Lake County Forest Preserve District met on Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at the District General Offices, 1899 West Winchester Road, Libertyville, Illinois.

**1.0 Call to Order** – With a quorum physically present, President Jessica Vealitzek called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2.0 Roll Call of Commissioners** – Board Secretary Gagnani called the roll and 17 Commissioners responded present: Altenberg, Campos, Casbon, Clark, Danforth, Frank, Hart, Hewitt, Hunter, Knizhnik, Kyle, Maine, Parekh, Roberts, Schlick, Vealitzek, and Wasik. Absent: Cunningham and Pedersen.

**3.0 Moment of Silence** – President Vealitzek called for a moment of silence.

**4.0 Pledge of Allegiance** – Vice President Roberts led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**5.0 Addenda to Agenda** – None

**6.0 Public Comment** – None

**7.0 President’s Report, Special Recognition and Committee Appointments**

- Catherine Game, Executive Director of Brushwood, presented an annual update to the Board.
- Attended IAPD/IPRA Conference Awards Luncheon on January 30, 2026.
- Attended 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Profiles in Excellence on February 1, 2026.
- Met with Openlands staff regarding the old Route 53 corridor.

**7.1 Strategic Plan Update** – Executive Director Kovach noted that work is beginning on the next round of five-year objectives to have them ready for the 2027 Budget development. A presentation was given by Jennifer Olson, Consultant with Partners In Capacity. The firm’s President, Laurel Tustison, was present remotely via Zoom. Ms. Olson gave an overview of the process and timeline for developing the Strategic Plan as led by a Steering Committee. Commissioners will receive a digital survey in March for their input. The final Plan will be presented to the Committee of the Whole in July, with formal Board approval in August.

**8.0 Executive Director’s Report** - Executive Director Kovach reported on:

- Introduction of new Golf Operations, Natural Resources, and Public Safety Department staff;
- IDNR/OSLAD grant received for Lake Carina Forest Preserve accessibility improvements;
- Summary of revenue received from the Foundation’s remittance envelope in *Horizons*;
- Rep. Schneider secured \$1 million federal funding for habitat restoration at Gander Mountain;
- Closing took place on the Sidhu acquisition at Ray Lake Forest Preserve;
- Summary of volunteer hours throughout the District in 2025;
- Winter clearing of woody invasive species at Greenbelt, MacArthur Woods; Buckthorn clearing at Ryerson, MacArthur Woods and Cuba Marsh;
- First virtual Native Gardner’s Club program had 178 participants;
- New exhibit at Dunn Museum is For the Love of Pollinators, opening February 14;
- Words of the Woods podcast in February featured owl sounds of resident and visitor owls;
- Lake County History Symposium held virtually in January; Profiles in Excellence on February 1;
- Senior Buyer elected vice president of the Board of Midwest Assn. of Public Procurement;

- The District received the 2026 Distinguished Budget Presentation Award and special recognition for its Capital Program from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) ;
- Two Showcase Awards received from IAPD/IPRA for Horizons and Foundation Annual Report.

**9.0 Unfinished Business – None**

**10.0 Consent Agenda** – Commissioner Hart requested that Item 10.4 be removed from the Consent Agenda. Motion by Vice President Roberts, seconded by Commissioner Hart to approve the Consent Agenda, items 10.1 through 10.3:

10.1 Approval of Minutes: January 14, 2026

10.2 Approve a Resolution Approving the Disposal of Surplus Vehicles, Equipment, Furnishings and Other Items through a public auction process. **EXHIBIT NO. 6254**

10.3 Approve a Resolution Approving the Purchase of Police Computer Equipment from the County of Lake in the amount of \$68,250.00. **EXHIBIT NO. 6255**

With a roll call vote being had, the motion to approve the Consent Agenda passed by a vote of: **AYES: 17, NAYS: 0**

**10.4 Resolution Awarding Contract for Architectural Services at Adlai E. Stevenson Home**

Motion by Commissioner Frank, seconded by Commissioner Maine to approve a Resolution awarding a Contract for Architectural Services for the Adlai E. Stevenson II Home and Service Building to Hezner Corporation, in the Contract Price of \$82,500.00. Executive Director Kovach summarized the services to be provided with this contract and responded to questions from Commissioner Hart; and a discussion ensued. With a roll call vote being had (leave for previous roll call), the motion passed by a vote of: **AYES: 17, NAYS: 0 EXHIBIT NO. 6256**

**11.0 New Business – Report of Standing and Special Committees:**

**11.1 Ordinance Amending Personnel Policy 4.3 - Military Training and Leave of Absence**

Motion by Vice President Roberts, second by Commissioner Altenberg to approve an Ordinance Amending Personnel Policy 4.3 – Military Training and Leave of Absence. With a roll call vote being had (leave for previous roll call), the motion passed by a vote of: **AYES: 17, NAYS: 0. EXHIBIT NO. 6257**

**11.2 Resolution Amending the District’s 2025-26 Legislative Program**

Motion by Commissioner Hart, second by Commissioner Altenberg to approve a Resolution Amending the 2025-2026 Legislative Program. With a roll call vote being had (leave for previous roll call), the motion passed by a vote of: **AYES: 17, NAYS: 0. EXHIBIT NO. 6258**

**11.3 Resolution Pre-Authorizing the Purchase of Vehicles**

Motion by Commissioner Knizhnik, second by Commissioner Campos to approve a Resolution Pre-Authorizing the Purchase of Certain Vehicles pursuant to Section 6.0(J) of the District Purchasing Policy. With a roll call vote being had (leave for the previous roll call), the motion passed by a vote of: **AYES: 17, NAYS: 0. EXHIBIT NO. 6259**


**11.4 Resolution Awarding Contract to Purchase Three-Year License for Microsoft Software**

Motion by Commissioner Knizhnik, second by Commissioner Campos to approve a Resolution Awarding a Contract for the Purchase of a three-year License for Microsoft Software Products to Dell

Marketing LP in an amount not to exceed \$187,153.98. With a roll call vote being had (leave for the previous roll call), the motion passed by a vote of: **AYES: 17, NAYS: 0. EXHIBIT No. 6260**

- 11.5 Resolution Naming the new Mshkodé Forest Preserve in Winthrop Harbor, Benton Township**  
Motion by Commissioner Frank, second by Vice President Roberts to approve a Resolution Naming the LEH Limited Partnership and Har-Bar Incorporated Properties as the “Mshkodé Forest Preserve”. With a roll call vote being had (leave for the previous roll call), the motion passed by a vote of: **AYES: 17, NAYS: 0. EXHIBIT No. 6261**
- 11.5 Resolution Naming the new Mshkodé Forest Preserve in Winthrop Harbor, Benton Township**  
Motion by Commissioner Frank, second by Commissioner Schlick to approve a Resolution to Purchase an approximately 29.4-acre Property in Unincorporated Fremont and Ela Townships known as the Jarnowski Property, for \$2,100,000.00 as an Addition to Lakewood Forest Preserve. Public Comment was given by Chris Maier, who spoke in favor of the purchase and continuing the horse stable operation. With a roll call vote being had (leave for the previous roll call), the motion passed by a vote of: **AYES: 17, NAYS: 0. EXHIBIT No. 6262**
- 12.0 Petitions and Correspondence - None**
- 13.0 Miscellaneous Business –** Commissioner Casbon suggested having an information session for the Board to get a fuller understanding of how Brushwood, the Preservation Foundation, and the District interact. President Vealitzek noted that much of this information would be part of the discussion at the March joint committee meeting.
- 14.0 Closed Session – None**
- 15.0 Potential Action following Closed Session - None**
- 16.0 Adjournment –** With no further business before the Board, President Vealitzek adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Gragnani, Board Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

# ROLL CALL

## LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

STATE OF ILLINOIS)  
COUNTY OF LAKE)

REGULAR FEBRUARY 11 SESSION, 2026

ROLL CALL		COMMISSIONERS	QUESTIONS																	
			CONSENT AGENDA 10.1-10.3		10.4 HEZNER		11.1 Policy 4.3		11.2 AMEND LEGIS. PROB.		11.3 VEHICLES		11.4 MICRO SOFT		11.5 MISHKODE PRESERVE		11.6 STANCOWSKI PURCHASE			
P	A		Aye	Nay	Aye	Nay	Aye	Nay	Aye	Nay	Aye	Nay	Aye	Nay	Aye	Nay	Aye	Nay	Aye	Nay
1	✓	Altenberg, Marah	✓																	
2	✓	Campos, Esiah	✓																	
3	✓	Casbon, Carissa	✓																	
4	✓	Clark, Jennifer	✓																	
5	X	Cunningham, Mary Ross	-----																	
6	✓	Danforth, Michael	✓																	
7	✓	Frank, Paul	✓																	
8	✓	Hart, Sandra	✓																	
9	✓	Hewitt, Diane	✓																	
10	✓	Hunter, J. Kevin	✓																	
11	✓	Knizhnik, Sara Frederick	✓																	
12	✓	Kyle, Angelo	✓																	
13	✓	Maine, Ann	✓																	
14	✓	Parekh, Paras	✓																	
15	X	Pedersen, Linda	-----																	
16	✓	Roberts, Gina	✓																	
17	✓	Schlick, Adam	✓																	
18	✓	Vealitzek, Jessica	✓																	
19	✓	Wasik, John	✓																	
17	2	<b>TOTALS</b>	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170				
Notes:			LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE	LEAVE						