

Lake County Forest Preserve District

Joint Committee Meeting Minutes: Finance Committee, Operations Committee, Planning Committee
March 5, 2026

On Thursday, March 5, 2026 the Finance, Operations, and Planning Committees met jointly at the Lake County Forest Preserve District's General Offices, 1899 West Winchester Road, Libertyville, Illinois. President Jessica Vealitzek convened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and asked each Committee Chair to call their committees to order:

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call – Finance Committee: Chair Gina Roberts called the Finance Committee to order and asked for a roll call; six present: Chair Gina Roberts, Vice Chair Ann Maine, Marah Altenberg, Sandy Hart, Diane Hewitt, Linda Pedersen. Absent: Angelo Kyle

2.0 Call to Order and Roll Call – Operations Committee: Chair Sara Knizhnik called the Operations Committee to order and asked for a roll call; seven present: Chair Sara Knizhnik, Vice Chair Adam Schlick, Esiah Campos, Carissa Casbon, Mary Ross Cunningham, Kevin Hunter, Paras Parekh.

3.0 Call to Order and Roll Call – Planning Committee: Chair Paul Frank called the Planning Committee to order and asked for a roll call; six present: Chair Paul Frank, Carissa Casbon, Michael Danforth, Linda Pedersen, Gina Roberts, John Wasik. Absent: Vice Chair Jennifer Clark

Also Present:

Alex Ty Kovach, <i>Executive Director</i>	Alyssa Firkus	Julie Gagnani
Betsy Gates-Alford, <i>Corporate Counsel</i>	Dan Stearns	Laurel Diver
John Nelson	Ken Jones	Mike Bonn
Mary Kann	Kevin Kleinjan	Matt Ueltzen
Rebekah Snyder	Pati Vitt	Kim Mikus
Steve Neaman	Ron Davis	Maureen Shelton
Alex Eichman	Catherine Game	

4.0 Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner Pedersen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5.0 Addenda to the Agenda – None

6.0 Public Comment – There was no public comment regarding topics not on the agenda.

7.0 Correspondence – None

8.0 New Business – All Committees

8.1 Policy direction regarding potential amendments to the license agreement with Brushwood Center for the occupation and use of the Brushwood Home at the Edward L. Ryerson Conservation Area.

Chief Operations Officer John Nelson noted that staff was seeking consensus from the committees on whether to engage in discussions and negotiations with Brushwood Center to amend the license agreement. Mr. Nelson gave a presentation and Brushwood's Executive Director Catherine Game was present to offer comments and respond to questions as needed. Director Nelson summarized the current license agreement and explained that Brushwood Center has begun planning and fundraising for a major capital investment in the Brushwood Home for its future use and operation. Mr. Nelson gave an overview of the proposed renovations to the floor plan, expanded program room, improvements to the courtyard, and major overhaul of other rooms excluding the kitchen, which was renovated in 2022. The current license agreement would need to be amended if the District agrees to accommodate these capital improvements. Ms. Game added that Brushwood is committed to raise funds to support the infrastructure to make the building safe, up to current standards, and sustainable in the future.

Director Nelson continued, noting that staff is suggesting a 20-year agreement with 5-year renewals. Brushwood may want a longer initial term for their \$5 million investment. The use requirements language will be considered for revising so that Brushwood could expand use of the grounds for certain outdoor events without a special use permit, and for possible addition of solar panels for net-zero attainability. Mr. Nelson noted that the license agreement in place with College of Lake County at Brae Loch could be used as a model to amend the license with

Brushwood for addressing building maintenance and repairs. Grounds maintenance would continue to be the District's responsibility. Mr. Nelson and Ms. Game responded to questions and a discussion ensued including contractor apprenticeship programs, signage at the entrance, reduce or eliminate a license fee, and maintain the provision for reimbursement of legal costs.

As discussion concluded, President Vealitzek asked if there was a consensus of all committees to proceed with renegotiating the license agreement as presented and discussed, with the negotiated agreement to come back to the Operations and Finance Committees for review and approval. The consensus of all committees was to proceed.

President Vealitzek turned the meeting over to Operations Committee Chair Knizhnik for 9.0 and 10.0.

9.0 New Business – Operations Committee and Finance Committee

9.1 Policy direction regarding the sale of carbon credits.

Natural Resources Director Pati Vitt showed two recent acquisitions on maps, at Wadsworth Savanna and Lotus Country Conservation Preserve. The acquisitions create an opportunity to generate carbon credits. Working with City Forest Credits, 26.52 acres are accredited, and Director Vitt outlined three options for selling the credits. Option 1-sell them ourselves, incurring legal fees; Option 2-sell them along with a consultant; and Option 3-sell them directly on the open market through a broker, which would incur fees of 10 to 25%. Staff recommended Option 2 because gives us the most flexibility. Proceeds from a sale of credits would go to the Preservation Foundation endowment. Director Vitt responded to questions and a discussion ensued. The consensus of both committees was to proceed with pursuing Option 2.

10.0 New Business – Operations Committee

10.1 Approval of Minutes – February 2, 2026 Motion by Casbon, second by Campos to approve the minutes of February 2, 2026. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

10.2 Approve and accept new acquisitions and donations to the Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County's Collections - Motion by Hunter, second by Schlick to approve the recommendation. Education Director Alyssa Firkus gave a presentation showing the items being recommended for acceptance. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

10.3 Recommend approval of a Resolution approving Deaccession and Conveyance of Out-Of-Scope Items from the Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County's Collections - Motion by Campos, second by Schlick to recommend approval. Director Firkus showed images of stained glass windows that are in the Museum's possession that have no known relationship to Lake County and no future benefit to the Museum. This will make room for a recently acquired stained glass window from the Fort Sheridan chapel. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously and the Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

10.4 Approve Change Order No. 1 to the Contract with TGF Enterprises, Inc., increasing the Contract Price for mowing and landscape maintenance at Independence Grove by an amount not to exceed \$94,182.00 and extending the contract time by one year - Motion by Schlick, second by Campos to approve the recommendation. Chief Operations Officer Nelson summarized the change order to extend the contract for one year with no increase in unit prices. He responded to questions and with a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

10.5 Approve Change Order No. 1 to the Contract with Brightview Landscapes LLC, increasing the Contract Price for mowing at Fort Sheridan, Fox River and Van Patten Woods by an amount not to exceed \$106,902.88 and extending the contract time by one year - Motion by Casbon, second by Campos to approve the recommendation. Chief Operations Officer Nelson summarized the change order to extend the contract for one year with no increase in unit prices. Mowing of the Fort Sheridan Cemetery is not included in the one-year extension since the District no longer maintains the cemetery. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

10.6 Recommend approval of an Ordinance approving a Farm License Agreement with Lima Grain at Kestrel Ridge Forest Preserve for a term of March 1, 2026 through December 31, 2029 - Motion by Cunningham, second by Casbon to recommend approval. Natural Resources Director Pati Vitt showed the license

area on a map and summarized the agreement. Lima Grain held the farm license with the previous land owner, and due to the timing of the District acquiring the property, there was not sufficient time to perform soil testing needed in order to go out to bid. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously and the Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

10.7 Recommend approval of an Ordinance approving a Farm License Agreement with Lima Grain at Kestrel Ridge Forest Preserve for a term of March 1, 2026 through December 31, 2029 - Motion by Casbon, second by Campos to recommend approval. Natural Resources Director Pati Vitt showed the license area on a map and summarized the agreement. Kevec Farms held the farm license with the previous land owner, and due to the timing of the District acquiring the property, there was not sufficient time to perform soil testing and determine the nutrient status needed in order to go out to bid. Director Vitt responded to questions and with a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

11.0 Miscellaneous Business: Operations Committee - None

12.0 Adjourn Operations Committee – Chair Knizhnik noted that the next meeting is April 6, 2026 and declared the Operations Committee adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

President Vealitzek turned the meeting over to Finance Committee Chair Roberts for Items 13.0 – 17.0.

13.0 New Business – Finance Committee:

13.1 Approval of Minutes – February 5, 2026 - Motion by Hart, second by Hewitt to approve the minutes of February 5, 2026. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

13.2 Approve amendments to the Procedures section of Personnel Policies 3.2 Overtime and 4.1 – Paid Holidays Motion by Altenberg, second by Pedersen to approve the recommendation. Administration Director Mary Kann summarized the revisions to the procedures, required due to changes in the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding how overtime and paid holidays show on employees’ tax forms. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

13.3 Approve a position reclassification - Motion by Pedersen, second by Maine to approve the recommendation. Director Kovach summarized the reclassification for the Preservation Foundation Executive Director position, explaining that the recruiting consultant advised that the District is under market on this position and needs to be aligned. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

14.0 Miscellaneous Business: Finance Committee – None

At this time, the Finance Committee and Planning Committee decided to go into one closed session instead of separately.

15.0 Closed Session – FINANCE Committee: Motion by Maine, second by Hart to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing 1) pending, probable, or imminent litigation; 2) the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees; and 3) the purchase or lease of real property and the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the District. Roll call vote: AYES: 6, NAYS: 0. PLANNING Committee: Motion by Wasik, second by Danforth to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing 1) pending, probable, or imminent litigation; 2) the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees; and 3) the purchase or lease of real property and the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the District. Roll call vote: AYES: 6, NAYS: 0. The committees went into closed session at 2:48 p.m. and returned to open session at 3:16 p.m.

16.0 Potential Action Following Closed Session – None

17.0 Adjourn Finance Committee – Chair Roberts noted that the next meeting is April 9, 2026 and adjourned the Finance Committee at 3:16 p.m.

President Vealitzek turned the meeting over to Planning Committee Chair Frank for the remainder of the agenda. Gina Roberts left the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

18.0 New Business – Planning Committee:

18.1 Approval of Minutes – February 2, 2026 - Motion by Wasik, second by Casbon to approve the minutes of February 2, 2026. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

18.2 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract for Phase II Engineering Services for Millennium Trail – Ethel’s Woods to Pine Dunes Forest Preserves, to Civiltech Engineering, Inc., in the Contract Price of \$424,619.89 - Motion by Wasik, second by Casbon to recommend approval. Planning Director Kevin Kleinjan gave an overview of the project showing the planned trail route on a map. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously and the Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

18.3 Recommend approval of a Resolution approving (i) conveyance of fee simple title on certain District property and (ii) grant of permanent and temporary easements on certain District property to the Illinois Department of Transportation at Countryside Golf Club - Motion by Casbon, second by Danforth to recommend approval. Land Preservation Director Ken Jones summarized the temporary and permanent easements which will be granted to IDOT for the improvement of Route 60/83, which will become two lanes each way along Countryside Golf Club. A brief discussion ensued and with a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

18.4 Recommend approval of a Resolution to Purchase an approximately 24.9-acre Property in Avon Township known as the Goshgarian property, for \$923,000.00 as an addition to Kestrel Ridge Forest Preserve - Motion by Casbon, second by Wasik to recommend approval. Director Jones gave an overview of the property and explained the life estate area and related temporary access easement, which will terminate when the life estate ends and he responded to questions. Public comment was given by Susan Pribyl, representing the Manitou Creek Watershed Alliance, who spoke in support of the acquisition. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously and the Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

18.5 Recommend approval of a Resolution to Purchase an approximately 13.4-acre Property in Fremont Township known as the Quentin Road Bible Baptist Church property, for \$3,994,100.00 as an addition to Lakewood Forest Preserve - Motion by Casbon, second by Danforth to recommend approval. Director Jones gave an overview of the property and noted that buildings can be used for USDA sharpshooters and deer processing, which Director Pati Vitt explained. A brief discussion ensued and with a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

19.0 **Miscellaneous Business** – None

20.0 **Closed Session** – No further closed session.

21.0 **Potential Action Following Closed Session** - None

22.0 **Adjourn Planning Committee** - Chair Frank noted that the next meeting is April 6, 2026 and adjourned the Planning Committee at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Julie Gragnani, Committee Secretary

Approved – Planning Committee: 4-6-2026

Approved – Operations Committee: 4-6-2026

Approved – Finance Committee: 4-6-9-2026