

## Lake County Forest Preserve District

### Joint Committee Meeting Minutes: Planning Committee, Operations Committee, Finance Committee March 6, 2025

On Thursday, March 6, 2025, the Planning, Operations, and Finance 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 confirmed electronic attendance for Operations Committee member Kevin Hunter due to employment. The Chairs call their committees to order:

**1.0 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 Frank, Carissa Casbon, Michael Danforth, Linda Pedersen, Gina Roberts, John Wasik. Absent: Vice Chair Jennifer Clark

**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; five present: Chair Knizhnik, Vice Chair Adam Schlick, Carissa Casbon, Kevin Hunter (via Zoom), Paras Parekh. Mary Ross Cunningham arrived at 1:07 p.m. Absent: Esiah Campos

**3.0 Call to Order and Roll Call – Finance Committee:** Chair Gina Roberts called the Finance Committee to order and asked for a roll call; four present: Chair Roberts, Vice Chair Ann Maine, Marah Altenberg, Linda Pedersen. Diane Hewitt arrived at 1:11 p.m. Sandy Hart arrived at 1:18 p.m. Absent: Angelo Kyle

#### Also Present:

Alex Ty Kovach, *Executive Director*  
Matt Norton, *Corporate Counsel*  
Steve Neaman  
John Nelson  
Mary Kann  
Rebekah Snyder  
Kevin Kleinjan

Ken Jones  
Pati Vitt  
Ron Davis  
Dan Stearns  
Alex Eichman  
Alyssa Firkus

Julie Gragnani  
Debbie Boness  
Mike Bonn  
Kim Mikus  
Maureen Shelton  
Natalie Kahn

**4.0 Pledge of Allegiance** – President Vealitzek 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 Executive Director's Report** – Executive Director Kovach reported on the following:

- Update on the Preservation Foundation endowment and Board of Directors first quarter meeting;
- Recap of 2024 volunteer restoration efforts across the District;
- Temporary job fair on March 10 at Greenbelt Cultural Center;
- Annual Maple Syrup Hikes at Ryerson Woods to take place the first three weekends in March;
- Education staff had an educational booth at Lake County Teacher Institute Day and attended two high school events for Black History Month;
- New exhibition at Dunn Museum is *Threads of Time: Quilts and Textiles*, which runs through May 4;
- Spring issue of *Horizons* magazine is now available in print or online;
- Community Engagement and Partnerships Valentines Day Campaign to promote programs;
- The Foundation hosted *The Happy Invention: The History and Significance of Picture Postcards*;
- Two papers recently published in *Journal of Wildlife* that included Natural Resource staff;
- Manager of Conservation Ecology Gary Glowacki was guest editor for *Northeastern Naturalist*;
- Manager of Restoration Ecology Matt Ueltzen received a gubernatorial appointment to the State of Illinois Legacy Tree Program Task Force;
- Matt Ueltzen and Landscape Ecology Manager Dave Cassin are now Certified Instructors for the Chicago Wilderness Alliance Midwest Prescribed Burn Crew training course.

## 8.0 Correspondence – None

President Vealitzek turned the meeting over to Finance Committee Chair Roberts for Item 9.1:

### 9.0 New Business – All Committees

9.1 Review 2025 Capital Improvement Plan and recommend approval of an Ordinance amending the 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan and 2025 Annual Budget – Chair Roberts asked for a motion from each committee:

- Finance Committee: Motion by Vice Chair Maine, second by member Pedersen to approve;
- Planning Committee: Motion by member Casbon, second by member Roberts to approve;
- Operations Committee: Motion by member Cunningham, second by Vice Chair Schlick to approve.

Executive Director Kovach began a presentation by noting that consideration and selection of new CIP projects is based on the capacity to deliver and operate with a limited ability to add staff, while meeting the 2024 referendum goals, which he reviewed. He also reviewed the District's land preservation land acquisition goals and added that the goal for annual ecosystem services is \$30 million annually, which he explained. He gave an overview of the list of recommended new CIP projects for public access and maintenance, and habitat restoration. He noted that one objective was to complete accessibility requirements at the three remaining off-leash dog exercise areas. Another objective was to complete the remaining portions of the Millennium Trail that are the District's responsibility. He then showed the other projects on a series of maps.

Chief Operations Officer John Nelson went through the CIP spreadsheet in detail, explaining each proposed capital and habitat restoration project. The redlined projects are completed and will be removed.

Operations Committee member Parekh left the meeting at 2:28 p.m.

Mr. Nelson reviewed the unfunded project list, which showed the projects coming off the list that are being moved to the funded list. Staff recommended adding the Cuba Marsh trail connection to the unfunded list to align with Lake County Department of Transportation's 2040 Plan for a trail at that location. Executive Director Kovach responded to questions and a general discussion ensued. Member Danforth asked for consideration to move the Fox River Preserve-Roberts Road addition up in priority as soon as feasible. Director Kovach noted that staff cannot get to the project right now but the list is re-examined by staff every year.

Public comment was made by:

- Nick Sauer, Lake Barrington, in favor of moving up the Fox River Preserve-Roberts Road project.
- Douglas Ower, Zion, in favor of Waukegan Savanna restoration project
- Susan Zingle (via Zoom) – in favor of Waukegan Savanna restoration project

Each committee chair asked their committee for policy direction to add the Cuba Marsh trail connection project to the unfunded list and all three committees gave consensus to add the project to the list. Chair Roberts then asked each committee to vote on their motion on the floor to recommend approval of an Ordinance amending the 10-year CIP as presented, and amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Budget:

- Finance Committee, Chair Roberts: Voice vote being had, the motion unanimously.
- Planning Committee, Chair Frank: Voice vote being had, the motion unanimously.
- Operations Committee, Chair Knizhnik: Voice vote being had, the motion unanimously.

The Ordinance was forwarded to the full Board for approval. President Vealitzek turned the meeting over to Operations Committee Chair Knizhnik for Item 10.0.

### 10.0 New Business – Operations Committee and Finance Committee

10.1 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a three-year Contract to Sentry Security, LLC for fire and security alarm monitoring, testing services, maintenance, repair, and parts.

- Operations Committee: Motion by Casbon, second by Schlick to recommend approval.
- Finance Committee: Motion by Maine, second by Pedersen to recommend approval.

Director Kovach summarized the contract and with a voice vote from each committee both motions passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

10.2 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a three-year Contract to Comcast Cable Communications Management, LLC for Managed Internet Services, in an amount not to exceed \$56,537.20

- Operations Committee: Motion by Schlick, second by Casbon to recommend approval.
- Finance Committee: Motion by Hart, second by Hewitt to recommend approval.

Director Kovach summarized the contract and with a voice vote from each committee both motions passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

10.3 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a two-year Contract for Ecological Assessment of District Lands to the Chicago Academy of Sciences/Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum in the Contract Price of \$155,901.32.

- Operations Committee: Motion by Cunningham, second by Schlick to recommend approval.
- Finance Committee: Motion by Pedersen, second by Hart to recommend approval.

Natural Resource Director Pati Vitt summarized the project and with a voice vote from each committee both motions passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

10.4 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding Contracts for Plant Protectant and Herbicide Products to Advanced Turf Solutions, Inc.; Carlin Sales Corporation; BTSI; Clesens Inc.; Conserv FS; Pendelton Turf Supply; Reinders, Inc; SiteOne Landscape Supply; Simplot AB Retail, Inc.; Van Diest Supply Company; Nutrien AG Solutions; and Heritage Landscape Supply Group, Inc. in a total amount not to exceed \$529,500.00.

- Operations Committee: Motion by Cunningham, second by Schlick to recommend approval.
- Finance Committee: Motion by Altenberg, second by Hewitt to recommend approval.

Director Vitt summarized the contracts and responded to questions. With a voice vote from each committee both motions passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

10.5 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding Contracts for Woody and Herbaceous Invasive Species Management 2025-2028 at Multiple Preserves to Integrated Lakes Management, Inc., Native Restoration Services, Pizzo & Associates LLC, Red Buffalo Nursery, RES LLC, and V3 in a total amount not to exceed \$740,000.00 in Year 1.

- Operations Committee: Motion by Casbon, second by Schlick to recommend approval.
- Finance Committee: Motion by Pedersen, second by Hart to recommend approval.

Director Vitt summarized the contracts and responded to questions. With a voice vote from each committee both motions passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

President Vealitzek turned the meeting over to Finance Committee Chair Roberts for Items 11.0 – 15.0.

**11.0 New Business – Finance Committee:**

11.1 Invoices and Requisitions - Motion by Pedersen, second by Hewitt to approve the invoice for legal services for December 2024. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously and the invoice was passed around for signatures.

11.2 Approve a motion to (i) release certain Committee closed session minutes, (ii) retain as confidential all other Committee closed session minutes not previously released, and (iii) delete verbatim recordings of certain open sessions and closed sessions of meetings, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, as provided in Exhibit 1 to staff's memo dated March 6, 2025 - Motion by Altenberg, second by Pedersen to approve the recommendation as presented. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

12.0 Miscellaneous Business: Finance Committee – None

13.0 Closed Session – None

14.0 Potential Action Following Closed Session – None

15.0 Adjourn Finance Committee – Chair Roberts noted that the next meeting is April 3, 2025 and adjourned the Finance Committee at 3:00 p.m.

President Vealitzek turned the meeting over to Operations Committee Chair Knizhnik for Items 16.0 – 18.0.

**16.0 New Business – Operations Committee**

16.1 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract to MBA Design and Display Products Corp. for the Purchase and Delivery of Movable Museum Display Walls, in the Contract Price of \$34,081.00 Motion by Cunningham, second by Schlick to recommend approval. Director Kovach summarized the project and with a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

16.2 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract to Reinders Inc. for the Purchase of two Toro Greensmaster e1021 mowers, in the Contract Price of \$40,139.80 under a Sourcewell contract - Motion by Schlick, second by Cunningham to recommend approval. Chief Operations Officer John Nelson summarized the equipment and with a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

Operations Committee member Casbon stepped out of the room at 3:02 and President Vealitzek made a quorum for the committee.

16.3 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract to Burris Equipment for the Purchase of a Case Compact Track Loader, in the Contract Price of \$85,528.46 under a Sourcewell contract - Motion by Cunningham, second by Schlick to recommend approval. Director Kovach summarized the equipment and Director Alex Eichman responded to questions. With a voice vote being had including President Vealitzek, the motion passed unanimously and the Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

16.4 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding Contracts for the Purchase of Trees and Shrubs for Multiple Preserves to Possibility Place Nursery in the Contract Price of \$49,518.00, and Majestic Oaks Nursery in the Contract Price of \$30,536.00 - Motion by Schlick, second by Cunningham to recommend approval. Director Kovach summarized the contracts and with a voice vote being had including President Vealitzek, the motion passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

Member Casbon returned to the room at 3:06 p.m.

16.5 Recommend Approval of a Resolution Awarding Contracts for Native Seed Purchases at Multiple Preserves to Genesis Nursery, Inc. in the Contract Price of \$62,229.43 and Prairie Moon Nursery in the Contract Price of \$48,594.93 - Motion by Cunningham, second by Schlick to recommend approval. Director Kovach summarized the contracts and with a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

16.6 Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding a Contract for the Lake Plain Invasive Plant Strike Team Project 2025 along the Chiwaukee Prairie-Illinois Beach Lake Plain to Native Restoration Services, Inc. in the Contract Price of \$145,636.48 - Motion by Casbon, second by Schlick to recommend approval. Director Kovach introduced, and Natural Resource Director Pati Vitt reviewed the project using a map. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously. The Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

17.0 Miscellaneous Business: Operations Committee - None

18.0 Adjourn Operations Committee – Chair Knizhnik noted that the next meeting is March 31, 2025 and declared the Operations Committee adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

President Vealitzek turned the meeting over to Planning Committee Chair Frank for the remainder of the agenda.

**19.0 New Business – Planning Committee:**

19.1 Approve a motion to (i) release certain Committee closed session minutes, (ii) retain as confidential all other Committee closed session minutes not previously released, and (iii) delete verbatim recordings of certain open sessions and closed sessions of meetings, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, as provided in Exhibit 1 to staff's memo dated March 6, 2025 – Motion by Roberts, second by Casbon to approve the recommendation as presented. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

19.2 Recommend approval of a Resolution to purchase an approximately 34.4-acre property in Antioch Township known as the Elliott W. Frank, LLC property, for \$960,000.00 as an addition to Lotus Country Conservation Preserve - Motion by Casbon, second by Roberts to recommend approval. Land Preservation Director Ken Jones gave a brief overview of the property. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously and the Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

19.3 Recommend approval of a Resolution to Purchase a 54.468-acre property in Fremont Township known as the Steffenhagen property for \$1,436,973.27 as an addition to Lakewood Forest Preserve - Motion by Roberts, second by Casbon to recommend approval. Director Jones gave a brief overview of the property and responded to questions. Director Vitt reviewed the plan for restoration. With a voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously and the Resolution was forwarded to the full Board for approval.

**20.0 Miscellaneous Business – None**

**21.0 Closed Session** – Motion by Roberts, second by Danforth to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the purchase or lease of real property. Roll call vote being had, the motion passed by a vote of: AYES: 5, NAYS: 0. The committee went into closed session at 3:17 p.m. and returned to open session at 4:15 p.m.

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

**23.0 Adjourn Planning Committee** - Chair Frank noted that the next meeting is March 31, 2025 and adjourned the Planning Committee at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie Gragnani  
Committee Secretary

Approved – Planning Committee: 3-31-2025

Approved – Operations Committee: March 31, 2025

Approved – Finance Committee: 4-3-2025