

**West Suburban Special Recreation Association**

May 9, 2023

WSSRA

2915 Maple St, Franklin Park, IL

**MINUTES**

I. Chairman Jackie Iovinelli called the **meeting to order** at 4:04pm those present included:

Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District

Colleen Broderick, Village of N Riverside

Jan Arnold Park District of Oak Park

Cathy Fallon, Berwyn Park District

Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park

Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District

Dan LoCascio, Park District of Franklin Park

Anna Wegrecki, Village of HH

Ted Gruber, Elmwood Park attended remotely

Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside

**Others in Attendance:** WSSRA staff: Annie Hart, April Michalski, Marianne Birko, WSSRF, Geri Estvanik

**Excused Absence:** Norridge Park District

**Unexcused Absence:** North Berwyn Park District

II. **Approval of Agenda Arnold/Iovinelli to approve the agenda. The motion was unanimously approved.**

**a. Approval of Ted Gruber, Village of Elmwood Park & Annemarie Flaherty, Norridge Park District for Remote Attendance Sletten/Stanczyk motioned. The motion was unanimously approved.**

III. **Approval of the Consent Agenda Arnold/Sletten motioned to approve the Consent Agenda including the March 14, 2023, Minutes, March & April Financial Report, and Disbursements for March, April & May 2023. Roll call vote showed 10 yes votes, and the motion was approved**

IV. **No Public Comment**

V. **Under the Foundation Estvanik reported on behalf of the Foundation Board,** It has been a busy 2 months for the Foundation as we hosted the Bowl-a-thon at Circle Lanes for WSSRA participants and their families on Saturday March 18 and raised over \$6,500. Double what has been raised in the past for this event. This past weekend the WSSRA/WSSRF hosted the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Derby Gala on Saturday, May 6 which was held at D'Agostino's in River Grove. It was a GREAT Day at the Races with 152 guests, Nine of the twelve WSSRA partners represented as well as 6 Steering Committee members present. WSSRA/WSSRF together raised a preliminary \$48,000 in profits. We are delighted with the outcome and the continued support we receive. Know your continued presence as WSSRA partners really does make a difference! The WSSRF will also host the John Lannefeld Bocce Tournament on September 9<sup>th</sup> which will be held at the Village of Elmwood Park's CRC Bocce and Fallin For Our Stars on Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, the Holiday Concert is set for December 8, 2023. We will close the year with Giving Tuesday and the Holiday Solicitation. The group continues to focus on recruiting new members and helping WSSRA recruit staff for the summer day camp program. As always thank you for your continued support of their ongoing efforts in supporting the WSSRA mission.

VII. **Under Committee Reports**

A. **Birko reported the WSSRA Finance Committee** will be meeting May 30<sup>th</sup> to review the 2022 Audit.

B. **Birko reported the Policy Committee** headed by Annemarie Flaherty will begin the process of reviewing the WSSRA Personnel and Board Policies. Our first meeting will be on Wednesday May 24, 2023.

C. **Birko reported the WSSRA Planning Committee** headed by Ted Gruber will host its first meeting tentatively set for Wednesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>.

VIII. **Unfinished Business**

A. **Park District of Forest Park Building & Land purchase updates** Iovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park 2023 will be the planning year for the Harrison project. Discussions continue with the Park District of Forest Park Board.

B. **Acceptance of updated 2023 Alternate Partner Appointment** for Berwyn Park District is Cindy Hayes, Superintendent of Finance & HR & the Village of North Riverside will be Jeanmarie Hajer-O'Connor, Recreation Coordinator, and PDOP Board Commissioner, Jake Worley-Hood. Arnold/Sletten motioned to approve the new Board Alternates as stated. **The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.**

C. **No other**

- IX. **Under New Business:**
- A. **Approval of the 2023 -2024 Lease with Franklin Park Public Schools District 84**  
*Arnold/lovinelli motioned the WSSRA Board of Directors by roll call vote accept the Lease agreement as presented for the 2023 – 2024 effective July 1, 2023. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.*
  - B. **Byline Banking Updates** *Hart reported staff have updated banking services to include extra fraud protection services such as check Positive Pay and ACH Positive Pay. We also added the feature of remote deposit capture. Which allows us to deposit checks daily, which provides added security. Staff are looking into the security of partners quarterly check payments being made electronically. All those who are able would like to move in this direction.*
  - C. **No Other**
- X. **Under Correspondence No Comments**
- XI. **Under Board Reports: Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park's** *The Village of Elmwood Park Bocce league just finished their winter league. 88 teams participated and it was a rounding success. The outdoor league started May 12<sup>th</sup> and will run through September. The pool is almost ready for opening on May 27<sup>th</sup>. There have been a few leaks identified and will be fixed after the season is over in September. The Recreation Department started on a new software called DaySmart. The Department started with just pool pass sales and will transfer over fully in September. Outdoor hockey will be happening in the summer with both kids and adult leagues. **lovinelli reported for the Park District of Forest Park** "Where every day is a walk in the park..." They are beginning the process rebuilding the first of four pocket park projects. They just received an OSLAD grant for the second park and are expecting their first playground delivery in June. They will be awarding the Rieger Park bid soon and spent the day with IDPH preparing for the opening of the Splash pad which is in a matter of days. They are finalizing their plans for summer special events including July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks and a Concert Series. They have run out of space and have 50 + waitlists for every camp. Had a great visit to Springfield discussing the plans for the building. The pool will open on time with some patches and they are also discussing possible Pickleball courts. **Sletten reported the River Forest Park District** is 5 weeks out from wrapping up the tennis court project. Just received the Washington Park permits with the project commencing in 30 days. If everything is on schedule it will open in September. Board approved their Master Plan which includes another playground rebuild if the OSLAD Grant comes through. They are also looking at new courts in spring. **Wegrecki reported the Village of Harwood Heights.** On April 13th they planted 30 new trees donated by Morton Arboretum. VHH also took part in "Kindness Day" by project "Playpen" and collected all baby care items including diapers, wipes, and all things babies. They also had 60 volunteers who made 1000 sandwiches in 45 minutes for a local agency. They are also planning for Harwood Heights Days August 17 – 20<sup>th</sup> bringing the local Carnival back to the community. **LoCascio reported the Park District of Franklin Park** also planted 20 trees from the Morton Arboretum and enjoyed the 16,000 tulips planted around town for all to enjoy. Coming up they are hosting the Annual Ice show on May 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> as well as getting ready for summer. They are excited to roll out their use of Epact for summer day camp. LoCascio also announced the loss of 50,000 bees that perished this winter from their hives. **Broderick reported the Village of North Riverside** just hosted the local players show of Music Man to record attendance numbers. Summer projects include the paving of the parking lots. They are busy making plans for their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a local logo contest and a July 30<sup>th</sup> Gala at the Riverside Golf Club. They are also looking to fill a Program Coordinator position. **Arnold reported the Park District of Oak Park** noted both pools started up without an issue. They are currently warming and being treated. Their pool pass sales were extended to May 15<sup>th</sup>. Arnold wanted the group to be aware the Chicago Park District is in the same situation as last year and will not be opening until late June and on a limited basis. PDOP has changed its admissions process to help streamline behaviors. Evening hours are limited to passholders only. They are breaking ground on the Barrie Park project and refurbishing the playgrounds and sled hill. All PDOP activities will be at Scoville Park for A Day in Our Village. The CRC's 42,000sqft facility will have its VIP Opening on Friday May 19<sup>th</sup> and the Grand Open House on*

Sunday, May 21st including a ribbon cutting at 2:00pm and official opening for programs on May 22nd. Arnold also reported they are a Finalist for the Gold Medal with 9 persons representing the district at NRPA in Dallas in October. **Stanczyk reported the Veterans Park District's** Winter/Spring quarter is over. They had great success with their 1-2 day craft programs out of Bulger Park Community center. They recently held their Indoor garage sale and summer registration kick off. They are busy getting ready for summer and securing sponsorships for the upcoming Softball Tournament. **Fallon reported the Berwyn Park District** will be hosting the first ever "Touch a Truck" event for local families. They are all busy creating some structure, policies, procedures which the agency does not currently have. **Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside** staff can't wait until the C4 luncheon. They are rolling out some sustainability programming as well. Malchiodi is working with 2 Trustees who are very active in this process. VRS reports all day camps are full with wait lists. Their hiring has come back in a big way and as a result they are able to expand their camps. They will be hosting a Family Field Game night like old times and a summer Concert series June – August. They have instituted times for organized Pickleball to allow for networking and game play. They have 2 different applications which include Team Reach or Swish. They are also in the beginning talks of a collaborative with the Riverside Arts Center to expand program opportunities. .

XII. **Executive Director's Report- Birko Reported**

- A. **WSSRA Coordinates the SRA Table at Parks Day** Birko coordinated the SRA table at PARKS Day at the Capitol. It was a great way to share the Unified front and share the message to those who were interested about the positive impact SRA's make every day on the lives of persons with disabilities.
- B. **IAPD Legislative Conference** Birko attended the 2023 Legislative Conference in Springfield. Birko visited all 14 Legislators offices and dropped off a WSSRA recognition. Also met with Senate President Harmon, and Speaker Welch along with the Park District of Forest Park. In addition, Birko connected with Representative Ford, Stephens, Senator Martwick, and Representative Lilly joined us for dinner. Great discussions were had in every circumstance. Birko attended the Conference the next day and was reminded of the amazing work IAPD does on our behalf advocating for the Park Districts and SRA's in Springfield. Add it to your list of "Must Do's" next year!
- C. **WSSRA Derby Gala 2023** Birko reiterated the WSSRF report of the success of the 2023 Derby Gala. It was well attended by the Steering Committee and WSSRA partners. She shares her gratefulness for everyone's support!
- D. **Staff Attend Best of Berwyn** Staff attended the "Best of Berwyn" hosted by the North Berwyn Park District. This Annual event highlights the young teens in the community of Berwyn and recognizes them for all their accomplishments and contributions to the community. Vallez and staff do a great job lifting up the youth of the community by giving them an opportunity to work towards goals of community involvement and leadership.
- E. **WSSRA Quarterly Board Training** Birko presented her first topic on WSSRA Program Structure and Staffing, and it was attended by 6 partners and 7 staff. Our next Zoom meeting will be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 – noon, with a focus on Behavior Management. Chris Sturm, WSSRA Inclusion Manager, will be sharing his expertise. All Board members and staff are welcome to attend.
- F. **Bi-monthly WSSRA Updates** Per your request for more information WSSRA has been sending Bi-monthly WSSRA Updates. The board responded that it was meeting their needs.
- G. **Partner Annual Presentations** Birko is scheduling Annual presentations to meet with your boards and share the Annual report and WSSRA updates. Call or email Birko with dates and times that work for you in 2023.
- H. **Staff Report: April Michalski, Superintendent of Recreation reported:**
  - 1. **Programs** Spring programs are wrapping up and staff are preparing for summer. Summer program registration opens on Monday, May 15. Our Dobbins Theatre participants have been working hard on their High School Musical production, the performance will be on Thursday, May 18 at the Liberty Center in Berwyn. We have four groups scheduled to visit the Imaginarium Sensory room for our Sensory Seekers program this month!



2. **Special Olympics** WSSRA had 6 athletes compete in the Special Olympics Spring Games on April 30 at Marmion High School in Aurora, 4 athletes received gold medals and will advance to the state summer games in June.
3. **Day Camp** Day Camp Registration is underway. We currently have 99 participants registered for Summer Day Camp and Community Cruisers and 39 participants on the waitlist due to staffing challenges. We also attended the We will continue to add off the waitlist as staff are hired.
4. **Seasonal Hiring Updates** Staff are working hard to recruit additional seasonal part-time staff to work day camp, programs, and Inclusion. Last week staff attended job fairs at Morton College and West Leyden High School. Staff also attended the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce Wellness Fair on April 23 and the Forest Park School District 91 Resource Fair on April 29. If you know anyone aged 15 or older that might be interested in joining our team, please have them apply at [wssra.net](http://wssra.net).
5. **Full-time Staff Updates** We are pleased to announce that Alex Regyna has been promoted to Recreation Coordinator. Alex will be overseeing WSSRA's Special Olympics programming and will assist with Inclusion Support. Alex is very excited to take on this new role with WSSRA.
6. **Hiring Summer Interns** We hired two interns for the summer. Both interns will start on Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup> and will be involved in a variety of programs, events, and Inclusion. **Kayla Smith** is a student at Illinois State University, graduating in Recreational Therapy this spring. She has experience in ABA therapy and program coordinating and supervising at the Bloomington Normal YMCA. She is excited to work with WSSRA this summer. **Brooke O'Neill** is a senior at the University of Iowa, graduating with her degree in Therapeutic Recreation with a focus on Child Life. After her internship with us, she is going on to complete her Master's in Child Life at the College of Charleston. Brooke has volunteered with WSSRA programs in the past and she is looking forward to continuing her experience WSSRA.
7. **Inclusion** requests are still coming in for spring programs, we currently have 42 participants registered in 55 programs. Just a reminder to allow a minimum of 2-3 weeks for us to find staffing for inclusion requests. If you are interested in having WSSRA staff implement a training during your summer staff training, please reach out to our Inclusion Manager, Chris, at [chriss@wssra.net](mailto:chriss@wssra.net).

I. **Staff Report: Annie Hart, Superintendent of Safety & Operations reported:**

1. **Transportation** We are excited to announce that we have hired a Transportation Specialist, Jacob Kell, who officially started May 4<sup>th</sup>. Jacob lives in North Riverside and grew up in Oak Park, so he is very familiar with the communities WSSRA serves. Jacob will be spending most of his time over the next couple of weeks getting ready for Day Camp transportation.
2. **Catalytic Converter update** After 6 months of waiting, we have received and installed the new catalytic converters along with a braided wire device to help deter any future attempts.
3. **Safety** WSSRA Safety Team met this week to refine our training schedule for summer day camp staff. All supervisors will go through the full Handle with Care training here at the office and we will have 2 hours dedicated to Handle with Care at our Day Camp training in June.
4. **Hart attends IAPD Financial Sustainability Workshop** Hart shared it was a thought provoking few days where we looked at how to effectively calculate your cost recovery and how you can be more financially responsible if you look at service categories vs. service areas. This can help you determine what areas may be duplicated in the community where you can either collaborate with or choose to put your resources in other categories. We will be looking at this concept as we plan forward.

XIII. **Adjournment** Sletten/Wegrecki motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:22pm. Motion was unanimously approved.  
Respectfully submitted,

*Marianne Birko*

Marianne Birko, Executive Director  
mb/ May 23 minutes