

**West Suburban Special Recreation Association**

July 11, 2023

WSSRA

2915 Maple St, Franklin Park, IL

**MINUTES**

I. Chairperson Ron Malchiodi called the **meeting to order** at 4:03pm those present included:

Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District Arrived 4:05

Jan Arnold Park District of Oak Park Left 5:00

Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park

Dan LoCascio, Park District of Franklin Park

Ted Gruber, Elmwood Park Arrived 4:07

Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside

Colleen Broderick, Village of N Riverside

Cathy Fallon, Berwyn Park District

Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District

Joe Zerillo, Village of HH

Annemarie Flaherty, Norridge Park District Arrived 4:20

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

**Unexcused Absence:** North Berwyn Park District

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

III. **Approval of the Consent Agenda Iovinelli/Arnold motioned to approve the Consent Agenda including the May 9, 2023, Minutes, May & June Financial Report, and Disbursements for May, June & July 2023, and the approval of 3-year Audit renewal. Roll call vote showed 9 yes votes, and the motion was approved**

IV. **No Public Comment**

V. **Under the Foundation Estvanik reported on behalf of the Foundation Board,** WSSRA/WSSRF hosted the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Derby Gala on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> and 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. The final numbers are in and WSSRA/WSSRF together raised \$47,425 in profits as noted in your Board packet. 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 is currently busy preparing for the upcoming John Lannefeld Bocce Tournament on Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup> which will be held at the Village of Elmwood Park's CRC's indoor Bocce Courts. We are prepared to host 16 – 32 teams at this event. So do not waste any time and get your team of 4 players together. The Foundation is also preparing for the Annual Fallin For Our Stars Casino night event on Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at the Cheney Mansion in Oak Park. WSSRF will close the year with the Holiday Concert, which is set for December 8, 2023, and 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. **Arnold reported the WSSRA Finance Committee** met May 30 & June 27 to review & accept the 2022 Audit & Carry over dollars, Bus lease renewal and Mini van replacement.

B. **Birko reported the Policy Committee** headed by Annemarie Flaherty met May 24<sup>th</sup> & June 29<sup>th</sup> to review and update the WSSRA Board Policies.

C. **Gruber reported the WSSRA Planning Committee** met June 21 to review and approve the updated Strategic Plan.

VIII. **Unfinished Business**

A. **Park District of Forest Park Building & Land purchase updates** Iovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park 2023 plans continue for the Harrison project. They are waiting for the MOU from their legal counsel for review by the Park District of Forest Park Board & then the WSSRA Board.

**B No other**

IX. **Under New Business:**

A. **2022 WSSRA Audit presentation by Lauterbach & Amen** Principal Courtney Mohr shared an overview of the 2022 Audit done by Lauterbach & Amen. Mohr reported WSSRA to have a Clean 2022 Audit and appreciated the ongoing cooperation shared by the WSSRA staff in completing the Audit process. No questions were asked by the board. Birko reminded the board they will be

**approving the 2022 at the September 12, 2023, Board meeting.**

- B. **Approval of 2022 Audited Carry-over** Birko shared per the 2022 audit WSSRA has a carryover of \$35,949. Per the WSSRA Carry over policy 50%;\$17,974 goes to the Partner shares and 50%;\$17,974 goes to the WSSRA Facility Fund, which is currently at \$545,176. No questions were asked. The WSSRA Finance Committee reviewed and recommends the Board follows the carry-over policy and vote on this carry-over at the September 12, 2023, Board meeting.
- C. **WSSRA Board Policy Manual Updates & Approval Flaherty** the WSSRA Policy Committee Chairperson Flaherty met May 24<sup>th</sup> & June 29<sup>th</sup> to review and approve the suggested updates to the WSSRA Board Policy Manual. Birko reviewed the summary of changes. Arnold & Sletten each asked about the Remote meeting attendance and the Committee will further investigate and report back any additional changes. The Board is set to vote on the updated Board Policies at the September 12, 2023, Board meeting.
- D. **WSSRA 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan Approval** Gruber reported the Planning Committee met June 21<sup>st</sup> to review and approve the suggested updates to the WSSRA 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan. Birko reviewed and no questions were asked. The WSSRA 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan will be approved at the September 12, 2023, Board meeting.
- E. **WSSRA Vehicle #1 Replacement Vehicle** Hart shared the Vehicle Bus #1's lease was up in June. Staff have assessed the Association's current need and recommend replacing the bus with a second Mini van as it gives WSSRA more versatility both in ease of finding drivers and allows for plenty of seating for many of the Associations routes with fewer passengers which also saves money in gas and wear and tear on the larger vehicles. Per discussions at the Finance and Planning Committee levels staff are recommending the replacement Vehicle #1 with a Mini Van and delaying the replacement of the current minivan for another year. **Sletten/lovinelli motioned & seconded the WSSRA Board of Directors approve the WSSRA Staff to move forward with leasing of Vehicle #1 with a Mini Van instead of a bus as it gives the Association more flexibility to meet its driving needs while saving the Association money and ease of securing drivers. The motion was approved unanimously.**
- F. **No Other**

X. Under **Correspondence** **No Comments**

XI. Under **Board Reports:** *lovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park is halfway through the pool season! They are requiring everyone that enters to have an account. It is challenging but successful. The Splashpad is a huge success and as a result they have reached capacity on several occasions. They also switched to Ellis last year and are doing really well with the program. Forest Park is also building two parks and one is almost complete. It just needs fencing. Rieger Park has been demoed and is waiting for an OSLAD confirmation. Forest Park also hosted a fantastic July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks show for its who really enjoyed it. They are currently getting ready and looking for Volunteers for the No Glove Softball tournament- July 27-30. lovinelli reminded everyone who volunteers will get a really nice t-shirt. The tournament typically serves upwards of 7-10,000 people. Camp is going well too. Broderick reported the Village of North Riverside just hired a new Program Coordinator. They too had a great July 4<sup>th</sup> shindig. They will also be celebrating the Village turning 100 years old on July 30<sup>th</sup> they will host a parade and carnival to celebrate this special occasion. Day camp is going well as is the Summer concert series on Thursday nights with three more remaining. Staff are busy gearing up for fall session. LoCascio reported the Park District of Franklin Park's camps are going well and the numbers are good. Pool pass sales are higher, and they are hosting the Annual street dance event this Friday. In summary everything is better than last summer! Zerillo reported the Village of Harwood Heights will be hosting their 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Craft Fair this Fall September 30 – October 1, 2023. They will be hosting the Annual Village Carnival and Fest August 17 – 20 which will feature carnival rides again this year! And will also be hosting the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Car Show on Sunday September 24. Ridgemoor Country Club had their Annual July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks show which had excellent viewing from the top of the Harlem/Irving Plaza Garage! The VHH Recreation Center programs are currently running and they are wrapping up*

soccer and basketball. The Village also hosted the planting of another 35 trees, bringing the total over 100 new trees in the VHH at no cost to residents or village! **Fallon reported the Berwyn Park District** started a master planning process that the board should approve this month. They will be working with Hitchcock Design Group. They are once again offering programs for its residents. Their spring soccer had over 100 kids and their summer camp numbers are good. They will be hosting a community Garage sale on Saturday and have over 60 booths sold. They will be hosting their Annual Back to School event on August 20 in cooperation with the School District and the Berwyn YMCA. **Arnold reported the Park District of Oak Park's** pools are very busy! It is the first time in Arnold's career that they had to close the pool due to the poor air quality. They recently had their Ellis pool audit – and they are excited to report 1 guard received the “**Golden Guard**”, and another the “**Outstanding Responder**” both coveted awards! The winners will be recognized at the next PDOP Board meeting. In addition PDOP is having work done at Barrie Park and they just hosted a very successful “Dino Week” featuring a Dino train at Scoville and Dino themed decorations throughout the parks and pools. Certainly, a Big hit in the community! The CRC has a few leaks that have been corrected but all continues to go well since the Grand Opening. They are currently completing their 5-year Strategic Master Plan. **Sletten reported the River Forest Park District** is wrapping up the tennis court project with 5 New courts and a basketball court. They will be starting the Washington Park playground project this week and are planning to put in 3 pickle ball courts at Washington square. They too are working on a Master Plan. Day camps are going well. **Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park's** Summer camps have 200 registrants in the first session and 175 registrants in the current session. They will be hosting the “Taste of Elmwood Park” the third week in August. Pools are busy and they too have had a few patrons fighting outside the pool. They are accepting bids for a new park at Elm Grove drive. And their residents have joined the Pickleball craze. Their indoor Pickleball courts are constantly booked. They are hoping to build 4 outdoor Pickleball courts near the CRC by next summer. They are currently hosting 200 Bocce teams with indoor and outdoor play. **Flaherty reported the Norridge Park District** is busy with camps and they held their Annual “Island in the City” Festival July 6-9 which was a very successful event. Their pool is busy, and they too are having issues with patrons, some hopping the fence to get in while it is open. The Pool contract has been approved and the demolition and re-building process will begin August 14. **Stanczyk reported the Veterans Park District** hosted a “Cardboard Boat Race with Jr. Counselors as the captains of the ships. While many boats sunk, all had a great time! The Chicago Sky will be hosting a camp tomorrow. The Creative Arts workshops that had great success during the school year have not been as successful over the summer. They figured they were competing with their own camps. They are busy promoting preschool and afterschool care programs starting in fall. **Malchiodi reported for the Village of Riverside's** summer camp is going well. They held a series of four July 4<sup>th</sup> events in 36 hours. They are collecting the results of a community survey on program facilities and park analysis to help compile a Master Plan. They are wrapping up their concert services on August 18 and held a very successful summer of the Farmers Markets on Wednesdays.

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

- A. **WSSRA Derby Gala 2023 Success** As mentioned the WSSRA/WSSRF 2023 Derby Gala was a great success bringing in profits of \$47,425. A special thanks to all for making WSSRA a priority. WSSRA had Last count 7 of our 12 partners in attendance and 100% contributing to the event in some way which certainly added to the visibility and success of the event!
- B. **WSSRA Quarterly Board Training** Birko presented her second topic on “Behavior Management” on May 16<sup>th</sup>, and it was attended by 6 partners. Birko also hosted the third training on June 20<sup>th</sup> on “WSSRA's Board Members Roles & Responsibilities” 5 WSSRA Board members were present and participated in our discussions. The next and final training of the year will be on WSSRA Budget planning. A date will be set for some time in August or September.
- C. **WSSRA Orientation of WSSRA Board Representatives and Alternates** Birko conducted a Zoom training for new Board Representatives and Alternates on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Healy attended from the RFPD. The hour and one-half meeting was a great opportunity to share in depth details about the Association and how we conduct business as

well as providing further clarity on their role as a WSSRA Board Representative & Alternate. Birko will continue to conduct these meetings with those who were not able to attend.

D. **Bi-monthly WSSRA Updates** Per your request for more information WSSRA has been sending Bi-monthly WSSRA Updates. Please share feedback if this is meeting your needs.

E. **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.

F. **Staff Report: April Michalski, Superintendent of Recreation reported**

1. **Programs** Summer programs are going well. Our adults enjoyed a trip to Long Grove's Annual Strawberry Festival on June 23 and is going to the Anderson Japanese Garden in Rockford on August 18. Our social club groups kicked off summer with a Glo Party and they will be enjoying outings to Mountain View Mini Golf in Des Plaines and the Chicago Dogs and Schaumburg Boomers baseball games. Our youth enjoyed a trip to Trailside Museum in River Forest and are going to Brookfield Zoo on July 29. Some programs continue to have waitlists, we are working to secure more consistent staffing to add off waitlists. Waitlists are reviewed twice a week. Staff are working on Fall brochure copy, our brochure is scheduled to go to print on Friday, July 21.

2. **Special Olympics**

**Bowling-** The Special Olympics Regional Bowling Tournament will be held on Saturday, July 22 at Stardust Bowl in Addison, we have 11 athletes attending. Gold medal winners will advance to the state bowling tournament in December.

**Golf-** The Special Olympics Golf Skills Competition will be held on August 2 at Springbrook Golf course in Naperville, we have 13 athletes competing. Gold medal winners will advance to the state games in September.

**Softball-** Our three softball teams have two upcoming completions. They are participating in the ITRS Tournament on Sunday, July 16 at Centennial Park in Oak Lawn. On August 6 teams will compete in the Special Olympics Regional Tournament at Inwood Sports Complex in Joliet.

3. **Day Camp** Staff are preparing for session two of day camp, session two runs July 10 through July 28. WSSRA is serving 105 participants with 41 participants on the waitlist. We are continuing to hire, and participants continue to be added as staff are hired.

4. **Grants**

**Happy Campers** WSSRA received grant funding from the Oak Park Community Mental Health Board to hire a Behavior Specialist and Occupational Therapist to assist with day camp. The Behavior Specialist and Occupational Therapist have been working closely with our seven camps to implement visual supports, behavior management plans and teaching staff concrete methods to redirect negative behavior. Both have been a great support to our participants and camp staff. The grant has also allowed us to purchase a tool kit for each staff member. The kits have a variety of visual supports and sensory/fidget toys.

**STEAM Labs** WSSRA received funding from the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundations Future Philanthropists Program to implement specialized STEAM activities into our camps. Day Camp staff take part in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of each lesson. Staff are enjoying coming up with activities, examples of lessons implemented include making invisible ink, code bracelets, robotics, and ocean slime.

5. **Hiring Updates** We are still hiring for seasonal part-time summer positions and part-time drivers. Applicants can apply online at [www.wssra.net](http://www.wssra.net). Again, thank you to our partners who have been referring staff to WSSRA, please continue to refer applicants to Maria Losselyoung at [marial@wssra.net](mailto:marial@wssra.net).

6. **Inclusion** We are currently serving 60 participants in 242 inclusive programs and camps. We just hired five new Inclusion Aides to begin in July. Our Inclusion Manager Chris and our three summer Inclusion Coordinators conduct weekly site visits for all inclusion programs and camps to support participants, aides,

and partner district staff. Please reach out to Chris Sturm with any questions regarding inclusion at [chriss@wssra.net](mailto:chriss@wssra.net).

**7. Upcoming Events**

**Family Swim** WSSRA is hosting a family swim at Rehm Pool in Oak Park on Sunday, July 9 from 9:30-11:00am.

**Splish Splash Summer Bash** Our annual pool party will be held on Wednesday, July 19 at the Forest Park Aquatics Center from 6:30-9:00pm. The event will feature our Wacky Quacky Duck Splash, ducks can be purchased online at [wssra.net](http://wssra.net).

**Movie in the Park** WSSRA is joining the park District for their Movie in the Park event on Friday, August 18. The featured movie will be Sonic the Hedgehog 2.

**G. Staff Report: Annie Hart, Superintendent of Business reported**

1. **Finance** WSSRA learned last month that the accountant we have been working with for 3 years has decided to leave Kaizen CPAs. We found out late last week that we had been assigned a new accountant, Ben Johnson. Hart met with Johnson to go over the agency and familiarize him with our systems. Johnson is set to reconcile the books and do his monthly report remotely but has agreed to come in quarterly for in person meetings.

2. **Safety** WSSRA has decided to stop using Concentra for Occupational Medical Services and has moved to use Physicians Immediate Care. We had a lot of negative feedback regarding wait times at Concentra and there were not convenient locations for all. Hart met with a Rep from Physicians Immediate care in the late spring and have officially transitioned over. All new hires will be sent there for Pre-Employment screenings and well as staff that have been injured at programs.

XIII. **Adjournment Gruber/LoCascio motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:15pm. Motion was unanimously approved.**  
Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko, Executive Director  
mb/ July 23 minutes