

**West Suburban Special Recreation Association**

**May 13, 2025**

**WSSRA**

**2915 Maple St, Franklin Park, IL**

**MINUTES**

**I. Chairperson Jan Arnold called the meeting to order at 4:08pm those present included:**

Jan Arnold, Park District of Oak Park  
Jackie Iovinelli, Park District of Forest Park  
Dan LoCascio, Park District of Franklin Park  
Ron Malchiodi, Village of Riverside  
Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District

Cathy Fallon, Berwyn Park District  
Angel Avalos, North Berwyn Park District **remote**  
Nate Brown, Norridge Park District arrived 4:10  
Katie Muellner, Village of River Grove arrived 4:22  
Ted Gruber, Village of Elmwood Park **remote**

**Others in Attendance:** WSSRA staff, April Michalski, Marianne Birko, WSSRF, Peggy Yogya

**Approval of Remote Attendees meeting Qualifying Event:** Angel Avalos, North Berwyn Park District, Ted Gruber, Village of Elmwood Park **LoCascio/Iovinelli motioned to approve remote attendance, and the motion was approved by roll call vote**

**Not in Attendance**

Village of Harwood Heights Excused Absence  
River Forest Park District Excused Absence  
Village of North Riverside Excused Absence

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

**III. Approval of the Consent Agenda** **Iovinelli/Fallon motioned to approve the Consent Agenda including the March 11, 2025 Minutes, March & April Financial Report, and Disbursements for March & April 2025. Roll call vote showed 9 yes votes, and the motion was approved**

**IV. Public Comment:** **No Public Comment**

**V. Under the Foundation** **Yogya reported for the WSSRF:** The Foundation reports The Foundation is busy celebrating a busy four months of successful events: **2025 Bocce Tournament** took place on Saturday, February 1, 2025. It will be held at the Village of Elmwood Park's CRC and raised \$11,000 in profits.  
**2025 Derby Gala** The Foundation has also been busy preparing for the 2025 Derby Gala held on Saturday, May 3, 2025 at D'Agostino's in River Grove from 4 – 7:00pm. As noted in your packet, the WSSRA/WSSRF raised \$46,000 in profits. A special thanks for your Ad Sponsors, Gold, Silver & Bronze Sponsorships and of course your many donations to the Silent Auction and for those who came to the event! It was a lively supportive crowd. Thank you for being a part! The funds raised will support our participants and help reduce the dependency on the partner shares. A win, win for all! **WSSRA hiring assistance** The Foundation is committed to support WSSRA in their search for staff for programs and summer day camp. Staff have been invited to present to various parent groups to help get the word out about WSSRA programs and staff support. WSSRF once again thanks you for your continued support throughout the year! **Our next scheduled event will be the 2025 Family Bowl-a-thon on Saturday October 4<sup>th</sup> followed by the Fallin For Our Stars Casino night event scheduled for Friday, November 7, 2025. Plan to be there!**

**VI. Under Committee Reports** **LoCascio reported the Policy Committee met on April 8<sup>th</sup> & May 7<sup>th</sup> to review updated PDRMA policies and the Vehicle Camera Policy of which details will be shared later in the agenda.**

**VII. Unfinished Business**

- A. **Park District of Forest Park Building Updates** Iovinelli stated Senator Kimberly Lightfoot's office requested to see the building proposal and there was building updates to report.
- B. No Other

**VIII. Under New Business**

- A. **Approval of WSSRA Fleet Telematics and Camera Policy** (action)  
Birko reported In response to an increase in aggressive behaviors exhibited by participants during transportation, WSSRA implemented new safety measures beginning in the past winter season. Each door-to-door transportation route now includes a part-time support staff member to help ensure the safety of both participants and drivers. To further enhance safety and accountability, WSSRA has also researched the

installation of cameras on vehicles as an added layer of protection. Important camera notes:

1. The Momento M7 is a two-camera system with a 135° radius. One will focus on the internal cabin with the driver not in view and the other will focus on the entrance and exit of vehicle.
2. There will be no audio and no exterior camera.
3. The cameras are triggered by motion sensors and will turn on with internal and external motion or automatically turn on with the start of the vehicle.
4. The system has Sound & GPS capabilities, which will be turned off based on PDRMA's recommendation. Per the policy, the patrons and drivers will know WSSRA can enable anytime.
5. There will be verbiage posted on the vehicle visible as patrons enter

Staff have worked closely with PDRMA, WSSRA Legal Counsel, and the Policy Committee to develop the Fleet Telematics and Camera Policy. Upon approval, staff will move forward with the installation of fleet cameras in preparation for the upcoming summer season.

→**Recommendation** **lovinelli/Fallon motioned for WSSRA Board of Directors to approve the WSSRA Fleet Telematics and Camera Policy which will go into effect immediately. Motioned and approved with 10 yes votes and 0 nays.**

**B. Approval of Summer Transportation Bid** (action)

Hart shared WSSRA recently conducted a bidding process for a two-year contract to provide transportation for our Day Camp program. We received bids from four transportation providers, including our most recent vendor, After a review of the proposals, detailed cost analysis, and reference checks, WSSRA is recommending awarding the contract to **First Student**.

→**Recommendation:** **lovinelli/Stanczyk motioned for the WSSRA Board of Directors to accept the Transportation bid from First Student as they were one of two low bidders and WSSRA believes this change will support our program's needs while maintaining high standards of safety, reliability, and service. Motioned and approved with 10 Yes votes and 0 nays.**

**C. No Other**

**IX. Under Correspondence No Comments**

**X. Under Board Reports** **Fallon reported the Berwyn Park District** Camps are starting in a couple of weeks, they continue working on final steps in the Proksa Park redevelopment project and will go out to bid shortly. They are also getting ready for summer events: Touch-A-Truck on May 21 at Liberty from 4:30-6:00pm, concerts and movies. **lovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park** where every day is a walk in the park...They are busy getting ready for summer and opening the pool on May 24<sup>th</sup>. They are fully staffed for lifeguards and summer camp and programs. They started conducting their orientations, lifeguard training and will have their Grand Opening of Remembrance Park on May 26<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day and officially opening the Splash Pad there. In the midst of all of the summer prep they are finishing their budget and looking to add Pickleball Courts. lovinelli has begun her orientation of their newly elected board member Maria "Betty" Alzamora. **Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside's** Master planning process is completed and will be approved in June and includes the replacement of all playgrounds. Spring soccer is in full swing, and the summer program guide came out last week. It includes the guided bike ride and fishing derby this Saturday, May 17. The Before and After school RFP process is completed and the recreation department was competing against 3<sup>rd</sup> party competitors "Right at School". Contract decisions are to be announced at next week's School Board meeting. **Stanczyk reported the Veterans Park District** has a summer intern from Dominican. They have a degree in Business Management/Human Resources and are interested in pursuing a career in parks and recreation. Their seasonal hiring is complete, and the district went paperless for the first time and are using ADP software. Camp training starts on Monday next week, and then their focus will shift to the fall program guide development where they plan to expand their creative arts and early childhood programming. **LoCascio reported the Park District of Franklin Park's** Easter activities went great.

The Spring hockey numbers are good and their "Color Run" event they hosted went really well as they doubled their numbers to #360 participants this year! They are excited to host the Community Meeting to discuss the Dog Park being put on the land leased to the park district by the Village. **Arnold reported for the Park District of Oak Park** is going geothermal at Cheney. The exterior work will be finished next week, and the interior will be completed by the end of the year. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> PDOP building to be geothermal. The park district is going back out to bid for Field Center as the First round of bidding came in 1.3 million above budget. The PDOP is taking a different approach- going out by trade in the hopes of getting the prices to come down. They will be opening Ridgeland pool on 5/24, and a portion of Rehm pool June 5<sup>th</sup> with the new pool opening after completion. Arnold announced the PDOP is a Gold medal finalist for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row. They are fully staffed for camp, and guards have been in the pool since Saturday. They will also be hosting "A Day in our Village" June 1 with many exciting activities throughout the village. PDOP also had a new board member Ade Onayemi, sworn in on May 1. **Brown reported the Norridge Park District's** new Board Member, Mike Fanelli, has started his onboarding process. Mike is a very active member of Norridge. The park district is hosting its first annual Family Fun Festival on May 18<sup>th</sup> which includes food trucks, DJ, and bounce houses and more. They will also be hosting the dance recital this weekend as well, getting ready for the pool opening- set for Saturday, May 24. **Muellner reported the Village of River Grove's** Planting Day is this Saturday, 17, they will be hosting a Memorial Day Service at the new park, and the River Front Fest May 29-June 1<sup>st</sup>. They are also hosting the Rockets Softball Round-Robin Tournament and the River Grove 5K on Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome! **Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park's** Bocce with the Bunny was a huge success with over 200 kids participating. They will be opening their pool Memorial Day weekend and Summer Bocce starts May 15<sup>th</sup>. Watch for upcoming events including the Car Show and Concert on Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. **Avalos reported the North Berwyn Park District's** Easter events were a success! They recently hosted the "Best of Berwyn" event which highlights the involvement of teenagers and their contributions back to their community of Berwyn! This past Wednesday Commissioner Kelly Diaz resigned, and NBPd is starting the process to look for a new commissioner and thanked Mark Sladek for his years of service. The NBPd is partnering with Secretary of State to hold a mobile emissions testing and mobile ID site at the Community Center. Their day camps are set to start June 2, and they are making preparations for the Corrida del Mariachi 5K is on Saturday, August 16.

XI. **Executive Director's Report** Birko Reported

- A. **Successful Trip to Springfield** Birko and Hart traveled to Springfield to represent WSSRA during Parks Day at the Capitol and the 2025 IAPD Legislative Conference. As always, it was a busy but highly productive trip. While there, they assisted with staffing the SRA booth, engaged with key legislators, and took part in valuable discussions about the future of parks and recreation in Illinois. This year's highlights included in-person conversations with Representative Robert Martwick, Representative La Shawn Ford, and a 40-minute meeting with Speaker Emanuel Chris Welch—an important opportunity to advocate for our mission and the individuals we serve. The trip included a delightful dinner shared with Board members and staff from the Park District of Forest Park, reinforcing the importance of strong partnerships.
- B. **WSSRA 2024 Audit Update** WSSRA's 2024 Audit is waiting for the IMRF reporting to complete the audit. Lauterbach & Amen is scheduled to present it at the July 8<sup>th</sup> board meeting for formal approval.
- C. **WSSRA Derby Gala 2025 A Success** Derby Gala 2025 took place on Saturday, May 3, 2025 at D'Agostino's, where WSSRA/WSSRF hosted the 24<sup>th</sup> year of this very successful event. I am delighted to report 80% of WSSRA partners participated on some level either through auction donation, sponsorship or attended the event. As you know this event is 100% dependent on all of your support and the preliminary Financial report shows it was another successful year, raising over \$46,000 in profits. A special thanks to the WSSRF for their continued support. Mark your calendars for their next event **Fallin For Our Stars taking place on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup> at Cheney Mansion.**
- D. **WSSRA Attends "Best of Berwyn 2025"** On May 7, 2025, Hart and Reynaga represented WSSRA at the Best of Berwyn 2025 event, a celebration honoring exceptional 8<sup>th</sup> grade students for their outstanding citizenship and commitment to their community. This annual recognition event, led by NBPd staff, brings together community organizations to celebrate the next generation of leaders. Also recognized was Mark Sladek's 27 years as a NBPd Park Board member whose last meeting was May 8<sup>th</sup>. Mark is a dedicated supporter of WSSRA and represented the NBPd on the WSSRA Board for 22 years.

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

1. **Programs** Spring programs are wrapping up and summer program registration opens on Wednesday, May 14. Eight athletes compete in the Special Olympics Spring Games at Marmion Academy in Aurora on May 4, and four athletes received a gold medal in one or more of their events and will advance to the Special Olympics Summer Games in June.
2. **Day Camp** Staff are busy preparing for camp. Supervisor training is scheduled between May 22–28, and all-staff training will take place June 4–6. Currently, 107 participants are registered for day camp, with 28 on the waitlist. Community Cruisers has 21 participants registered and one on the waitlist. All waitlists are reviewed weekly, and participants will be added as additional staff are hired
3. **Grants** WSSRA received funding from the Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township to continue our Happy Campers program. The funding will allow us to hire an Occupational Therapist and Behavior Specialist to support camps through the summer. This is the third year this very successful grant program has been funded!
4. **Hiring Updates** Our team has been busy attending recruiting events, and applications continue to come in steadily. We are still looking to fill approximately 30 more positions. We greatly appreciate your referrals. Interested candidates can apply directly on our website at [wssra.net](http://wssra.net).
5. **Inclusion** Summer inclusion requests are coming in. Our inclusion team is scheduled to conduct 11 trainings across our partner districts starting May 14–June 5. This training presentation is a tremendous support to your staff as you launch summer day camp programming! Don't wait to contact Chris Sturm at [chriss@wssra.net](mailto:chriss@wssra.net) to schedule your training.
6. **Special Events** WSSRA is excited to participate in several partner and community events throughout the month of May. Events include:
  - **Knights of Columbus, Riverside** Birko presented to the Knights of Columbus in Riverside on WSSRA programming and hiring needs on Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. It was a wonderful opportunity to thank them for their donation to the WSSRA Scholarship fund.
  - **North Berwyn Park District's Best of Berwyn** On May 7, WSSRA staff attended Best of Berwyn, a Junior Citizen Recognition Program honoring outstanding 8th grade students in the City of Berwyn.
  - **Eisenhower Wellness Fair** WSSRA is attending a Wellness Fair at the Eisenhower Public Library in Harwood Heights on Saturday, May 10 from 10:00-2:00pm.
  - **Berwyn Touch-A-Truck** WSSRA is participating in Berwyn Park District's Touch-A-Truck event on Wednesday, May 21 at Liberty Cultural Center from 4:00-6:30pm. Children and families can explore vehicles and meet local community helpers.
  - **River Forest Memorial Day Parade** WSSRA is excited to participate in the Village of River Forest's Annual Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 26. The parade kicks off at 9:00am.
  - **River Front Fest** WSSRA is excited to have an information booth at The Village of River Grove's River Front Fest on Saturday, May 31! Enjoy carnival rides, live entertainment, food and more. Be sure to visit WSSRA's booth between 1:00-5:00pm.

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

1. **Transportation** WSSRA is pleased to say that both of our new minivans have been outfitted with a custom wrap featuring the WSSRA logo and matching the 3 buses.
2. **No Other**

**XII. Closed Session None**

- XIII. Adjournment** LoCascio/Iovinelli motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:57pm. Motion was unanimously approved  
Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko, Executive Director, mb/ May 25 minutes