

West Suburban Special Recreation Association

May 12, 2026, Board of Directors Meeting

Held at

The Village of North Riverside Offices

2401 S Des Plaines Avenue

North Riverside, IL 60546

MINUTES

I. Chairperson Ted Gruber called the meeting to order at 4:05pm 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
Anna Wegrecki, Village of Harwood Heights **remote**
Mike Sletten, River Forest Park District
Greg Stanczyk, Veterans Park District

Nestor Zavala, North Berwyn Park District **remote**
Nate Brown, Norridge Park District
Katie Muellner, Village of River Grove **remote**
Sue Scarpiniti Village of North Riverside
Ted Gruber, Village of Elmwood Park
Cathy Fallon, Berwyn Park District

Others in Attendance: WSSRA staff: Annie Hart, April Michalski, Marianne Birko WSSRF. Peggy Yogya

- I. Approval of Remote Attendees meeting Qualifying Event:** **Arnold/ Malchiodi motioned to approve remote attendance from Wegrecki, Village of Harwood Heights, Zavala, North Berwyn Park District, and Muellner, Village of River Grove and the vote was unanimously approved**
- II. Approval of Agenda** **Arnold/Sletten motioned 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 March 10, 2026 Minutes, March Financial Report, and Disbursements for March & April 2026. Roll call vote showed 13 yes votes, and the motion was approved**
- IV. Public Comment:** No Public Comment
- V. Under the Foundation** **Yogya reported for the WSSRF**, The Foundation, in collaboration with WSSRA staff, proudly presented the WSSRA 50th Anniversary Celebration at the Derby Gala on Saturday, May 2, 2026. This milestone celebration was a spectacular showcase of the agency's many years of dedication and the lasting impact of this signature event. The new venue, Robert's Westside, proved to be a tremendous success. With its stage and sound system, it provided exactly what was needed for the occasion. The staff at the venue were exceptionally supportive, helping ensure the day went off without a hitch. A total of 177 guests enjoyed food, drinks, the Silent Auction, Wheel Spins, raffles, and prizes. WSSRA Boxability participants, along with coaches Brian Roman and David Romines, presented an exciting demonstration highlighting the skills they have developed through the program. Our host, Mayor Skip Saviano of the Village of Elmwood Park, and Senate President Don Harmon delivered inspiring speeches in support of WSSRA and our mission to serve children and adults with disabilities. Preliminary results are in, and this was the **MOST SUCCESSFUL Derby Gala** in the event's 25-year history! We raised \$16,000 more than last year, with additional financial commitments still coming in. Current net profits total an incredible **\$63,000!** We are thrilled to share this success, which reflects the hard work and dedication of so many individuals who helped increase our visibility and bring us to this exciting milestone. A BIG thank you goes to Karen Mullarkey Kerrins and Geri Estvanik for spearheading the Paddle Raise and engaging the audience in a tremendous way. Special thanks also to Jim White and MaryAnn Borgmann for sharing their talents to create a spectacular Silent Auction. Thank you all for everything you do on behalf of WSSRA and WSSRF. Enjoy the WIN!
- Upcoming Events** Next up is the planning of the **Family Bowl-a-thon, which will be held this fall on Saturday, October 3**, at Circle Lanes. Following that will be the **Fallin' For Our Stars Casino Event on Friday, November 6**, hosted at the beautiful Cheney Mansion. Mark your calendars — more information will be coming soon!
- WSSRA Hiring Assistance** The Foundation remains committed to supporting WSSRA in its search for staff for programs and summer day camp. Staff members have been invited to present to various parent groups to help spread the word about WSSRA programs and staffing opportunities. WSSRF once again thanks you for your continued support throughout the year!
- VI. Under Committee Reports**
- A. The Finance Committee** Sletten reported the WSSRA Finance Committee met on April 21 to review the updated vehicle purchase and leasing purchase schedule going forward. More information to be shared at the meeting.

VII. Unfinished Business

- A. **Approval of 2026 Updated Shares** Birko reminded the Board the final 2024 EAV's were published on April 13, 2026. As shared when the 2026 shares were approved in November 2025 it was pending this information. WSSRA has updated the formula for Veterans Park District, the Village of River Grove, and the Village of Harwood Heights and Norridge Park District. Birko stated this impacts everyone's shares slightly as discussed when they were approved in November. Attachment E is the updated share chart, and F is the comparison chart to your current approved shares. The Finance Committee has recommended this adjustment happen in the fourth quarter payment. **Arnold/Iovinelli motioned as reviewed and recommended by the WSSRA Finance Committee the WSSRA Board of Directors approve the updated 2026 shares with the final adjustment made in the fourth quarter billing. Roll call vote showed unanimous approval with 13 YES votes.**
- B. **Park District of Forest Park Building Updates** Iovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park Board has added Community Collaborations to the Board Agenda so that monthly they can talk about "indoor space" potential in local school building collaborations that can be discussed at regular board meetings. Iovinelli also shared that the Interim School Superintendent of Forest Park Schools is leaving and they will continue to discuss building collaborative opportunities with the School District.
- C. **No Other**

VIII. Under New Business

- A. **Presentation of 2025 Audit by Lauterbach & Amen** The Hannah Cullerton from Lauterbach & Amen gave an overview of the 2025 audit. There were no questions and the Board is asked to approve the audit at the July 14, Meeting.
- B. **Bus Purchase Update & Bus replacement Schedule** Birko shared since the last Board meeting some new information was shared by Best Bus and the 2026 bus, we were set to purchase was taken out of the running. The options to replace the Green Bus whose lease is up in August. **Arnold/Iovinelli motioned based on the WSSRA Finance Committee recommendation the WSSRA Board of Directors by roll call vote amend the purchase of the 2026 Ford E450 Endera and approve the purchase of the 2024 Ford E450 Endera for \$104,970. Roll call vote showed unanimous approval with 13 YES**
- Blue Bus non-accessible, 2020 Micro bird with 25,000 miles lease is up in November Arnold/Iovinelli motioned based on the WSSRA Finance Committee recommendation the WSSRA Board of Directors by roll call vote approve the purchase of the 2020 Blue Micro bird when lease is up in November for \$12,000. Roll call vote showed unanimous approval with 13 YES.**

C.No Other

- IX. **Under Correspondence** Birko shared the highlights included in the correspondence including the communications to the 13 Legislators in regard to SB3907 and encouraged others to stay in touch with their Legislators.
- X. **Under Board Reports** **Brown reported the Norridge Park District** is working on updating the egress to the main gym. The pool opens next week, and they are putting the final touches on the concession stand. They are also busy preparing for "Pack the Park" with Little League on May 31. They are also finalizing details for the upcoming Island in the City Festival on July 9 -12. **Stanczyk reported for the Veterans Park District** Seasonal staff training begins next week. They are currently ahead of their Fall program planning schedule where they are expanding Creative Arts and Early Childhood programming. **Fallon reported the Berwyn Park District** is finishing the pond renovation and will be awarding the Proksa Park Re-development contract next week. They are also immersed in Summer camp staff training and getting ready for summer concerts and events. **LoCascio reported the Park District of Franklin Park** staff are busy training staff for summer and completing pool repairs. They are also preparing for the 52nd Annual Spring Ice Show this weekend and all are welcome. The Dog Park bid opening is Thursday. **Sletten reported the River Forest Park District** is working on two projects: the Priory splash pad opening taking place on June 13, and the following week Constitution Park will open. Sletten asked if anyone had a table vendor they liked? Please send your information. The River Forest Park District Board approved the consumer survey, and they have met with architects for community center and expect to go to referendum next April. **Arnold reported the Park District of Oak Park** has the Rehm Pool Ribbon cutting event on Friday May 22 at 4PM. Staff & their families will get to swim from 5 -7:00pm. The Anderson park ribbon cutting will take place on Saturday May 23 at 10:00am. The Longfellow Playground equipment has arrived, and the expected completion date is November

2026. They too attended the Legislative conference and encouraged all to be in touch with their Legislators about SB3907. The bill sponsor is currently making changes so watch for updates from IAPD. PDOP Lifeguards are in the water for training. Rehm pool opens Saturday, May 23 and Ridgeland opens Tuesday May 26th. Everyone is looking forward to a GREAT Summer! **Iovinelli reported the Park District of Forest Park's** pool currently does not have water in it yet. They have been utilizing the Proviso East pool for lifeguard training. They are excited for the collaborative with the Forest Park Library and the NEW opportunities for passholders. Residents will be able to check out a pool pass at the library for families and seniors, and the library is hosting Mermaid Reading event on June 30 at the pool. All staff training has begun, and they are also working on the OSLAD Grant redevelopment of the main park and soccer fields. They are currently in the design phase of the park and playground area. Of course they are getting ready for summer events as well! (Arnold shared everyone should consider Forever Lawn for their turf projects as it has a two year longer warranty than others.)

Malchiodi reported the Village of Riverside's recently celebrated "Global BIG DAY" a worldwide birding event held on May 9, where participants observe and report birds to help monitor global bird populations and National celebration of bird migration. It included bird walks and nature hikes. Coming up this weekend is the Riverside Ride, a guided ride through Riverside escorted by the local police followed by their Fishing Derby. The New Playground bids are due June 7th including pickleball courts and basketball courts. **Scarpiniti reported the Village of North Riverside** is looking to add a new park in addition to the two they have and it will be located on the west side of town as noted in the comprehensive plan. They will be applying for OSLAD grant for funding. **Wegrecki reported the Village of Harwood Heights** participated in the local Polish Parades of which Mayor Jezierny was the Parade Marshall. They will also be celebrating the Nations 250th Anniversary and combining events with the Village of Norridge August 20 -23 including a carnival, food, bingo fireworks, and live music. Zavala reported the **North Berwyn Park District hosted the 2026 "Best of Berwyn"** on May 13 at 6:30, Summer camp starts on 6/1 for ages 6-12, campers who will enjoy arts and crafts, sports and group games and they will be hosting their May 14th Board meeting at 5:00pm at the Joe Vallez Community Center. Mark, your calendars as Early bird registration has begun for the Corrida del Mariachi 5K is on 8/15. Don't wait to register as the race, registration closes prior to the event. **Muellner reported the Village of River Grove** is hosting the Memorial Day Ceremony on May 25th and River Front Fest on May 28 – 31. **Gruber reported the Village of Elmwood Park's** New pickleball courts are almost done, camp registration is going well and they have large waitlists. The Annual Car Show and concert are on June 12 where they anticipate 300 cars! Winter bocce ends this week, and summer Bocce begins with 150 teams.

XI. Executive Director's Report Birko Reported

- A. **WSSRA Derby Gala 2026 Success** The WSSRA/WSSRF 2026 Derby Gala was a smashing success with nearly 200 guests present to celebrate the Agency's 50th Anniversary. The new venue Robert's Westside in Forest Park worked out beautifully managing the crowd and busy activities of the day easily! A special Thank you to all for your continued support. Preliminary Derby Gala Event results were shared.
- B. **Staff Attend IAPD Legislative Conference** Birko and Hart attended Park's Day and the Legislative Conference in Springfield May 5 & 6. It was a busy 2 days of engaging with guests visiting the capitol while staffing the SRA information booth. Then visiting all 14 of the Legislators that serve the WSSRA partner districts. We had a formal meeting with Speaker Welch and the Park District of Forest Park and had a brief encounter with Representative Lisa Hernandez and Representative Camille Lilly and an extensive conversation with Representative Brad Stephens. The Legislative Conference on Wednesday was a packed agenda of informative speakers and an engaging presentation with IDEC about SB3907 of which we were able to clearly communicate to the department our opposition. Be sure you are still communicating to your Legislators your opposition to SB3907!
- C. **WSSRA Attends "Best of Berwyn 2026"** Coming up this week is the "Best of Berwyn" event presented by the North Berwyn Park District. We love this opportunity to connect with the Town of Berwyn staff, NBPD staff, school personnel, and community members to support their young people and their commitment to their community! A great message to send young people about committing time to their community!
- D. **Partner Annual Presentations** Call or email Birko with dates and times that work for you in 2026. Coming up Birko will be presenting to North Berwyn Park Districts Boards next week.
- E. **Staff Report: April Michalski, Superintendent of Recreation reported**
 1. **Programs** Spring programs are wrapping up, and summer program registration opens on Monday, May 11. Softball season is underway, and we have two teams with 24 athletes participating. WSSRA had 12 athletes qualify for the Special Olympics State Summer Games in powerlifting, track and field, swimming, and rhythmic gymnastics. The competition will take place on June 12-14 at Illinois State University.
 2. **Day Camp** We currently have 123 participants registered for day camp, with 23 on the waitlist. Community Cruisers

has 21 participants registered with two on the waitlist. We anticipate adding additional participants off the waitlist this week, we are in the process of conducting assessments with families. Staff are busy preparing for camp. Supervisor training is scheduled between May 20–28, and All-staff training will take place June 3–5. We are excited to welcome back Michael Brandwein to our all-staff training. Topics will include Why Don't You Behave? - The Brandwein Key System Solution to Handling Negative Behavior in Young People and Dump the Dissing - How to Stop Put-Downs, Bullying, Teasing, and Other Disrespectful Behavior While Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment for Learning and Growth.

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 throughout the summer.
4. **Inclusion** WSSRA is currently supporting 55 participants in 76 inclusive programs. Our inclusion team is gearing up for summer and is scheduled to conduct 10 trainings across our partner districts between May 15-June 5.
5. **Upcoming Events** WSSRA is participating in several partner and community events throughout the month of May
 - **The Eisenhower Wellness Fair** at the Eisenhower Public Library in Harwood Heights on Saturday, May 9 from 11:00am-2:00pm.
 - **North Berwyn Park District's Best of Berwyn** on May 13 at Crystal Sky Banquets, recognizing outstanding 8th grade students in Berwyn.
 - **Berwyn Park District's Touch-A-Truck** on May 20 at Liberty Cultural Center from 4:30-6:00pm, where families can explore vehicles and meet local community helpers.
 - **The River Forest Memorial Day Parade** on May 25, the parade kicks off at 9:00am.
 - **River Grove's River Front Fest** on May 30, where WSSRA will host a booth from 1:00-5:00pm. The event will also feature carnival rides, entertainment, food and more!

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

1. **Marketing** WSSRA recently hosted our annual Marketing Roundtable, and once again it was a great success. Nine staff members representing five different districts attended the meeting. Discussions included WSSRA's upcoming 50th Anniversary celebrations, our pop-up shop, and upcoming events planned throughout the year. The group also shared ideas and best practices for providing incentives to seasonal staff. A special thank you to the Park District of Franklin Park for generously offering pool passes to WSSRA staff working their summer day camp programs.
2. **Staffing** Summer hiring is progressing well, and we are currently in a stronger position than in previous years. At this time, we have only a few remaining openings for Day Camp staff and have applicants still coming in. Inclusion staffing is also in a positive position based on our current needs. We recognize that staffing demands may continue to evolve as we get closer to summer and as inclusion support needs are finalized.

XII. **Closed Session** **None**

XIII. **Adjournment** **Iovinelli/Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:59pm. Motion was unanimously approved**

Respectfully submitted,



Marianne Birko,
Executive Director, mb/ May 26 DRAFT minutes