

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
BOARD MEETING
Forest Preserve Headquarters
March 19, 2025

MINUTES of a regular public meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, Winnebago County, Illinois, held at the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District Headquarters Office, 5500 Northrock Drive, Rockford, Illinois at 5:30 o'clock P.M., on the 19th day of March, 2025.

PRESENT

Judy Barnard – Arrived at 5:32pm
Mike Eickman
Gloria Lind – Absent
Cheryl Maggio
Jerry Paulson
Emily Porter
Jeff Tilly

STAFF

Mike Holan, Executive Director
Steve Chapman, Director of Finance
Vaughn Stamm, Director of Operations
Kristy Knapp, Administrative Services Manager
Sarah Lorenz, Communications Coordinator
Mike Brien, Director of Natural Resource

GUESTS

ATTORNEY

Roxanne Sosnowski

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM, by President Jeff Tilly.

PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE Mike Eickman led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL Recording secretary Emily Wendlandt called the roll. President Jeff Tilly, Judy Barnard, Mike Eickman, Cheryl Maggio, Jerry Paulson, and Emily Porter were present.

APPROVAL of AGENDA and MINUTES Jerry Paulson made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 19, 2025 Board meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC HEARING REQUIRED UNDER BOND ISSUE NOTIFICATIONS ACT

Jeff Tilly, the President, and the following Commissioners were physically present at said location: Judy Barnard, Mike Eickman, Cheryl Maggio, Jerry Paulson, and Emily Porter.

The following Commissioners were absent and did not participate in the meeting in any manner or to any extent whatsoever: Gloria Lind.

At 5:35 o'clock P.M., the President announced that the next agenda item for the Board of Commissioners was a public hearing (the "*Hearing*") to receive public comments on the proposal to sell not to exceed \$2,000,000 General Obligation Limited Tax Bonds (the "*Bonds*") for the purpose of paying costs of acquiring land in and for the District, and explained that all persons desiring to be heard would have an opportunity to present written or oral testimony with respect thereto.

The President opened the discussion and explained that the reason for the proposed issuance of the Bonds is land acquisition.

Whereupon the President asked for additional comments from the Commissioners. Additional comments were made by the following: None.

Written testimony concerning the proposed issuance of the Bonds was read into the record by the Secretary and is attached hereto as *Exhibit I*: None.

Whereupon the President asked for oral testimony or any public comments concerning the proposed issuance of the Bonds. Statements were made by the following: Steve Chapman.

The President then announced that all persons desiring to be heard had been given an opportunity to present oral and written testimony with respect to the proposed issuance of the Bonds. Commissioner Judy Barnard moved and Commissioner Jerry Paulson seconded the motion that the Hearing be adjourned. After a full discussion thereof, the President directed that the roll be called for a vote upon the motion. Upon the roll being called, the following Commissioners voted AYE: President Jeff Tilly, Judy Barnard, Mike Eickman, Cheryl Maggio, Jerry Paulson, and Emily Porter. The following Commissioners voted NAY: None. Whereupon the President declared the motion carried and the Hearing was finally adjourned. Other business not pertinent to the conduct of the Hearing was duly transacted at said meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AWARDS, and PRESENTATIONS

Ann Wasser provided the board with an update on behalf of the Severson Dells Education Foundation.

NEW BUSINESS

Mike Brien made the board aware of the recent announcement made by the Prairie State Coalition Foundation and how grant funding from the foundation will become more competitive and harder to come by as a result.

Mike Holan reminded the board that the statements of economic interest were given to each member and they're due May 1st.

ACTION ITEMS

Bills for February – Steve Chapman presented to the board the bills for February. Mike Eickman made a motion to authorize the payment of the bills for February in the amount of \$462,847.87. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bids for Atwood Driving Range Project – Vaughn Stamm presented to the board the bids for the Atwood driving range project. Judy Barnard made a motion to accept the bids. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bids for Ledges Rotary Mower – Vaughn Stamm presented to the board the bids for the Ledges rotary mower. Jerry Paulson made a motion to accept the bids. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bids for Macktown Contour Finish Mower – Vaughn Stamm presented to the board the bids for the Macktown contour finish mower. Jerry Paulson made a motion to accept the bids. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Amended Employee Agreement– Mike Holan presented to the board the amended employee agreement. Cheryl Maggio made a motion to accept the amended employee agreement. **Roll Call Vote Taken. Motion passed 5-1, with Emily Porter voting no.**

STAFF REPORTS

Preserve Operations - Vaughn Stamm, Matt Weik, Scott Wallace, and Bryan Helmold submitted a written report.

Natural Resource Management – Mike Brien, Keith Krey and Liz Hucker submitted a written report. Mike Brien let the board know that the chronic wasting disease test results had come back from the deer management program and that the department has begun prescribed burns. The design of the Natural Resource shop is also underway.

Golf Operations – Vaughn Stamm, Rich Rosenstiel, Tyler Knapp, and Mark Freiman submitted a written report. Vaughn Stamm mentioned to the board that the Atwood golf course has opened for the season.

Communications Coordinator – Sarah Lorenz submitted a written report.

Law Enforcement – Sheriff's Department submitted a written report.

Partner Group – Alex Mills presented on behalf of Klehm Arboretum to let the board know of the recent invasive tree removals.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS

1. March 22 – Eastern Bluebird Nest Box Training at Funderburg Forest Preserve starting at 10:00am.
2. April 11 – Guided Bird Hike at Pecatonica Wetlands Forest Preserve starting at 8:30am.
3. April 14 – Spring Ephemeral Walk at Kilbuck Forest Preserve starting at 5:30pm.

CLOSED SESSION

At 5:58 PM Jerry Paulson made a motion to go into closed session to discuss lease of property, personnel and litigation. Judy Barnard made a motion to go back into open session at 7:07 PM. Roll Call taken. No action was taken while in closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

Jerry Paulson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 PM; **motion passed unanimously.**

Next board meeting 5:30 PM, Wednesday, May 21, 2025 at Preserve Headquarters.

Respectfully Submitted,
Emily Wendlandt
Recording Secretary