

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
BOARD MEETING
Forest Preserve Headquarters
April 15, 2026

PRESENT

Judy Barnard – via phone
Mike Eickman
Gloria Lind
Cheryl Maggio
Jerry Paulson
Emily Porter
Jeff Tilly

STAFF

Daniel Olson, Executive Director
Steve Chapman, Director of Finance
Vaughn Stamm, Director of Operations
Sarah Lorenz, Communications Coordinator
Mike Brien, Director of Natural Resources
Jody Kennay, Human Resources Manager
Emily Wendlandt, Board Recording Secretary

GUESTS

Ann Wasser Jan Paustek Alex Mills Becky Maier Debbi Hamilton

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

ROLL CALL Recording secretary Emily Wendlandt called the roll.

PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE Cheryl Maggio led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

REMOTE ATTENDANCE VOTE

The Board voted to allow Judy Barnard to attend the meeting via phone.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Cheryl Maggio made a motion to approve of the meeting minutes from March 18, 2026 seconded by Gloria Lind. **Motion passed unanimously.**

PRESENTATIONS

Audit Results – Jon Rader presented to the Board FPWC’s audit results for 2025 on behalf of Baker Tilly US. LLP.

Wild Roots – Ann Wasser announced to the Board that Severson Dells Nature Center has changed their name to Wild Roots Nature Center. Ann also updated the Board with some renovations being done at The Grove area and the date for their 50th Anniversary Party.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Jerry Paulson asked Daniel Olson when the Holt House RFP will be posted. Daniel informed Jerry that it will be posted on Sunday, April 26th.

NEW BUSINESS

Bills for March- Steve Chapman presented to the Board the bills for March. Mike Eickman made a motion to authorize the payment of the bills for March in the amount of \$704,844.13 seconded by Cheryl Maggio. **Roll call vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bid for Ledges Paving Project – Vaughn Stamm presented to the Board the resolution to approve the acceptance of bid for the Ledges paving project. Gloria Lind made a motion to approve of the resolution, seconded by Emily Porter. **Roll call vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bid for Seward Bluffs Asphalt Paving Project – Vaughn Stamm presented to the Board the resolution to accept the bid for the Seward Bluffs asphalt paving project. Jerry Paulson made a motion to approve of the resolution, seconded by Mike Eickman. **Roll call vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bid for Sugar River Asphalt Project – Vaughn Stamm presented to the Board the resolution to accept the bid for the Sugar River asphalt paving project. Mike Eickman made a motion to approve of the resolution, seconded by Jerry Paulson. **Roll call vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bid for Atwood Golf Course Asphalt Project – Vaughn Stamm presented to the Board the resolution to accept the bid for the Atwood Golf Course asphalt project. Emily Porter made a motion to approve of the resolution, seconded by Gloria Lind. **Roll call vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Change Orders for Natural Resources Building – Mike Brien presented to the Board the resolution to approve of the change orders for the Natural Resource building. Mike Eickman made a motion to approve of the resolution, seconded by Gloria Lind. **Roll call vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Agreement with Sheriff's Office for Police Services – Daniel Olson presented to the Board the resolution to approve of the agreement with the sheriff's office for police services. Cheryl Maggio made a motion to approve of the resolution, seconded by Gloria Lind. **Roll call vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION

Data Center

- Committee Meeting Summary: Vaughn Stamm provided the Board of a summary of the committee meeting he had attended regarding the TIFF District. The Board's consensus was opposing the development of the TIFF District, given that they don't believe the land meets the criteria. Board's consensus was to seek legal counsel to write up a letter to the City of Rockford opposing the TIFF District.
- Development Process (video): Dan presented to the Board the video that had been posted by Rockford's Mayor McNamara on the next steps of the approval process for the TIF district.

Employee Handbook

- Commissioners Comments Memo: Daniel Olson presented to the Board the employee handbook memo which detailed comments from commissioners followed by a response from staff.

At 7:54 pm Mike Eickman exited the meeting.

- Vacation Accumulation Policy Concept: Daniel Olson sought Board opinion on changing the accrual timing for vacation time, and paying down some employee's excess time if the new accumulation was to be put in place. The Board consensus was they would not be in favor of doing a payout, but rather institute a temporary increase in allowable roll over, and have the employee use their time down.

STAFF REPORTS

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

Natural Resource Management – Mike Brien, Mike Groves, Keith Krey and Liz Hucker submitted a written report.

Golf Operations – Vaughn Stamm, Bobby VanSistine, Tyler Knapp, and Mark Freiman submitted a written report.

Communications Coordinator – Sarah Lorenz submitted a written report.

Human Resources – Jody Kennay submitted a written report.

CLOSED SESSION

At 8:30 PM Gloria Lind made a motion to go into closed session to discuss land acquisition. At 8:40 PM the meeting returned to open session. No action was taken while in closed session.

OPEN SESSION

President Tilly suggested due to time and weather concerns the Action Items for Approval of listed closed session minutes and the Approval of a Resolution for Release and Destruction of Closed session minutes be tabled to the next meeting. Consensus was unanimous.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS

1. April 22 - Bat Monitor Training with Urban Wildlife Institute over Zoom starting at 6:00pm.
2. April 24 – City Nature Challenge Hike with Severson Dells Nature Center / Wild Roots Nature Center starting at 10:00am at Kilbuck Bluffs Forest Preserve.
3. May 6 – From Backyards to Boardrooms: Building Community Led Climate Resilience at Every Scale with Illinois Extension from 1:00-2:30pm at Headquarters Forest Preserve.
4. May 6 – Wildflower Walkabout with Severson Dells Nature Center / Wild Roots Nature Center from 6:00 pm – 7:00pm at Deer Run Forest Preserve.

ADJOURNMENT

Emily Porter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. Judy Barnard seconded; **motion passed unanimously.**

Next regular Board Meeting– 5:30 PM Wednesday, April 15th, Forest Preserve Headquarters

Respectfully Submitted,
Emily Wendlandt
Recording Secretary