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

PRESENT
Judy Barnard - Absent
Mike Eickman
Gloria Lind - Absent
Cheryl Maggio
Jerry Paulson
Emily Porter
Jeff Tilly

STAFF
Daniel Olson, Executive Director
Steve Chapman, Director of Finance
Kristy Knapp, Administrative Services Manager
Mike Brien, Director of Natural Resources
Jody Kennay, Human Resources Manager
Sarah Lorenz, Communications Coordinator
Emily Wendlandt, Board Recording Secretary

GUESTS
Ann Wasser

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 Mike Eickman led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Jerry Paulson made a motion to approve of the meeting minutes from June 17th, seconded by Emily Porter. **Motion passed unanimously**.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
Ann Wasser spoke to the Board to thank South area maintenance for helping with Wild Root's 50th anniversary. Ann also thanked some members of the upper management staff for attending the event.

NEW BUSINESS
Dan Olson announced the dates that the Board has agreed on for the Strategic Planning Kickoff meeting. Dan reminded the Board that he hasn't heard back from a couple of Board members on dates for the Board tour.
Dan gave some additional details to the Board for the Paula Swanson dedication meeting, which is scheduled for July 23rd, at 3:30pm.

Holt House RFP Kickoff Meeting – Jerry Paulson briefed the Board on the kickoff meeting, which he and Judy Barnard attended.

ACTION ITEMS
Bills for June - Steve Chapman presented to the Board the bills for June. Mike Eickman made a motion to authorize the payment of the bills for June in the amount of $1,771,408.91 seconded by Emily Porter. **Motion passed unanimously**.

Approval of FY 2026-27 Fee Schedule– Vaughn Stamm and Bobby VanSistine presented to the Board the golf and preserve fee schedules for 2027. Jeff Tilly suggested to apply a veteran's discount, to which staff agreed to add the discount to their golf guidelines. Emily Porter made a motion to approve of the 2026-27 fee schedule. **Motion passed unanimously**.

Approval of Transfer of Assets to Severson Dells Education Foundation (d.b.a. Wild Roots) – Daniel Olson presented to the Board the resolution. Emily Porter made a motion to approve the transfer of assets to SDEF (d.b.a Wild Roots), seconded by Jerry Paulson. **Motion passed unanimously**.

Approval of Operating Agreement with Severson Dells Education Foundation (d.b.a. Wild Roots)– Daniel Olson presented to the Board the resolution. Jerry Paulson made a motion to approve of the operating agreement with SDEF (d.b.a Wild Roots) seconded by Emily Porter. **Motion passed unanimously**.

Approval of contract for Website Redevelopment – Sarah Lorenz presented to the Board the resolution. Emily Porter made a motion to approve of the contract for the website redevelopment. **Motion passed unanimously**.

Emily Porter made a motion to table resolution 26-0706 indefinitely, seconded by Jerry Paulson. **Motion passed unanimously**.

DISCUSSION
The Board discussed the redevelopment and annexation of PIN 15-35-100-004 into the South Rockford TIF District.

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 Taylor Joray 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.

Partner Groups – Ann Wasser spoke on behalf of Wild Roots.

CLOSED SESSION
At 7:29 PM Mike Eickman made a motion to go into closed session to discuss land acquisition. At 7:47 PM the meeting returned to open session. No action was taken while in closed session.

Emily Porter made a motion to approve the following closed session minutes: November 6, 2013 – Penfield Crossing, November 6, 2013 – Vehicle Policy, November 6, 2013 – Land acquisition, November 20, 2013 – Personnel, July 16, 2014, September 17, 2014 and November 19, 2014. **Motion passed 4-0. Jerry Paulson abstained.**

Approval of resolution to release closed session minutes and destroy verbatim recordings –Emily Porter made a motion to amend the resolution to remove November 6th, 2013 - land acquisition, July 16th, 2014 - negotiations, December 17th, 2024 from section 2 and December 17th 2024 from section 3. Jerry Paulson seconded. **Motion passed unanimously**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS
1. July 23rd, Paula Swanson Dedication Event at Paula Swanson Forest Preserve at 3:30pm.

ADJOURNMENT
Emily Porter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Cheryl Maggio seconded; **motion passed unanimously.**

Next regular Board Meeting– 5:30 PM Wednesday, August 19th, Forest Preserve Headquarters

Respectfully Submitted,
Emily Wendlandt
Recording Secretary