

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
BOARD MEETING
Forest Preserve Headquarters
October 22, 2025

PRESENT

Judy Barnard
Mike Eickman – Via Phone
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 Resource
Jody Kennay, Human Resources Manager
Kristy Knapp, Administrative Services Manager

GUESTS

Alex Mills Ann Wasser Craig Campbell Ray Ferguson Ethan Schultz

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

PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE Emily Porter led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL Recording secretary Emily Wendlandt called the roll.

APPROVAL of AGENDA and MINUTES Gloria Lind made a motion to approve the minutes for the September 17 board meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS

Bills for September - Steve Chapman presented to the Board the bills for September. Judy Barnard made a motion to authorize the payment of the bills for September in the amount of \$720,291.66. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Budget and Appropriations Ordinance – Steve Chapman presented to the Board the Budget and Appropriations ordinance. Gloria Lind made a motion to approve of the budget amendment. **Roll Call Vote Taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Budget Tax Levy Ordinance – Steve Chapman presented to the Board the Annual Budget Tax Levy Ordinance. Judy Barnard made a motion to approve of the resolution. **Roll Call Vote Taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Public Comment Ordinance – Daniel Olson presented to the Board the Public Comment Ordinance. Gloria Lind made a motion to approve the ordinance for public comment. **Roll Call Vote Taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of 2026 Fee Schedules– Vaughn Stamm presented to the Board the 2026 Fee Schedules. Mike Eickman made a motion to approve of the resolution. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of 2026 Holiday Schedule– Daniel Olson presented to the Board the 2026 Holiday Schedule. Judy Barnard made a motion to approve of the resolution. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of the Donation of the Harezlak Family Sundial and Improvements at Klehm– Alex Mills presented to the Board the resolution to accept the Harezlaks family’s donation for the sundial and improvements at Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden. Gloria Lind made a motion to approve of the resolution. **Motion passed unanimously.** Judy Barnard suggested that President Jeff Tilly and Executive Director Daniel Olson, write a thank you letter to the family.

DISCUSSION

Severson Dells Operating/Partnership Agreement: Daniel Olson and the Board discussed the possibility of a new operating/partnership agreement with Severson Dells. The Board requested that Executive Director Olson work with Severson Dells Education Foundation staff to draft an agreement to bring to their respective Boards for review.

Update on 2026 Greenways Plan and Process: Mike Brien presented to the Board the Greenways update for 2026 and where they currently are in the updating process.

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. Mike Brien let the Board know that they are beginning their prescribed burning season and that the bids for the Natural Resource shop will be put out into the public on Monday, October 27th.

Golf Operations – Vaughn Stamm, Rich Rosenstiel, Tyler Knapp, and Mark Freiman submitted a written report. Vaughn let the Board know that Macktown Golf Courses last day of play was on October 19th, and that Ledges Golf Course’s last day of play is November 3rd.

Communications Coordinator – Sarah Lorenz submitted a written report.

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

Human Resources – Jody Kennay submitted a written report. Jerry Paulson asked Jody Kennay to provide an update as to the compensation study that’s being conducted.

Partner Groups – Alex Mills clarified to the Board that the agreement between Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden and the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County is an operating agreement. Mike Eickman provided the Board with an update for Sand Bluff Birds Observatory and the Bird Banding that is currently taking place.

CLOSED SESSION

At 6:32 Gloria Lind made a motion to go into closed session to discuss land acquisition. Emily Porter made a motion to go back into open session at 7:37 PM. No action was taken while in closed session.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Ordinance and Purchase Contract of +/- 88 Acres along Sugar River – Jeff Tilly presented to the Board the ordinance to approve the purchase of 88 acres along the Sugar River. Jerry Paulson made a motion to approve the ordinance and purchase contract of +/- 88 acres along the Sugar River. **Roll Call Vote Taken. Motion passed unanimously.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS

1. October – November - Bird Banding at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory starting at 8:00am

2. November 6 – Managing Woody Invasive Plants: Fall Classroom Edition with Illinois Extension at Headquarters Forest Preserve starting at 6:00pm.
3. November 7th – 9th - Lincoln & Liberty at Macktown Living History.

Emily Porter had let the Board know that she has had numerous patrons ask if portable water be accessible on certain Forest Preserves.

ADJOURNMENT

Cheryl Maggio made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM; **motion passed unanimously.**

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Emily Wendlandt
Recording Secretary