

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
BOARD MEETING
Forest Preserve Headquarters
May 20, 2026

PRESENT

Judy Barnard
Mike Eickman
Gloria Lind
Cheryl Maggio - Absent
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
Emily Wendlandt, Board Recording Secretary

GUESTS

Craig Campbell Alex Mills Eve Kirk Jan Pausteck
Verna Schubert Ann Wasser

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 PM, by President Jeff Tilly.

ROLL CALL Recording secretary Emily Wendlandt called the roll.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Gloria Lind made a motion to approve of the meeting minutes from April 15, 2026 seconded by Judy Barnard. **Motion passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Craig Campbell spoke to the Board on behalf of the data center being proposed in Rockford. Campbell thanked Daniel Olson for speaking at the most recent city council meeting and implored the Board to reach out to city officials regarding the alleged data center.

NEW BUSINESS

Judy Barnard discussed with the Board the idea of creating a storm damage fund, after visiting several preserves with excessive damage. Jeff Tilly mentioned the Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network that specializes in disaster relief, which himself and Dan are looking to attend their next upcoming meeting. Judy Barnard also suggested that the Board schedule a Board tour to visit.

Finance Reports – Steve Chapman presented to the Board the Finance Reports.

ACTION ITEMS

Bills for April - Steve Chapman presented to the Board the bills for April. Mike Eickman made a motion to authorize the payment of the bills for April in the amount of \$1,062,233.07 seconded by Judy Barnard. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Amendment to Sugar River Adventures License Agreement – Daniel Olson presented to the Board the resolution to amend the Sugar River Adventures license agreement. Gloria Lind made a motion to approve of the resolution, seconded by Jerry Paulson. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Employee Handbook – Jody Kennay presented to the Board the resolution to approve the employee handbook. Judy Barnard made a motion to approve of the handbook, seconded by Mike Eickman
Roll call vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Reallocation of Klehm Gazebo Money – Alex Mills presented to the Board the resolution to approve the reallocation of funds from the Klehm Gazebo to the Kid’s Creek and Splash Pad installation. Judy Barnard made a motion to approve of the resolution, seconded by Jerry Paulson. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Judy Barnard requested that Daniel Olson write a thank you letter to all of the staff at Klehm Arboretum who have been working on the renovation projects.

DISCUSSION

South Rockford TIF Redevelopment – Jeff Tilly reminded the Board of the public hearing that Daniel Olson had attended and announced that the meeting for the continuation of public comment will be held tomorrow. Judy Barnard suggested that Daniel Olson add the letter that he presented at the public hearing to the FPWC website, so the public knows where the agency stands.

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 Abigail Ponders 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.

Alex Mills from Klehm Arboretum spoke about the Mother’s Day event that was held.

Mike Eickman announces that this weekend is their last weekend for bird banding at Sand Bluffs until the Fall.

CLOSED SESSION

At 6:30 PM Gloria Lind made a motion to go into closed session to discuss land acquisition and the approval of meeting minutes. At 7:20 PM the meeting returned to open session. No action was taken while in closed session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS

1. June 6 & 7 – Garden Fair at Klehm Arboretum.
2. June 6 – Seth B. Atwood Crosstown Classic at Ledges Golf Course.
3. June 7 – Seth B. Atwood Crosstown Classic at Atwood Golf Course.
4. June 13 – Hooked on Fun Kid’s Fishing Derby at Four Lakes Forest Preserve 9:00 – 11:00am.

ACTION ITEMS CONTINUED

1. Consent Agenda

Emily Porter made a motion to approve of the following meeting minutes, seconded by Mike Eickman: January 18, 2017, March 15, 2017, April 19, 2017 – Fiddis property (land acquisition), April 19, 2017 – Eckburg property (land acquisition), April 19, 2017 – Stone Bridge property (land acquisition), May 16,

2017, July 19, 2017, February 17, 2016, March 16, 2016, May 18, 2016, July 20, 2016 – Land Acquisition, July 20, 2016 – Personnel, September 21, 2016, November 16, 2016, December 21, 2016. **Motion Passed. Jerry Paulson abstained.**

Approval of Closed Session Meeting Minutes (Tabled from April Meeting) – Emily Porter made a motion to amend the resolution to keep closed the following minutes: March 15, 2017, April 19, 2016-personnel and May 16, 2017, seconded by Judy Barnard: **Motion passed unanimously.** Judy Barnard made a motion to approve of the resolution as amended, seconded by Mike Eickman. **Motion pass unanimously.**

Approval of Closed Session Meeting Minutes– Jerry Paulson made a motion to approve of the resolution, seconded by Emily Porter. **Motion passed unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT

Judy Barnard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m. Emily Porter seconded; **motion passed unanimously.**

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Emily Wendlandt
Recording Secretary