



REGULAR BOARD MEETING
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF PALATINE PARK DISTRICT
Village of Palatine, 200 East Wood Street in Palatine
Second Floor- Village Room B
July 28, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

These minutes are not a verbatim record of what was said during the meeting

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Ruff

Commissioners Present

Terry Ruff, President

Greg Sammons, Vice-President

Susan Gould

Joe Petricca

Jennifer Rogers

Commissioners Absent

Staff Present

Benjamin Rea, Executive Director

Andrea Fisher, Park Board Treasurer/Director of Finance

Lisa Allie, Park Board Secretary/Executive Assistant

Sonia Austin, Superintendent of Finance

Dayell Houzenga, Superintendent of District Services

Jim Holder, Director of Parks & Planning

Amy Vito, Superintendent of Parks

Colleen Palmer, Director of Recreation & Facilities

Josh Ludolph, Supt. of Recreation Facilities

Katie Waszak, Supt. of Recreation Programming

Visitors and Citizens Present

Joseph McArthur, Resident

Jeni Hukta, Resident

Jennifer Giuliano, Resident

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Rogers moved, and Commissioner Sammons seconded that the agenda be approved. By a roll call vote, the agenda for the regular meeting of July 28, 2025, was approved. The result of the roll call vote follows:

AYE: Greg Sammons, Joe Petricca, Susan Gould, Jennifer Rogers, Terry Ruff

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The Board reviewed the previously distributed items posted on the consent agenda. Commissioner Sammons moved, and Commissioner Petricca seconded that the consent agenda be approved as presented. By a roll call vote, the following items on the consent agenda were approved: Regular Meeting Minutes of July 14, 2025 and Executive Session Minutes of July 14, 2025. The motion was approved by a roll call vote; the result follows:

AYE: Joe Petricca, Susan Gould, Jennifer Rogers, Greg Sammons, Terry Ruff

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

Visitors and Citizens' Comments

Jennifer Giuliano: Shared her concern about an issue at Eagle Pool; there is a metal trim strip at the pool entrance, which becomes extremely hot and has burnt the feet of her two granddaughters, one of whom had blood on her toes the day after swimming. Ms. Giuliano mentioned the issue to staff at the pool, and they suggested splashing water on the metal, which isn't practical since you must step on it to get into the pool. She wanted to bring it to someone's attention because it's dangerous, especially for children and something needs to be done. Director Holder said that this is the first he is hearing of it and will have his staff look into it.

Joseph McArthur: Resides on lot 20 in a Rolling Meadows subdivision and is here concerning a Water Restoration Project for Structure Number 2, which the Palatine Park District has corporate boundaries on. In addition to a 1981 maintenance and operations contract, the Palatine Park District sponsored MWRD to maintain the original grading plans of the structure. However, the City of Rolling Meadows made changes to Special Condition #5 of the permitting that says flood storage shall be maintained by all owners. That means it is mandatory for him to preserve the structure and not build upon it. Mr. McArthur also mentioned that he pays taxes on the maintenance and operations contract to Palatine Park District and MWRD. After 11 months of sending emails to MWRD, the Executive Director came to his house and rerouted an outfall into the channel, which needs to be permanently corrected, but he's still waiting for a resolution from MWRD. There is also an outfall on lot 19 that the city of Rolling Meadows installed during the 2019 reconfiguration project. It's uncompensated, and there's no maintenance contract, so they expect him to maintain the drainage that they put onto a foreclosed home, which affects his property and turns his land into a wetland. It's supposed to be an existing shallow lake that's maintained and can be used. He has lived there for 28 years and used to have a paddle boat and fish. Mr. McArthur said that there are plenty of opportunities economically for him to increase the value of his home, but believes that there is a regulatory taking because the United States Army Corps of Engineers called his backyard a wetland fringe pond. He disagrees because they used his 2002 aerial picture with an edited red line and pretended that his backyard looks like 2002. He continued to explain that he submitted a FOIA request to MWRD for the topography feed survey, and the information he received shifts the maintenance burden to the City of Rolling Meadows because on page 14 of the maintenance operations contract, it gives the Village of Palatine and the City of Rolling Meadows the sediment and erosion ordinance control. He wanted to come here and introduce himself as he is trying to come up with a solution where, it gets resolved without litigation, but it seems like that's the route as of now because in a week the United States Army Corps of Engineers is going to lock themselves into potentially a flawed determination, because they did not follow the procedure of doing a boundary test on his property; they just labeled it a wetland fringe pond. Since the Palatine Park District is a sponsor on the contract, he should be included in the annual budget, which he doesn't believe any dollars have ever been spent on him, and that's why he's here.

Jeni Hukta: Lives at 11 E Russet Way, behind the bike path from Hamilton Reservoir, where they are having a problem with high-speed e-bikes and electric scooters. There used to be a sign saying no motorized vehicles were allowed, but those have been taken down and replaced with speed limit signs. She expressed concern about someone getting hurt on one of the bike paths and referenced an article in the Daily Herald that cited the Illinois Bike Association's recommendations, which suggest that shared paths should exclude e-bikes and electric scooters.

President Ruff explained that we put up the speed limit signs and that the Village of Palatine is currently working on this issue. They have recently announced that this is one of the next major items to resolve, so we are somewhat reliant on the village to come up with their own ordinance, and then once that ordinance is in place, the police department will be able to enforce it.

Department Reports

The Board reviewed the previously distributed written Finance Report. Director Fisher shared the following highlights from the June Financials: net profit, district-wide, across all the funds, we are showing a 33% increase over 2024. Most of that is driven by the property tax revenues that we've received so far, as well as the debt proceeds from market activity. The expense side was a little less in the Capital Projects Area. Looking at the Corporate Fund individually as a fund, we are showing an increase in that profit of 19%, which is on par with 2024 when excluding interfund transfers. The expenses are slightly lower due to Customer Service wages/benefits being moved to the recreation fund, and the IT purchase services are now allocated to individual facilities in the recreation fund. Looking at the recreation fund, the net profit is down about 25% compared to 2024. The revenues are also lower due to a shorter summer programming season this year and the absence of a lucrative late-summer sports camp that we offered last year. This was the result of the 2024 school schedule, which certainly had an impact. We are seeing a 12% increase on the expense side, and that's mainly from the customer service wages and benefits that are now living in the rec fund, as well as the IT services mentioned earlier. Commissioner Sammons asked if delays in Cook County tax bills would affect disbursement; a discussion ensued about problems caused by the delay.

The Park Board reviewed the previously distributed written District Services Department report. Superintendent Houzenga reported that the Performance Appraisal Task Force has figured out a more concise layout for the performance appraisal system going into next year. The last step is to add job-specific elements for each full-time position, and then they will be ready for the rollout. Another training for part-time staff was held in June, with 67 in-person attendees and an online format for those who couldn't attend live. We have well over 90% of all our staff having completed training. In HR & Safety, we had 323 applicants in June, mostly for marketing assistant and camp roles. There were 49 hires: 1 full-time, Gymnastics Coordinator, and the rest were part-time, mostly for camps. We also had Nancy Hoban join us as a part-time volunteer coordinator. The servers for the Community Center security cameras have been upgraded, and installation for the Falcon Park roadside sign will begin this week. We've had a slight decrease in the volume of phone calls over the past 6 months: 53,000 vs. 65,000 previously. The average is about 300 calls per day, mostly to the Community Center and Golf Pro Shop. Risk Management had just under 100 incidents in June, mostly from sports camps. This is a decrease from last year, which is most likely due to the shorter camp season. Communications & Marketing saw an increase in sponsors at Sounds of Summer; we had 10 this year compared to 6 last year. The Park Views newsletter had a 64% open rate, which is about 15,000 readers. The website traffic was also high, mostly for the Family Aquatic Center and Birchwood. Social media engagement was also strong across all summer programs and events.

The Board reviewed the previously distributed written Parks and Planning Report. Director Holder started with an update on Meadowlark; the contractor is still working on some punch list items to finish up. They also plan to replace the old wooden fence with vinyl fencing, which will be extended around the adventure course to keep kids from running out to the road; expect to start that in the fall. The grass growth has been slow due to the weather; plans to reseed in September. The contractor is working on closing regulatory permits with MWRD and the Village. We have the grant extension secured through October, and the final walkthrough with Hitchcock is scheduled for next week. They no longer come from Springfield for in-person inspections; it's now done through photos and a report. Hope to get that done next week, and then we can start the final grant, close out paperwork to get that done. The Falcon Park change order has been executed, and construction is still on track to begin in late August. Director Holder is trying to coordinate with the contractor for work to be done around the week of their summer closure. The special use permit for The Grove Playground was approved by the Rolling Meadows Zoning Board and City Council. We are just waiting for the permit approval, then we can get started with the concrete work. Kids Around the World will remove the Wally Degner playground the week of the 18th so fencing will go up on the 18th, and hopefully we'll start right after that. The Locust Tennis Court renovation project is completed and looks great.

The Board reviewed the previously distributed Recreation and Facilities report. Director Palmer echoed previous comments about the late start to summer, which began slowly due to delayed programming and uncooperative weather, especially affecting pool operations. However, once the weather improved, operations accelerated. Daily pool receipts increased by 3% and the total pool memberships were up 27% from last year, as of the end of June. Director Palmer mentioned a correction to the camp totals, which are a little higher than what is in her report. This year's totals are 2,248; that's still lower than last year, due to the late start that Andrea mentioned. We had a couple of additions to our sports camp. June also saw the start of our special events, theater camps and performances, Sounds of Summer Concerts, Swim meets, Story Time in the Park, Pop-In & Play events, Fishing Derby, with a lot more to come in July. We also welcomed Kelly, the new Gymnastics Coordinator, in June. CARE Registration totals for June are trending higher than previous years. Staff is working with the district to ensure that we have the space we need to accommodate everyone. We also had new sound systems installed at Birchwood and the Community Gymnastics Area. Director Palmer also shared that we typically experience lower indoor usage this time of year, but fitness center check-ins and membership sales were up from the past few months. In addition, in-person registration transactions were up, and drop-in services continued to perform well at all centers.

Executive Director Reports

Director Rea commended staff for their proactive efforts during the heat—across the parks, recreation, and facilities teams. From adjusting programming like athletics and special events, to canceling activities when needed, starting shifts earlier, bringing campers indoors, and increasing pool time, everyone has prioritized safety. Thank you for ensuring the well-being of both participants and event attendees.

Commissioner Reports/Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Gould appreciated the advanced cancellation notice for the Canine Carnival and is looking forward to the new date.

Commissioner Petricca Joe complimented Dan Hernandez on his innovation and the great job he's been doing.

Commissioner Rogers thanked staff for trimming the trees and bushes on the bike trail near Ashwood Park.

Executive Session

President Ruff requested a motion to close the public portion of the meeting and convene in Executive Session for Section 2(c)(11) discussion of pending or probable and imminent litigation against, affecting, or on behalf of the District; 2(c)(21) discussion of minutes of prior meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, for the purpose of review, approval, or release of such minutes. Commissioner Rogers moved and Commissioner Sammons seconded that the Board of Park Commissioners go into closed session for discussion of Executive Session Section 2(c)(11) discussion of pending or probable and imminent litigation against, affecting, or on behalf of the District; 2(c)(21) discussion of minutes of prior meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act. The motion was approved by a roll call vote; the result follows:

AYE: Susan Gould, Jennifer Rogers, Greg Sammons, Joe Petricca, Terry Ruff

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried at 6:32 p.m.

Return to Open Session

President Ruff entertained a motion to come out of closed session and resume the regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners. Commissioner Sammons moved, and Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by a voice vote as follows:

AYE: Jennifer Rogers, Greg Sammons, Joe Petricca, Susan Gould, Terry Ruff
NAY: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried at 6:45 p.m.

Action on Matters Considered in Closed Session

Regarding Section 2(c)(11) Open Meetings Act for discussion of pending or probable and imminent litigation against, affecting, or on behalf of the District; President Ruff said that there is no action at this time.

Regarding Section 2(c)(21) Open Meetings Act for discussion of minutes of prior meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, for the purpose of review, approval, or release of such minutes. Commissioner Sammons motioned, and Commissioner Petricca seconded that the Board of Park Commissioners approve Resolution #25-08; Determining the Confidentiality of closed session minutes. The motion was approved by a roll call vote as follows:

AYE: Greg Sammons, Joe Petricca, Susan Gould, Jennifer Rogers, Terry Ruff
NAY: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Park Board on this date, Commissioner Rogers moved that the regular meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Sammons seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by a voice vote as follows:

AYE: Joe Petricca, Susan Gould, Jennifer Rogers, Greg Sammons, Terry Ruff
NAY: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Allie
Park Board Secretary

Attest:



Lisa Allie
Secretary

Approved:



Terry Ruff
President

2025 Park Board Meetings	
August 25, 2025	October 27, 2025
September 8, 2025	November 10, 2025
September 22, 2025	November 24, 2025
October 13, 2025	December 8, 2025