

**LA PORTE PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
BOARD MINUTES
DECEMBER 20, 2023**

The meeting was called to order by President Mitch Felkes who also led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Also attending were Karen Ellison, Denise Bealor, Jake Heulat, Nicole Messacar, Mark Schreiber, Pam Carroll, Kyle Cashmer, Brett Binversie, Karyl Felkes and Roberta Mumaw.

RECOGNITIONS

Mark Schreiber informed the board that Joe Ault will be moving to Michigan City and will be leaving the board. He will remain with the board until a replacement has been found.

Mark Schreiber introduced and asked the board to approve the hiring of Sam Back as the new Recreation Director. Sam stated he was born and raised in North Judson. He is a graduate of Valparaiso University with a degree in Sports Management. While attending college Sam worked closely with the men's basketball team, the ticket office, communications department and athletic department and equipment room. Sam stated he is very excited to begin his new position. The motion to approve Sam Back as the new Recreation Director was unanimously approved on a motion by Denise Bealor, seconded by Nicole Messacar.

MINUTES

The minutes from the previous month's meeting were unanimously approved on a motion by Jake Heulat, seconded by Nicole Messacar.

BILLS AND CLAIMS

The bills and claims in the amount of \$250,164.84 were unanimously approved on a motion by Karen Ellison, seconded by Denise Bealor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

SUB-COMMITTEE

Denise Bealor updated the Board on the recent meeting of the Activity Center for Older Adults. The first meeting was an introductory meeting as well as discussed, the purpose of the committee. The purpose will be to establish a code of ethics and policies for the center. The next meeting will be January 23.

Mark Schreiber stated that the committee will be meeting in January to further discuss security cameras in the parks. The committee will be deciding what areas will be getting cameras and possibly deciding on a vendor.

OLD BUSINESS

Mark Schreiber has discussed the Build Operate Transfer Model process with a local contractor to get a feel on the process from the contractor's perspective.

Mark Schreiber is still working on the additional ball diamonds at Kesling Park. The fieldwork and fencing will be approximately \$262,000. The parking area is still something that needs to be worked out and how the funding will be raised. There are several grant options that are being looked at.

Kyle Cashmer discussed the Beechwood Mast Plan Project with the Board. There were 2 public meetings held with a great public turnout for both meetings. Very favorable comments with a few questions. The map will be included in the minutes. Phase #1, which is known as Beechwood Lakes, current #6 would become new #13, adjustments to current #7 and expand the pond. This could be completed in the summer of 2024. Phase #2 would be to construct a practice facility, shorten #10 and lengthen current #12. This phase could potentially begin in 2025. The final project would see the course basically flipped, with the back 9 becoming the front 9.

Mark Schreiber stated that requests for proposals were sent out by the City Planner to develop Beechwood Lakes. Developers would develop the Beechwood Lakes residential portion and with that they would agree to do the first 2 phases of the golf course. It was also stated that the current driving range, which is technically a wetland, could potentially be enhanced. A motion to approve the Beechwood Master Plan was made by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Jake Heulat. Kyle Cashmer stated that with the improvements, there would be no down time for course play. The motion was approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Mark Schreiber requested board approval to extend Kyle Cashmers contract through 2024. The motion to approve the 10th amendment to Kyle Cashmers contract was unanimously approved on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Jake Heulat.

The Civic guest/building policy has been tabled until the January meeting.

Mark Schreiber requested permission from the board to dispose of 2 snowplows that are no longer in working condition as well as 3 kilns. The motion to approve the equipment disposal was unanimously approved on a motion by Denise Bealor, seconded by Nicole Messacar.

Pam Carroll requested permission from the board to approve the attached list of give back nights that will benefit several of our programs. The motion to approve the attached giveback nights was unanimously approved on a motion by Karen Ellison, seconded by Denise Bealor.

Brett Binversie has had a request from the Culinary Arts Program and the Kiwanis Club to use the kitchen area at the Civic Auditorium at no charge. This would be to offer a cooking class to children with sensory issues. The class will be held on Tuesdays for 6 weeks. Each class would be for 1.5 hours and will be offered free of charge to those interested. The group would be required to clean the kitchen after the class. This would be for this first class only unless approval from the Park Board is requested. The motion to approve the free use of the kitchen was unanimously approved on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Karen Ellison.

BOARD MEMBER/DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

Mark Schreiber has informed the Board that the beavers in the Hennessy Wetlands area are very active and have taken down several trees. Mark has spoken with the DNR, they do not do beaver removal, however they did offer some useful information on how to proceed. Mark has spoken with Jeremy Sobecki who is the Superintendent of La Porte County parks and has formerly worked for DNR. The decision needs to be made to have them removed or to have them removed and relocated. Nicole Messacar stated beavers are very territorial and relocating them would have the same result as removal. A motion was made by Karen Ellison, seconded by Jake Heulat to allow Mark Schreiber to remove the beavers from the Hennessy area and to decide how it is done. The motion passed unanimously.

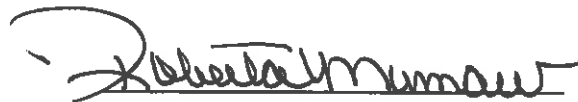
Mark Schreiber wanted to inform the Board that at the last City Council there was a local resident that expressed concern with the cost of dock rental. Our 2 concessionaires on Pine and Stone Lakes have been given board approval to charge market value for the dock rentals.

Upcoming Civic Events include The Christmas Wizards on December 22, Escape a Journey Tribute band on December 29 and the La Porte Invitational January 4-6.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Jake Heulat, seconded by Nicole Messacar.



Mitch Feikes, President
Jake Heulat



Roberta Murnaw, Secretary

Approved: 1-17-24