

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS AT 5:00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2024 HELD AT THE BONNIE NOBLE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1125 WEST LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA IL**

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Trustees Timothy Bertschy, Laurie Covington, Joyce Harant, Reagan Leslie Hill, Steve Montez, Vice President Alexander Sierra, and President Robert Johnson

**TRUSTEES ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Executive Director Emily Cahill, Nick Conrad, Matt Freeman, Becky Fredrickson, Scott Loftus, Shalesse Pie, Karrie Ross, Brianna Cobb, Jenny Swanson, Attorney William Streeter, Attorney Kevin Day, Michael Dixson, Becky Fredrickson, David Gray, Chief Todd Green, Chanel Hargrave-Murry, Willie Howe, Melinda Huett, Susie Ingram, Jacob Kuban, Jess Main, Matt Majors, Angela Martiens, Jonelle McCloud, Christina Mitchell, Edward Spencer, Jake Rockhold, Kristi Shoemaker, Melissa Sierra, Nicole Staley, Max Lakes, Greg Walker, Sue Wheeler, and Alicia Woodworth.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

President Johnson presided and called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**3. MOTION TO PERMIT TRUSTEE TO ATTEND MEETING ELECTRONICALLY**

No request to attend meeting electronically was received.

**4. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**5. MINUTES**

No minutes were presented at this time.

**6. STAFF REPORTS**

None at this time.

**7. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No committee reports were presented at this time.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**8.A. 2024 Tax Levy Estimate for 2025 Budget**

Karrie Ross stated that in compliance with the Truth in Taxation Act, the Board of Trustees is required to determine (estimate) the amount of its proposed aggregate levy not less than 20 days before the adoption of the levy ordinance. This is required in order to decide if the proposed aggregate levy, excluding the bond and interest levy, is more than a 5% increase over the amount of the previous year's extension. If the increase is more than 5%, a notice is required to be published and a public hearing must be conducted prior to the adoption of the proposed levy. As such, staff recommends Park Board approval of the 2024 aggregate tax levy estimate. This is an estimated aggregate levy increase of 4.99%; therefore, the notice and public hearing

requirements do not apply. The tax levy will be presented to the Board for approval after the Board's approval of the 2025 Operating Budget.

Vice President Sierra MOVED TO APPROVE the 2024 Tax Levy Estimate for the 2025 Budget. Motion seconded by Trustee Covington and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustees Bertschy, Covington, Harant, Hill, Montez, Vice President Sierra, and President Johnson. (Results: 7 Ayes; 0 Abstain; 0 Nays)

**8.B. 2025 Budget Presentation**

Executive Director Cahill welcomed everyone and stated that as we prepared for tonight, we have talked off and on about how the election might impact the mood in the room, how we present or what we say. I woke up today with a strong pull to say clearly and loudly that it doesn't change a thing. Regardless of how we frame it, our work remains the same. Our place and purpose in the communities we serve is not grounded in politics, but rather in people. We work every day to ensure that our spaces and places are consistently and clearly welcoming and accessible to all people. We are unwavering in our commitment to making our community a healthier and more vibrant place to live work and play. It is about advocating for sustainable, safe places for people, plants and animals to do more than survive, but to thrive. Simply put, our places and programs are for everybody and that can't and won't change. We woke up today as the same group of passionate people focused on our park district impact as we were yesterday and we look forward to making progress together tonight as we grow our shared understanding of our work and in the future as we make progress on our shared goals. We are all blessed to be a part of an organization that is in good financial health and that is having impact on our communities.

Karrie Ross stated that tonight, we have two specific goals: First, we hope to showcase the intentional ways that we operate on a daily, weekly, monthly, and annual basis to make the District better in every task we complete and every strategy we employ. Are we perfect? Most definitely not. Do we try our best to honor the 130-year history of this place in every step that we take? Most definitely yes. It is an expectation of this team that we continue to evolve and learn from our mistakes, because with the volume that we manage and the pace that we keep, it's impossible to achieve perfection. In fact, we often find that our greatest strides come from our biggest mess-ups, which is a hallmark of our resilience and drive. Next, we will work to showcase our achievements from 2024 and our goals for 2025. We, along with relevant staff, will share the foundations for our proposals tied to our commitment documents which we will talk more about as we proceed.

Brianna Cobb stated that as approved by this Board of Trustees, our organizational mission stands as a north star for all of our work and our commitment to contribute to healthy and vibrant communities by responsibly using our resources to offer high quality parks, recreation, and education experiences to those who live, work, or play in our District. Please note that when we say that, we mean clearly that our parks, recreation, and education experiences are for ALL people who live, work or play with us.

Executive Director Cahill stated that as 2024 ends, we look a little different than we have in past years. We are a little older, though we look pretty great for having celebrated our 130th birthday this year; our leadership looks a little different as we have said goodbye to old friends who made great impact and we have welcomed new faces who inspire and drive us in new ways daily. As 2025 quickly approaches, we are all, old and new and those in between, are proud to celebrate

our work and to recognize the opportunities that are within our reach as we continue to take steps toward that north star, which drives us to grow and change.

Matt Freeman stated that if the Board recalls, last year we talked about the superpowers of our organization. Strength and speed, flexibility, even shape shifting are super powers used regularly by our team to meet the evolving needs of our changing community. But without purpose and structure, super powers can be a liability. You can move too fast and get ahead of yourself. You can try to please everyone and wind up making everyone mad. You can be inconsistent and unreliable when you shift too often. As we tried to think about the message we wanted to share that provides context to everything that we present here, we thought about what makes us who we are.

Executive Director Cahill stated that as we built out a plan for this year's presentation, we looked back before looking forward. We thought about our January 2024 presentation to the Illinois Association of Park Districts where we highlighted our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility and how the pillars included in that document have provided a strong foundation for our work and shown quantifiable results. We thought about the application of our guiding principles and our policy to several challenges that we've faced this year and how they have led us to consistent, clear communications. We thought about the intentional efforts made by staff to bring our first fully electric vehicle to the District even though it would have been easier to just buy another big van for hauling stuff. And we thought about Park A Palooza and Founders Day and Earth Day and ZooTober and Streets Belong to Me and World Wide Day of Play and every one of our cultural festivals and we remembered the little boy who drank so much root beer at Soda Popalooza that he smelled like root beer long after his last taste. We saw the smiles of the kids who got backpacks in Trewyn Park and heard the giggles of kids who had eaten too much candy at HowlZooWeen. we thought about the little kids dancing outside the new shelter at Forest Park Nature Center to Safari Joe's singing and remembered when our floating lanterns didn't glide across the lagoon like we'd planned and our quick-thinking Miles Howley used the PPD drone to make them go and is a sight we won't soon forget. We also reflected on the great governance impact made by our board this year. Do you remember the single meeting where with your leadership, the District approved a lease to support 22VA's use of the Detweiller Riverside clubhouse, an agreement to work with renowned zoo designer Ace Torre to guide next steps in Zoo renovations, accepted a bid to begin construction of the Golf Learning Center, and approved a memorandum of understanding that will push forward a revitalized East Bluff Community Center. You have also approved multiple policy changes and handled several sensitive topics. All of those things didn't happen haphazardly or without purpose. They happened because of intentional application of our three Commitments. To Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility. To Environmental Sustainability. To Vibrancy. Those commitment documents prioritize our work and are home to multiple philosophies that guide our tasks.

Scott Loftus stated that tonight, we focus on philosophies that consistently guide our work. In the ancient world, stories of gods, heroes, and epic quests were not just tales of the past—they were reflections of human nature, aspirations, and the very essence of civilization, guiding ancient societies in their actions and beliefs. As we reflect on our own journey and the considerations that shape our own District "civilization", Greek myths and philosophy provide some parallels that help us to share our own guiding principles and the ideas that grow from them to shape the work of our organization.

Becky Fredrickson stated that accepted by the Board of Trustees in February 2023, our Implementation Guiding Principles provide a process for how we look at everything from public-private partnership opportunities to creation of new park amenities and experiences. These Guiding Principles, along with the District's three Commitments focused on Vibrancy, Environmental Sustainability, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility drive how the District prioritizes our work, both in our daily tasks and in our long-term strategies. Each of these documents is available for public review online at the Park District's website.

Nick Conrad stated that using these Commitments, the District believes that it is uniquely positioned to support community initiatives around DEIA, health and wellness, vibrancy, and violence prevention in ways that only a park district is able to connect with people. To achieve that end, the District will continue to focus on program grant award solicitation, fundraising, and development to diversify its funding sources and make the organization more adaptable to changing external forces.

Jenny Swanson stated that in addition to providing focus for both our annual strategic plan and our five-year capital improvement plan, the District's Commitments also provide structure to the organization of our best asset, our people. As you can see from the high-level organizational chart, leadership has tried to group focus areas to allow experts to be experts in their field of knowledge and support efforts across the District, rather than in silos. Note, a complete organizational chart can be found on pages 125-141 of the budget book/document.

Matt Freeman stated that our team relies on several foundational focuses when we build a plan, as we have here. Our budget process, which begins annually in late July, is built upon the following: First, Institutional knowledge and expertise: The District is fortunate to have a leadership team made up of many longtenured staff who are leaders in the region and beyond in their respective fields. These experts are well-versed in the daily operations of their programs or places, while also being willing to consider new ways to do business when necessary. This knowledge, combined with an unwavering commitment to community, is the backbone for our work to ensure that programming is available and accessible in the face of barriers. This commitment shows in both the fees and charges schedule that was shared for review as part of our pre-presentation discussions and in our bond issue proposal, which was reviewed at last month's meeting.

Scott Loftus stated that further, it has to be honored that much of what the District is able to offer to our communities is for free and where it isn't, the District's scholarship program is leaps and bounds beyond those found in other districts and helps to ensure access for all. This commitment does result in increased subsidies in some locations and programs, but we know that both our staff and our trustees believe that this is essential if we are to continue to impact the vibrancy and vitality of the community we serve.

Karrie Ross stated that next, Realistic revenue projections and responsible expense controls. While this budget does plan for some modest growth in staffing levels, this budget prioritizes being competitive in a challenging labor market. And last, but certainly not least, this budget promotes both efficiency and effectiveness. Our team has learned a lot in the last few years about ways to use staff and program resources to their fullest. Investment in technology and in our workforce capacity highlight this emphasis.

Executive Director Cahill provided an overview of how the presentation will work: Staff will provide a district wide overview which will provide data about the overall organizational position and highlight 2024 achievements and 2025 goals. Then, staff will spend time on a fund level, taking a look at our philosophies and how they apply to action, along with some key financial metrics to consider. At the close of each overview, staff will pause for questions, but please feel free stop if you have questions in the middle of a section.

Shalesse Pie provided an example of how we make the connection between Greek philosophy and Park District philosophy: In the myth of the Trojan War, the Greeks were unable to breach the walls of Troy after ten long years of battle. Ulysses devised the idea of building a large wooden horse to hide Greek soldiers inside, which was presented to the Trojans as a gift. This gift was framed as an offering to the gods, playing on the Trojans' religious beliefs. The Trojans, believing the war to be over and interpreting the horse as a sign of their victory, brought it within their city walls.

Brianna Cobb stated that the point of that story is the collaborative nature of the scheme: The ingenuity of Ulysses represents the innovative and strategic thinking necessary to make a partnership successful. He also brought a spark of innovation to the challenge. The Greeks brought their collective expertise, that of their soldiers, craftsmen, and leaders to provide resources and to execute the idea. The myth ends with the idea that their plan succeeded because it was aligned with divine favor. The Greeks prayed to the gods for success, and many versions of the myth imply that the gods guided their actions. In this sense, the gods acted as external supporters of a higher shared goal focused on community and civic prosperity.

Jake Rockhold stated that just as the Greeks combined their forces and innovation with the support of the gods to win the Trojan War, successful collaboration both internally and externally at the Peoria Park District blends creativity and innovation with resources and infrastructure to achieve something greater than either group could on their own. In action, partnerships help us to not only do more with less, but they also help us to find pride in our work and share the vibrant energy that comes with positive impact. Our team works long and sometimes strange hours, but true collaboration means that we don't do this on our own. Depending on the event, there are always different partners who stand alongside us as we plan, implement, and clean up after an event. They bring new ideas and sometimes long-standing tradition and pride that inspires both our District staff and those volunteers to always give our best and gives us energy at the end of long weekends and seasons. These partners can come from both in and out of our organization depending on the event, but they always bring a shared commitment to providing quality experiences for our patrons. We also have a loyal volunteer base that supports us regardless of the event or location. In the first nine months of 2024, we have received more than 4100 hours of support from this group of committed, talented people. We appreciate their generosity of time, which is often the hardest things to give, and want to say thank you to them here tonight.

Chanel Hargrave-Murry stated that when staff plans for signature events, we rely upon the expertise of our events team and programmers to build out a vibrant plan, but only with the support of our parks and maintenance and repair crews who help with set up and tear down, our police and security teams who help ensure the safety of our staff and patrons throughout, and our staff family who volunteer their time in support of our mission, are we able to achieve the results we hope for. We also benefit from external partnerships. Our collaboration with the Peoria Fire Department for our annual Fill the Fire Truck backpack drive has grown year over year and we

have built relationships that serve us throughout the year outside of the event planning process. In addition to supporting each other's causes, we have also helped to prepare cadets for hire by helping with mock interviews. Partnerships with cultural organizations and volunteer-led committees that support our many cultural festivals and with the NAACP and Advocates for Access, among others as we prioritize our DEIA work, are shining proof that we are better when we work together. We reach farther, serve more, and achieve greater, more long-lasting impact.

Nick Conrad stated that in support of these and other efforts, our staff continues to evolve and improve our internal communication and collaboration processes as well. Beginning in September, we shifted our working group structure to meet more regularly in smaller groups organized by facility or program type. This has allowed us to prioritize access of programmers and planners to executive leadership and empower them in their roles. At each meeting, we talk about measurable goals, strategy, and financial support and targets. This helps us connect dots between efforts to maximize collaboration and reduce competition, with the goal of moving us closer to the goals set forth in our commitment and strategic plan documents.

Jenny Swanson stated that founded in 1894, our Peoria Park District was the first park district formed in the state. Throughout our many years of service, we have remained focused on our mission to contribute to healthy and vibrant communities by responsibly using our resources to offer high quality parks, recreation, and education experiences to those who live, work, or play in our District. This mission-driven focus is clear when our nearly 122,000 residents and many others from the region visit our 9,000 acres of spaces and places which range from open green space to manicured parks to a state-of-the-art fitness center, a multi-sheet ice center, multiple rec centers that serve as the heartbeat of the communities they serve, as well as a zoo, a children's museum and a botanical garden, all located in one park space.

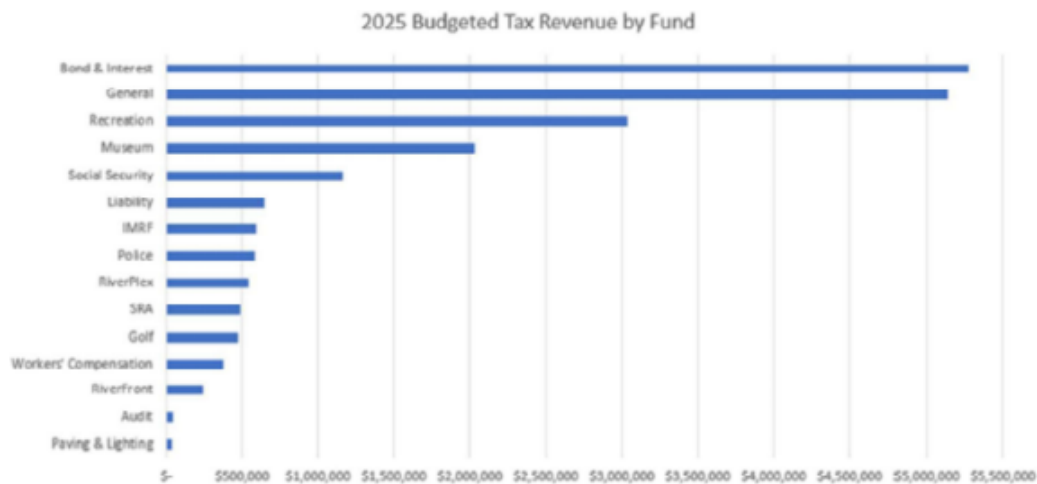
Becky Fredrickson stated that while we have highlighted the volume and variety of opportunities and assets within our spaces and places, especially for a District of this size, it is important to our ongoing improvement that we also establish targets for quality and quantity that allow us to offer the best variety of supports that tie back to our commitments and are mission-driven. If we are to be sustainable and successful, we must work together to implement data-driven evaluation and best practice efforts that are taken from both the public and private sectors focused on being our best selves. And while these data points should not and cannot be all financially focused, tonight, we will be spending the bulk of our time talking about the impact of our priorities and philosophies on our financial position.

**TOTAL REVENUES BY SOURCE**

|                                  | 2023 Actual      | 2024 Budget      | 2024 Revised     | 2025 Budget      |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Fees, Charges &amp; Other</b> | \$ 14,304,814    | \$ 13,448,191    | \$ 14,406,060    | \$ 14,782,117    |
| <b>Operating Fund Taxes</b>      | 14,500,190       | 11,499,115       | 12,283,785       | 12,039,340       |
| <b>Donations &amp; Grants</b>    | <u>4,156,051</u> | <u>6,913,176</u> | <u>5,271,953</u> | <u>4,482,750</u> |
| <b>Revenue Subtotal</b>          | \$ 32,961,055    | \$ 31,860,482    | \$ 31,961,798    | \$ 31,304,207    |
| <b>Non Operating Fund Taxes</b>  | 7,859,522        | 8,308,725        | 8,202,156        | 8,621,723        |
| <b>Over Reserve Projects</b>     | 9,935            | -                | 1,422,051        | 1,000,000        |
| <b>Internal Reimbursements</b>   | <u>7,188,771</u> | <u>8,049,515</u> | <u>7,579,406</u> | <u>8,278,543</u> |
| <b>Total Revenues</b>            | \$ 48,019,283    | \$ 48,218,722    | \$ 49,165,411    | \$ 49,204,473    |

Karrie Ross stated that District operating funds’ revenue is largely comprised of operating revenues (fees & charges revenue and operating grant/donor revenue) and nonoperating revenues (taxes and capital grants). Last year, the District was able to surpass pre-pandemic levels in fees and charges revenue, while continuing to secure grant/donor funds. In 2025, the District must remain focused on three key revenue sources to create success: 1) generating fees and charges revenue; 2) the ability to seek, secure and administer grant revenue; and 3) prudent management of tax revenue.

Scott Loftus stated that the chart shown here reflects the District’s revenues by source. In 2023, the District received record breaking replacement tax revenue, which was the primary reason the District’s operating fund balances grew. This heightened distribution of replacement tax was due to a distribution formula error at the State level. The State has since adjusted the formula and ratcheted back distributions. Because the District did not budget to rely on the irregularly high replacement tax revenue, there are no operating contractions needed for the lower, more normalized, 2025 replacement tax revenue projection. Additionally, given the strong fees and charges growth of 2023 and 2024, staff is strategically working to continue that trend into 2025, with a 3% growth target.



Matt Freeman stated that the District continues to tax at or just under the maximum levy rate in its primary operating funds, and is therefore reliant on EAV increases to increase property tax revenue. The District has benefited from EAV increases in the last three years, and for 2025 is budgeting on an estimated increase of 6%. This increase will put the EAV valuation at \$2.45 billion, and will be a record high valuation for the District. The strong housing market of 2022, and the continued demand for housing in 2023 are significant drivers of this increase.

Karrie Ross stated that while the EAV growth has allowed the District to sustain operations, the District will continue to remain vigilant in its pursuit to diversify revenue streams. Though the District is using a 6% EAV increase for its 2025 budget, it is not utilizing that full 6% increase in all levies. Given high replacement tax revenues in fiscal years 2022 and 2023, the health of the District's funds is strong, and the District believes it's important to temper the property tax levy demand passed to residents. For all levies, except the bond and interest levy, the District is projecting a 4.99% increase. When factoring the bond and interest levy, the estimated total aggregate 2024 levy rate, which funds 2025 tax revenues is .77706. For an owner occupied home valued at \$200,000, that's an increase of \$9.77 (\$461.64 to \$471.42). In addition to property taxes, as noted previously, the District receives Personal Property Replacement Tax revenue from the State and the level of this revenue source can vary significantly from year to year. In 2025, the District is projecting \$2.4 million of replacement tax, a level that is in line with historical averages, not the 2022 and 2023 record highs associated with the State formula error. The chart shown here reflects the 2025 budgeted allocation for all tax revenues by fund.

Shalesse Pie stated that the chart shown here outlines the District's expenses (excluding Bonded Project Fund) by fund for 2023 through 2025's proposed budget. As noted earlier, the District continues to face many challenges relative to the labor market and managing wage expenses. Because the District's operations are heavily reliant on personnel, wages and benefits are the District's largest expense, which means increases in labor expenses is one of the quickest and most material ways the District encounters financial stress, if not prudently managed.

| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES BY SOURCE</b> |                      |                      |                      |                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|                                 | <b>2023 Actual</b>   | <b>2024 Budget</b>   | <b>2024 Revised</b>  | <b>2025 Budget</b>   |
| <b>Wages</b>                    | \$ 13,732,514        | \$ 15,357,245        | \$ 14,504,548        | \$ 15,888,033        |
| <b>Employee Benefits</b>        | 4,594,185            | 5,432,700            | 5,169,303            | 6,102,365            |
| <b>Utilities</b>                | 1,901,374            | 1,845,271            | 1,832,818            | 1,905,359            |
| <b>Contractual Services</b>     | 3,593,863            | 3,119,986            | 3,479,164            | 3,943,669            |
| <b>Supplies &amp; Equipment</b> | 4,799,357            | 3,638,751            | 4,149,205            | 3,803,362            |
| <b>Other</b>                    | 345,289              | 359,827              | 369,326              | 381,779              |
| <b>Expense Subtotal</b>         | <u>\$ 28,966,582</u> | <u>\$ 29,753,780</u> | <u>\$ 29,504,364</u> | <u>\$ 32,024,567</u> |
| <b>Capital Projects</b>         | 1,835,272            | 5,167,093            | 4,416,915            | 3,500,000            |
| <b>Debt Service</b>             | 5,185,512            | 5,323,000            | 5,258,916            | 5,281,125            |
| <b>Internal Services</b>        | 7,188,771            | 8,049,515            | 7,579,406            | 8,278,543            |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>           | <u>\$ 43,176,137</u> | <u>\$ 48,293,388</u> | <u>\$ 46,759,601</u> | <u>\$ 49,084,235</u> |



Karrie Ross stated that in 2025, the District's wage and benefit expenses are projected to support 321 fulltime equivalents (158 fulltime + 163 part-time) and includes increases associated with the State minimum wage change to \$15, approximately 3.25% in fulltime cost of living adjustments, compliance with the projected January 1, 2025 FLSA salary exempt threshold, an increase of the District's IMRF employer contribution rate, and approximately a 10% increase in the District's health plan costs due primarily to the risk pool's loss history associated with rising prescription drug costs.

The tax levy increase along with modest growth in fees and charges revenues are projected to offset these personnel expense adjustments in 2025, and the District's responsible efforts to manage the ups and downs of our labor market since COVID has placed us in a relatively stable position. With regard to prudent management and stability, here's another example of philosophy guiding action ...

Scott Loftus stated that in the fable of the Ant and the Grasshopper, the Ant spends the summer diligently gathering and storing food, while the Grasshopper enjoys the warm days, playing and singing. When winter arrives, the Ant is well-prepared with enough resources to survive, while the Grasshopper finds itself in need, having failed to plan ahead. This story teaches us the value of foresight, wise resource management, and conservative budgeting. By carefully planning and allocating resources, we ensure that we are prepared for both the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Just as the Ant's diligence ensured its survival, our approach to budgeting and fiscal management safeguards the long-term stability and success of our organization.

Trustee Bertschy stated that it appears to him that expenses in 2025 as compared to the 2024 revised budget are increasing by almost 8%. As such, he would like to know how the District is going to fund that. The EAV has increased approximately 6% and levies are increased by 4.99%, will that generate sufficient funds to make up the increase in expenses? Karrie Ross stated that the property tax levy increase covers the biggest share of that and there are some increase for services revenue charges. Those two combined will primarily cover the increase. Trustee Bertschy stated that current year 2024, there's approximately a \$2.4M surplus correct? Karrie Ross stated yes. Trustee Bertschy asked what is the forecast for 2025? Karrie Ross stated that the 2025 budget presented is a net zero budget. Trustee Bertschy asked if the 2024 budget presentation predicted a surplus? It was net zero at that time correct? Karrie Ross stated that no, a surplus was not predicted in the 2024 budget and a net zero budget was presented. The Park District's Financial Policy for staff is that they must present to the Board a net zero budget.

Kevin Davis stated that conservative budgeting is not about being restrictive; it's about being responsible. In 2023, the District's Board of Trustees approved a Fund Balance and Reserve Policy that provides clear targets by fund for appropriate minimum reserve balances. Reserve balance targets are calculated by using annual budgeted expenditures to measure capacity to meet the needs of the District in a crisis and are determined through the application of criteria as outlined by the policy. The target for the General Fund is at least 50% of the annual budgeted expenditures. The Recreation, Golf, RiverFront, RiverPlex, Museum and Police Funds' targets are each 35%, and our Non-Operating Funds, except HISRA and capital-related funds each have a 25% of target.

|                                    | Operating Funds     |   |                        |                  |                  |                |                |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---|------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                    | General             | Recreation Type Funds                     |                        |                  |                  | Museum         | Police         |
|                                    |                     | Recreation                                | Golf                   | RiverFront       | RiverPlex        |                |                |
| Reserve Target Value               | 7,293,807           | 3,302,709                                 | 1,268,778              | 310,741          | 988,341          | 778,136        | 196,161        |
| Reserve Balance as FY23 Audit      | 11,603,700          | 3,712,258                                 | 574,607                | 113,235          | 51,742           | 957,201        | 323,720        |
| <b>Over/(Under) Reserve Funded</b> | <b>4,309,893</b>    | <b>409,549</b>                            | <b>(694,171)</b>       | <b>(197,506)</b> | <b>(936,599)</b> | <b>179,065</b> | <b>127,559</b> |
|                                    |                     | Recreation Type Funds: <b>(1,418,727)</b> |                        |                  |                  |                |                |
|                                    | Non-Operating Funds |   |                        |                  |                  |                |                |
|                                    | Audit               | FICA                                      | Liability 'ave & Light | IMRF             | WC & UC          |                |                |
| Reserve Target Value               | 14,072              | 272,500                                   | 132,756                | 11,500           | 142,500          | 77,500         |                |
| Reserve Balance as FY23 Audit      | 47,498              | 1,307,646                                 | 841,288                | 427,997          | 1,229,878        | 1,013,953      |                |
| <b>Over/(Under) Reserve Funded</b> | <b>33,426</b>       | <b>1,035,146</b>                          | <b>708,532</b>         | <b>416,497</b>   | <b>1,087,378</b> | <b>936,453</b> |                |

Kadar Heffner stated that this chart shows that using these requirements, at the close of fiscal year 2023, the General Fund was over-reserved by \$4.3 million, the Museum Fund was over-reserved \$179,000, the Police Fund was over-reserved \$127,000, and applicable Non-Operating Funds were all over-reserved, while the Recreation Type Funds (Recreation, Golf, RiverFront, RiverPlex) combined were only \$1.4 million below reserve target. The District's revised 2024 budget is projecting to maintain, if not slightly improve the reserve balance holdings, and the balanced proposed 2025 budget anticipates continuing to hold the District's strong fund balance position. Thinking like the Ant in our myth, our District recognized the unnatural increase in Personal Property Replacement Tax as temporary, and while the grasshopper might have utilized these funds to support short-term growth, our District has prioritized long-term sustainability. Reserves built over time ensure that we are ready for the next winter and our over-reserve position has allowed us to invest in capital improvements and District priorities that would have proven impossible in prior years. To date, these over-reserves have supported progress at the Golf Learning Center project and in our work to improve our environmental sustainability efforts, as well as showing significant investment in Glen Oak Park, the oldest park in our storied park district.

### *2024 Significant Achievements*

- Fully-inclusive Glen Oak Playground open!
- Reimagined website
- Paycom Implementation for recruitment, hiring, timekeeping and payroll
- Establishment of the PPD Foundation as a United Way Partner Agency; grant awards to support HISRA and Moonlight Coalition for Adult Learning
- Expanded Rec 'n' Roll programming to support Trewyn, Logan, Gwynn, Morton Square, Glen Oak and Columbia Parks
- Debut of the PPD Flag Football League
- DREAM Squared Program Participants demonstrated academic improvement in benchmark assessment with 82% showing growth in reading and 84% in math.

Scott Loftus stated that to set the stage for our fund reviews, we have compiled significant achievements and key proposed changes across the District. It is difficult to distill all that we do in a year into a simple list of achievements, but we've done our best to build a list by fund in your budget document. Here, we want to take just a couple of minutes to highlight a sample of the many things that our PPD family has accomplished this year. As we celebrated our 130th anniversary with our inaugural Founders' Day event, we kicked off the festivities with a ribbon-cutting celebration for the new fully-inclusive Glen Oak Playground. The process used to build this playground is a great example of both collaboration and responsible budgeting that we have referenced so far as philosophies. Built with funds designated from over-reserves by our Board, the playground design process included work with HISRA to bring families and organizations together to select elements and layout that support children and adults with special needs. Kudos to Becky Fredrickson, Mary Harden, Mike Friberg, and Tammy Johnson for coordinating this process and to Katie Van Cleve and her team for helping to bring strong advocates to the table. Additional thanks to Matt Freeman, Matt Majors and our Maintenance and Repair crew for their collaborative work to combine the expertise of our in-house teams with contractors to complete this project. Thanks to Chief Green and Ernest Starks as well as Supervisor Jacob Kuban and Glen Oak Park Manager Brian O'Malley and his team for being diligent in maintaining the safety of the playground.

Matt Freeman stated that 2024 also saw the reimagination of our District website. In partnership with Central States Media, our team led the effort to make the website easier to navigate and more efficient to maintain. The process utilized for peoriaparks.org is also being applied to the PlayHouse, Zoo, and RiverPlex websites as we work to prioritize making digital access for patrons easier and more consistent. We want to celebrate Jenny Swanson and Brittany Moldenhauer for their work to lead this effort. Kudos to Kevin Davis, Nyk Sutter Downs, and Scott Loftus for their ongoing work with RecTrac, our registration system which is the backbone for much of our engagement on the site.

Becky Fredrickson stated that the implementation of Paycom moved our payroll timekeeping from paper forms and excel sheets to an electronic timeclock. Our system now uses the same platform from application through hire and onboarding to timekeeping and discipline tracking. As you will hear more about later, we are working to add professional training to this same platform in 2025. Special thanks to the team that led the implementation process for the District...Shalesse Pie, Karrie Ross, Willie Howe, David Gray, Amber Eash, Angela Fryxell, Amy Berger, John Norton, Jacob Kuban, Sue Wheeler, Scott Loftus, and Kadar Heffner for the time spent to ensure that this was implemented accurately and on schedule, AND to all of the management staff that actively worked to learn the new system tool and positively embrace change.

Executive Director Cahill stated that after conversation with the Heart of Illinois United Way, the Peoria Park District Foundation was formally accepted as a United Way Partner this year. In consultation with the United Way, the Foundation applied for and was awarded program grant support for both HISRA and the Moonlight Coalition for Adult Learning. HISRA's funding supports FOCUS and the program's efforts to provide workforce skills development for special needs adults. Their work with Bicycle Brews garnered media attention this summer and they've expanded from their home base at Bicycle Safety Town to offer coffee on the go at several events, including ZooTober. They also sell consignment goods at local festivals and in area shops, including the Moonlighting at PIA gift shop. Katie Van Cleve, Shelby Martin and their team have done amazing things with this program and it is an honor to help to support it. Hedy Elliott

Gardner, Emily Bernardi, and Shayla Grantham provide administrative support for Moonlight's many efforts, all of which are built upon its strong foundation of GED programming, which also received funding from the United Way. More than 200 students are supported by Moonlight each year and the United Way helps to cover the costs of testing fees and tutoring. Housed primarily at Logan Recreation Center, the program also supports Moonlighting at PIA, a gift shop at the Peoria International Airport, which is managed by Andrea Fortner, the proceeds from which support GED education. In December, the shop will pop-up at Luthy Lights for the second consecutive year. Kudos to Karrie Ross, Kyle Deeter, Katie Van Cleve, Shelby Martin, Hedy Elliott Gardner, Alicia Woodworth and everyone else who helped us to establish this relationship with the United Way.

Nick Conrad stated that after starting the District's effort under the name PPD on the Go!, with the help and oversight of Angela Martiens, who did a great job keeping up with the ever-changing schedule and juggling internal demands to make PPD on the Go! work, in 2024, in partnership with the YMCA, we expanded and rebranded to Rec N Roll, which maintains an active schedule that rotates through neighborhood parks, makes stops at local cultural festivals and other community events. Funded in part by a grant from Impact Central Illinois, this effort which is now led by Michael Dixson and his team celebrates healthy lifestyles and activity. Thanks to Michael for his work here and in his intentional efforts to engage youth in sports, His work to collaborate with local colleges and college students to offer clinics and sports enrichment to youth has not gone unnoticed. He also added flag football to our inventory this year, which was a success and will continue to grow as flag football was also just added as an IHSA sport for girls this fall. We note here that HISRA, too, has added flag football to its inventory of Special Olympics and want to give a shoot-out to Kendrick Foster for his efforts in this regard.

Brianna Cobb stated that DREAM Squared continues to positively impact young lives. In 2024, 82% of program participants demonstrated academic improvement in reading and 84% improved in math. Jonelle McCloud, Julie Craghead, Jalen Jenkins and others have worked so hard to build a community with this program and it is evident on the faces of the youth participants as they perform original works at the program's Black History Month event and as they play the steel drums at the holidays. These youth, and the adults who are engage with them, are expanding their view and finding hope and opportunity along the way. As part of quarterly monitoring, Jonelle McCloud shared the following example of impact happening at Proctor: *Some of the students of DREAM2 have been with us since we started this in 2021. It's been so enlightening to see their growth over these years. One thing that has stuck out for me is one little girl named "A" "A" was in 1st grade and she does not like to exercise. I can remember asking her to walk with me around Proctor Center because 3 times around is a mile. As we were walking, we were talking about life and her being in the program. As we started our 2nd lap, her concerns were not of when we would finish our walk, but if we were going to miss snack. As I look at her today, she is running down and back sprints on the football team, because she is part of the first flag football program offered at the Park District. It made me so proud of her to see her running, and I told her to keep up the good work. Her confidence and self-esteem is showing up every day and I am happy that Proctor Center could build this in her.*

## *2024 Significant Achievements (continued)*

- AZA Re-Accreditation at Peoria Zoo!
- New shelter at FPNC thanks to Enis Foundation supporting expanded enrichment programs, field trips, preschool parties, and Earth Day celebration!
- 140 acres of PPD property prescribed burned (compared to 150 in last nine years)
- GLC Tee Off For Transformation
- RiverPlex membership continued to show increases in 2024
- Improved Impact Data Collection and Reporting.....

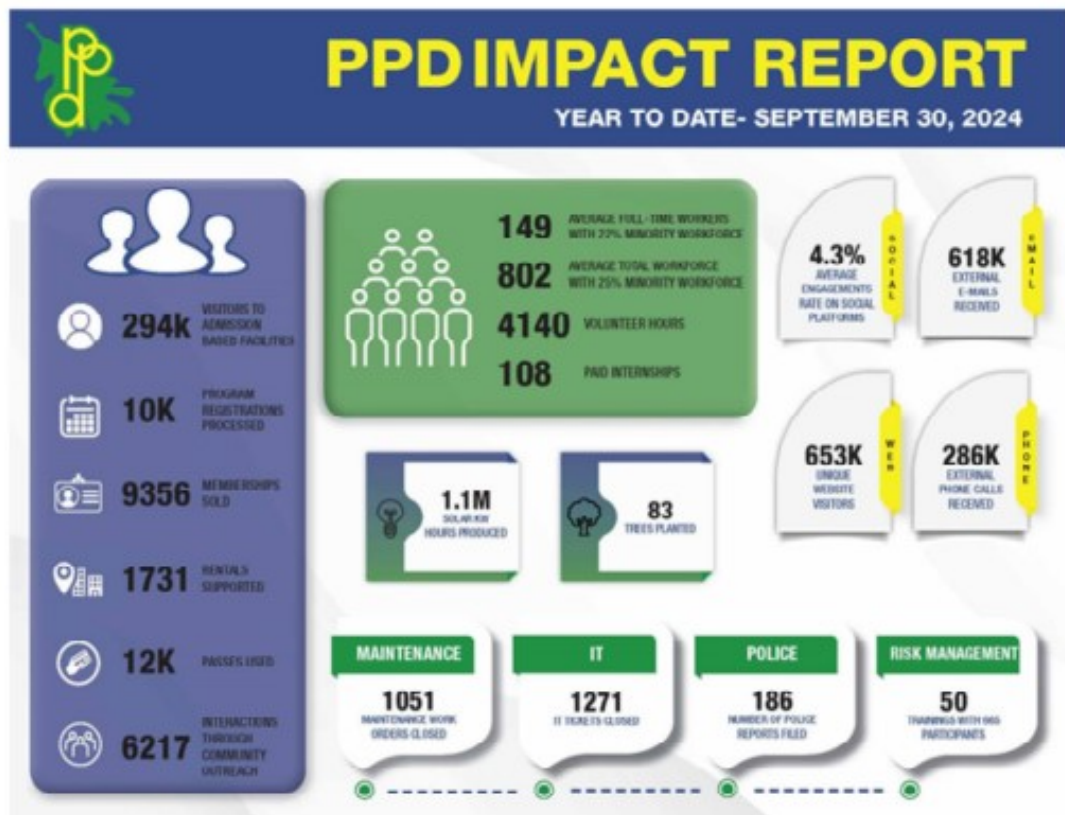
Jenny Swanson stated that After much effort that started in September 2023, the Zoo was re-accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums in September as part of their annual conference. Re-accreditation came after significant investment in several initiatives at the Zoo including outdoor access for the spider monkeys, lemurs, and swift foxes, as well as landscape maintenance and administrative changes. AZA conducted a site visit in June, just days into our new director Max Lakes' tenure, and the auditors saw significant change and investment. If you haven't been to the Zoo, please go. The work of our parks and maintenance/repair crews has changed the way people see Africa and the work of our Zoo maintenance team to care for the rest of the space, from Brenda O'Russa and Tara Jacobson who adopted a section of Asia and planted flowers and sewed prayer flags to our zookeepers led by Dawn Petefish and Jon Rold and Roz Wolfram who are focused on enrichment and animal welfare and advocacy, to Julie Brunton, Steve Hausler, Michelle, Ainsley and Shauna who support quality experiences that engage and encourage visitors to come back. All of that is said without mentioning ZooTober. Year one saw nearly 9000 people visit our Zoo on October weekends and we are already dreaming about Year Two. Before we get there, we are excited to offer Luthy Lights in December, which will feature Winter Wonderland programming on December 14, as well as a region first.... A Chinese Lantern Festival in March and April.

Karrie Ross stated that 2024 has been a great year for environmental programming and efforts. Under the strong leadership of Matt Freeman and Kristi Shoemaker, we celebrated our PPD signature Earth Week, which is one of our favorite days of the year. Showcasing Forest Park Nature Center and the new shelter built there with funds generously donated by the Enis Foundation. Earth Week allowed us to connect and celebrate our collective commitment to conservation and education. With Peoria PlayHouse helping kids to make walking sticks for hiking, Camp Wokanda releasing the first batches of maple syrup of the year, and our own Joe Christian providing entertainment for kids and families as his alter ego Safari Joe. We express gratitude to Susie Ingram, Kelli Parke, Cassie Sheehan, and others who helped to make Earth Day a success! This same team, which supports daily operations, as well as field trips and educational hikes, also led the cross-departmental effort to conduct 140 acres of prescribed burns in 2024, an astounding feat considering that in the last nine years the District had only prescribe burned a total of 150 acres. Thank you to all the aforementioned environmental and interpretive and park maintenance team members, and to Land Steward Jacob Mol for your commitment to stewardship and

allocation of resources. We acknowledge the leadership it takes to prioritize and monitor these efforts across 9000 acres of District property.

Shalesse Pie stated that originally funded as part of the 2022 State of Illinois Budget, the Golf Learning Center reimagination celebrated a key milestone this summer, with the official beginning of construction. Thank you to our Board and to Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth for championing this project, which will feature Top Golf like technology and high-quality food and beverage services. With the leadership of Greg Walker and Jeff Heiden, in collaboration with the owners of Fox Pub and Bearded Owl, our goal is to enhance an already vibrant facility to grow revenue and golfers.

Scott Loftus stated that as we review budget metrics, a key indicator of our financial health is the patronage at our significant facilities. RiverPlex membership revenue drives that facility’s viability and is one of the items that, if trending downward, could indicate the need for strategic change. In 2024, the RiverPlex once again exceeded goals for revenue and we are pleased to report that year-over-year, October membership households have increased 14%, from 4,866 households in 2023 to 5,551 in 2024. Kudos to Sue Wheeler, Jenn Crowe, Raquel Herron, Angie Bland, Jacob Whitehead, Damian Tracy, Craig Hibbard, and their teams for making the RiverPlex a great place to exercise and get healthy.



Brianna Cobb stated that the RiverPlex membership numbers are just one example of many data points that we work to track on a regular basis to monitor the health and impact of our organization.

The slide shown here is an example of the PPD Impact Report that we launched in 2024. At a glance, this document gives us all a better understanding of the depth and breadth of our work and the number of patrons that come into regular contact with the District. These numbers are shared monthly and then compiled year to date at the end of each quarter to show cumulative data.

Thanks to our team for reporting these numbers monthly and to Jenny Swanson for organizing and sharing them in a user-friendly way.

*Key Proposed Changes:*

- Golf Learning Center, Lakeview Splash Pad opening!
- Learning Management Software Implementation
- Investment in Continuing Education
- Investment in future leadership of the District
- Full-time Volunteer Coordinator
- Minimum Wage increase to \$15/hour; Increased rates for hard-to-fill part-time/seasonal positions
- Camp Counselor in Training program implementation
- Rental Rate increases for park shelters, event/activities, races, select facilities, and disc golf
- Fee increases for programming, camps
- Owens Center shutdown in March/April
- Chinese Lantern Festival at Peoria Zoo in March/April and Year 2 of Play in Peoria

Matt Freeman stated that a relatively stable budget process supports a consistent inventory of services and spaces. As shown here, key proposed changes in our 2025 budget focus on investment in our workforce and on responsible, minimal increases to fees and charges that offset growing expenses. Across the District, staff have worked as part of our budgeting and coordination efforts to build out a plan for 2025 that includes consistent, reasonable fee and charge increases that will help to offset increasing wage costs, as well as necessary hourly rate increases beyond the minimum for those positions that have proven to be difficult to fill and in 2024 negatively impacted our ability to take care of what we have. Staff has also worked to enhance our workforce development efforts tied to internships and growing our Be Anything! continuum of supports to include a Camp Counselor in Training program in 2025. We look forward to celebrating the opening of the new Golf Learning Center and the Lakeview Splash Pad, both of which we have talked about for a couple of years, but will open to the public officially in 2025.

Trustee Harant stated she really appreciates the format of the budget book. It's great to see what has happened budgetarily, however, is there a calendar for 2025 showing the timeline of budget expectations and goal of what is to be achieved? Executive Director Cahill stated that 2024 is the first year that this data has been compiled. Soon, smaller group meetings will be held with facility

leaders to set targets for 2025. This will be part of narrowing down measurable goals and creating a baseline.

Vice President Sierra stated he would like to note a few things in relation to the RiverPlex, asking what is the total revenue generated by RiverPlex? Karrie Ross stated that total revenue expenses budgeted for 2025 is \$2.867M. Vice President Sierra asked how much is tax subsidized? Karrie Ross stated the tax subsidy is \$539,666, in addition to OSF Mission Grant funds of \$400K. Vice President Sierra asked if in the event the grant wasn't received from OSF, how will that impact the funding and operations of the RiverPlex? Karrie Ross stated that as has been talked about in prior years, the Mission Grant is one of those grants that would significantly impact the RiverPlex and the tax needed. At this juncture, staff does not have any information that would state whether or not those grant funds will be provided, and staff is rolling over the assumption that those grant dollars will be awarded as in prior years. If not, mid fiscal year discussion would be had with the Board on how to remedy it. Vice President Sierra stated that he would like to have follow up conversations either in the Finance Committee or Strategy Ad Hoc Committee to explore alternative revenue options for the RiverPlex should they be needed.

Trustee Montez asked if the OSF Mission Grant is awarded on a yearly basis. Karrie Ross stated that it is awarded on a yearly basis.

Trustee Harant asked for more detail about the Franciscan Rec Center and what kind of rentals are there currently, and the financial impact staff sees changing. Scott Loftus stated that there is not much rentals in the downstairs classrooms at FRC due to the Regional Office of Education leasing that space. There are quite a few programs there that have been expanded for next year with roughly 28-32 new offerings. Open pickleball is offered in the evenings and Saturdays which works well for those that work during the weekday.

Trustee Harant asked if tennis will be pulled separately from pickleball. Executive Director Cahill stated yes, and it will be sent to everyone shortly.

Shalesse Pie stated that we are also prioritizing professional development, with the implementation of Learning Management Software, as previously approved by this Board. In Phase One of this implementation, we will focus on Districtwide required trainings including patron service, basic safety and mandated reporting, as well as improved tracking of required staff-held certifications like a CDL licenses and lifeguard certifications. The investment in professional development will extend even further in 2025, with funds being set aside for tuition reimbursement to support eligible staff as they seek to achieve their higher education goals. Further, in an effort to grow and improve our support of community volunteers that give their time and talent to enhance the District's impact, we are also returning to an organizational structure that supports a dedicated, full-time volunteer coordinator.

Scott Loftus stated that before we move on, we want to note that Owens Center has budgeted for a facility maintenance shutdown in March and April, which is traditionally a slower time at the facility to support necessary infrastructure maintenance to help us bridge to significant capital upgrades slated for consideration starting in 2026. We are also excited, as previously mentioned, to host the first Chinese Lantern Festival in the region in March and April at Peoria Zoo. In addition, we are looking forward to a second year of the Play in Peoria initiative in collaboration with Discover Peoria and OSF. Please note that the 2025 budget does NOT include funding for



Park A Palooza in the absence of state tourism grant supports. While this represents a high level review, specific proposed changes by fund are located under each tab in your budget book.

Trustee Montez stated that he wants to applaud the tuition reimbursement program for staff and for moving the Volunteer Coordinator position to full-time status.

Karrie Ross stated that relative to our overall organizational health, the three key takeaways from the information shared so far are the following: 1. We continue to be in a near-term healthy financial position. In 2024, while we anticipate finishing the year with revenues over expenses, this comes not because of an influx of one-time revenue, but because of the normal ebb and flow of managing an organization of our size. Anticipated reserve growth is approximately 2% of our overall annual budget and has resulted primarily from revenue generation in some key areas of the organization, and expense fluctuations associated with changes in our workforce and challenges in filling all budgeted positions. 2. While we are projecting to see an EAV increase of 6% in 2025, which will positively impact property tax revenue, we have been informed by the State that we should expect to receive lower than average replacement tax revenue, certainly not the record high replacement tax revenue we saw in the last several years. 3. As a result of our current position, along with the departure of Brent Wheeler as our Deputy Director, resources have been allocated within this budget to add 2 new full-time positions focused on growing management for the future as well as on upgrades in our technology that will better support continuity across our locations and invest in our human capital.

Matt Freeman stated that the District’s General Fund covers just what its name implies, the general operational costs of the District. This fund is home to all of our care and maintenance work, as well as our administrative costs. Please note that capital projects that are donation, grant, or debt certificate funded are also included in the Administration and Business Department of this Fund. Since these sources of revenue and the timing of capital project expenses can vary from year to year, the General Fund can experience material changes from year to year that don’t reflect changes in operation levels. It is home to 33 different departments as outlined in the budget book starting on page 13.

## WHO WORKS IN THE GENERAL FUND?

|                  | 2023  | 2024  | 2025  |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Full Time</b> | 63.73 | 68.93 | 68.98 |
| <b>Part Time</b> | 19.75 | 18.03 | 29.28 |

Note: Part time is reflected as full time equivalents (FTE), calculated by dividing annual part time hours worked by the number of annual hours a full time employee would be expected to work (2,080 hours).

Matt Freeman stated that in the graph above, you can see the makeup of the workforce in the General Fund.

Our General Fund philosophy connector is the story of Demeter and Persephone that explains the changing seasons and speaks to themes of life, death, and rebirth. Demeter, the goddess of agriculture and fertility, had a beautiful daughter named Persephone, who was beloved by all. One day, while Persephone was picking flowers in a meadow, Hades, the god of the underworld,

saw her and fell in love with her. He decided to abduct her and take her to the underworld to be his queen. Demeter, devastated by her daughter's disappearance, wandered the earth searching for her. In her grief, she neglected her duties as the goddess of agriculture, causing the crops to wither and the land to become barren. As famine spread across the world, humans suffered greatly. Eventually, Zeus, the king of the gods, intervened and a compromise was reached: Persephone would spend part of the year with Hades in the underworld (autumn and winter) and the rest of the year with Demeter (spring and summer). During the time Persephone is in the underworld, Demeter mourns, and the earth experiences the cold and barren months. When Persephone returns, Demeter rejoices, and the earth blooms once again.

Jacob Kuban stated that just as Demeter ensures the earth's fertility through her deep connection to the natural world, our Peoria Park District is committed to nurturing our local environment. By transitioning from annual to perennial flower beds, we are embracing the wisdom of sustainability—much like the enduring cycles of nature in the myth of Demeter. Perennial plants are a symbol of our dedication to creating landscapes that not only thrive year after year but also reduce waste and conserve resources. This shift is not just a change in tactics, but it is also a reflection of our deeper values—a commitment to nurturing the earth, just as Demeter nurtured the fields in her work.

Kristi Shoemaker stated that the cycles of nature are longer than the seasons. Insects who overwinter as eggs or larva, rely on vegetation cover over the winter. Many seeds require the cold winter temperatures in order to germinate in the spring. Perennial plants, especially those that are native to Illinois, provide better habitats for pollinators. Not only do they have wildlife value, but they also help us to keep within budgetary constraints by requiring less maintenance and staff time, and less long-term monetary investment. The Peoria Park District is fortunate to have an in-house source for native prairie seeds at the Tawny Oaks prairie. Staff harvest the seeds in the fall and are able to use them in planting projects throughout the District; if these seeds needed to be purchased, the market value is between \$1500 to \$2500 per acre. Staff is also looking to grow some of our native collected seed into smaller plants that can be utilized in perennial landscape bed plantings.

Jacob Kuban stated that each year as the growing season comes to an end, our prescribed fire season begins. As native plants go dormant, invasive plants have a longer growing season. This makes them susceptible to the effects of fire. In 2024 under the direction of the new Land Steward position, crews from across the Parks and EIS Departments have come together to conduct prescribed burns in our natural areas and restoration sites. Several additional staff members are currently increasing their training levels and working towards burn manager certification. This past season, staff were able to burn 140 acres, which is equivalent to the amount burned in the 9 years prior. ICJIA plantings in 2024 allowed staff to beautify some of our areas in parks that needed some attention. Staff designed, planted, mulched, and maintained areas at RiverPlex, Gwynn Aquatics, Proctor Rec, Logan Rec, and Trewyn Park. These plantings are a mix of native and exotic species, ensuring the exotic species do not currently possess invasive characteristics. They are also a mix of perennials, shrubs and trees. They provide year-round interest along with habitat for wildlife, all while requiring less watering and fertilizing. Our natural areas and Nature Preserves are not maintenance-free zones; however, staff plan restoration activities along with the seasons, and use tools like prescribed fire to care for them. In partnership with the Volunteer Dept, the Land Steward has increased the number of volunteer ecological

restoration workdays, allowing us to preserve unique habitats such as the hill prairies at Robinson Park and Singing Woods.

Kristi Shoemaker stated that to identify low use areas to convert to no-mow with intention of turning to naturalized plantings, staff look for areas of low use along with difficult to maintain areas. Staff then analyzes soil types and tailors the species seed mix to that soil and habitat type. The usage of adjacent land by park patrons is also considered. The Newman Golf Course plantings are a perfect example of this. Areas of rough were identified and put into “no-mow” with the intent to eventually transition to a natural area at the golf course. This past spring, soil type, habitat, and public use were all considered when selecting the native seed mix which was a shortgrass prairie composition with custom splashes of seasonal color, all staying 3ft tall or shorter. Similar processes were employed for the areas to be seeded yet this fall at Grandview Drive Park and Bradley Park. In the first full year of PPD ownership of the Springdale Savanna, staff have worked to update management objectives for the site. The Savanna itself is a remnant of an ancient landscape, whose trees witnessed changes to the landscape for hundreds of years. It is our duty and honor to protect this IL Natural Heritage Landmark. An ASV, which stands for all service vehicle, is also out for bid and will soon go to the board for approval. This machine will make staff time more efficient for tasks like tree planting, brush clearing, recreation maintenance (such as grading fields and landscaping), It will also help staff maintain and restore more natural areas in parks and preserves by clearing the way for native plants to germinate from the soil’s seed bank.

Becky Fredrickson stated that staff looks forward to the addition of a fully-accessible restroom next to the new Glen Oak Playground and thank HISRA for their participation in its design process. We will also use funds outside of our general obligation bonds to add basketball courts to the Glen Oak inventory in 2025. Our public input process will be front and center as we work to replace the playground in Endres Park with collaborative input from Peoria Heights. Not quite so flashy, but very important, is our work to replace end of life machinery and vehicles and the ongoing maintenance of our roadways and parking lots.

Executive Director Cahill stated that in response to requests from Trustees, staff has worked to reorganize the information provided within the summaries in each fund. I’d like to extend gratitude to Karrie Ross and Kadar Heffner for their efforts in this regard. The General Fund’s summaries begin on page 27. Please note that parks are evaluated based on per acre subsidy rather than a per user basis due to difficulty in tracking user numbers, differences in usage patterns for neighborhood and regional parks, and to allow for better systemwide analysis. Within the 2025 proposed budget, please note the following shifts: First, as noted, we have increased hourly rates for some part-time seasonal parks maintenance laborers with the goal of filling positions that were funded this year but remained unfilled. We have also increased the labor allocation within the recreation maintenance department and plan to have that team support our parks rentals and special events teams. Please also note that the increase in subsidy for Trewyn Park attributes to the termination of the early head start use of the lower level of the pavilion that was noticed in late summer. District staff will meet with Peoria Grown before year’s end to talk about other uses for this vacated area that supports our shared goals for support of the south side.

Jenny Swanson stated that in the General Fund and in each subsequent fund presentation, we want to try to connect our fund efforts back to the commitments that we started our

presentation with. As we progress in 2025, our focus will be on the following: First, policy updates that target equity and inclusion, starting with modification of our manual's introduction to include both our Welcoming Resolution and an acknowledgement of our native land history and continuing to update sections of the policy manual to consider the CROWN Act, parental rights including nursing protections, and vocabulary to current expectations. Our environmental focus in 2025 will start with the selection of an Alternate Energy Consultant before the end of 2024 who will be contracted to review our inventory and make recommendations about short-term and longer-term methods to reduce our carbon footprint and make our District more sustainable. Our General Fund is the foundation for our vibrancy efforts across the entire organization. We have talked in past budgets about our spaces and places being our stage.... This fund ensures that the stage is ready for activity and engagement and our work in 2025 focuses on ensuring that our resources are effectively, efficiently, and environmentally focused.

Trustee Bertschy asked how DEIA key efforts affects the General Fund. Executive Director Cahill stated that staff that are part of the DEIA Committee which Vice President Sierra is Chair, are primarily funded out of the General Fund. Because it is an administrative lead of the Park District, that's where that focus and attribute were allocated to for 2025. It is recognizing that the people power to make it all happen generally come from the General Fund. Trustee Bertschy stated that he hopes that track chairs in parks, which would come from the General Fund, will also put emphasis on this by way of accessibility.

Trustee Montez stated he had a few general questions, however, the layout of the 2025 budget book is wonderful. It explains many of the things he's looking for and it's an easy read and it's most appreciated.

Vice President Sierra asked in regards to Trewyn Park pavilion, could staff please elaborate upon the conversations had with Peoria Grown and their future plans? Executive Director Cahill stated that before the end of the year, staff will be meeting with Peoria Grown to look at their strategic objectives. As part of the relationship, the District has committed to helping them grow to meet their goals which are shared goals with the Park District. With Head Start having left the lower level, staff will determine if Peoria Grown has plans to occupy that space. Staff's priority is to understand exactly where their strategic plan has evolved and tie that to the District's strategic efforts and focus for Trewyn Park and the Southside and see where there are opportunities for overlap for both parties.

Vice President Sierra asked with Peoria Grown occupying Trewyn, how have rentals been impacted this year? Matt Freeman stated that as was talked about with the Board, the plan was to have weekend availability on Friday evenings and Saturdays for rentals, and has gone very well. There has been a steady rental menu this year and the groups coexist very well.

Scott Loftus stated that similar to the application of the Fund Balance and Reserve Policy, we have combined the Recreation, Golf, RiverFront, and RiverPlex Funds into a grouping termed Recreation Type Funds. These funds share recreation property tax levies and have multiple overlaps in their program operations, focus and resource allocation. As such, we believe it makes sense to combine our overview here as well. In your budget books, each fund is reviewed separately and we will highlight relevant notes for each here. But, as we think about philosophy drivers and impact, there are many things that are stronger when presented together. It is our

tradition to remind you that these funds put the ‘Fun’ in fund and they certainly do that for our patrons every day.

**WHO WORKS IN THE RECREATION FUND?**

|                  | 2023  | 2024  | 2025  |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Full Time</b> | 32.73 | 31.48 | 31.73 |
| <b>Part Time</b> | 47.12 | 46.00 | 52.09 |

Note: Part time is reflected as full time equivalents (FTE), calculated by dividing annual part time hours worked by the number of annual hours a full time employee would be expected to work (2,080 hours).

**WHO WORKS IN THE GOLF FUND?**

|                  | 2023  | 2024  | 2025  |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Full Time</b> | 10.22 | 10.02 | 10.02 |
| <b>Part Time</b> | 23.03 | 26.47 | 30.14 |

Note: Part time is reflected as full time equivalents (FTE), calculated by dividing annual part time hours worked by the number of annual hours a full time employee would be expected to work (2,080 hours).

**WHO WORKS IN THE RIVERFRONT FUND?**

|                  | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|------------------|------|------|------|
| <b>Full Time</b> | 2.27 | 2.82 | 2.57 |
| <b>Part Time</b> | .86  | 1.3  | 1.36 |

Note: Part time is reflected as full time equivalents (FTE), calculated by dividing annual part time hours worked by the number of annual hours a full time employee would be expected to work (2,080 hours).

**WHO WORKS IN THE RIVERPLEX FUND?**

|                  | 2023  | 2024  | 2025  |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Full Time</b> | 8.95  | 8.95  | 9.00  |
| <b>Part Time</b> | 23.52 | 27.24 | 31.26 |

Note: Part time is reflected as full time equivalents (FTE), calculated by dividing annual part time hours worked by the number of annual hours a full time employee would be expected to work (2,080 hours).

Scott Loftus stated that in the tables above, you can see the make up of workforce in the highlighted recreation-type funds.

Athena was the goddess of wisdom, strategy, and civic life. Unlike other gods who remained isolated on Mount Olympus, Athena was known for her active role in the lives of mortals. She was a protector of cities, a guide in strategic planning, and a promoter of community wellbeing. Her wisdom was not confined to a single temple but was spread across the many cities that revered her.

Melissa Sierra stated that in the spirit of Athena, our organization works to utilize public input and engagement to prioritize its offerings and amenities. In 2024, we have used survey tools to gather input on the Third of July, the Lakeview Splash Pad, Franciscan Recreation Complex playground and our community survey which is conducted every three to four years. We look forward to reviewing our just closed community survey to help shape our 2025 strategic focus and will share this data with staff, trustees, and our community soon. We also rely upon patron surveys following programs and events that help us to evaluate and improve. Since COVID, we have emphasized the value of expanding our offerings beyond central locations and into parks and neighborhoods across the area. This works to ensure that all members of our community can access the resources and opportunities that highlight wellness and fun that we provide. This decentralized approach reflects Athena’s strategic mindset, allowing us to meet people where they are, foster a sense of community, and create vibrant, active spaces across our entire service area. It’s a strategy that not only makes our programming more accessible but also enriches the fabric of the entire community, just as Athena enriched the cities under her protection. PlayHouse examples include our Real Tools space here at Noble Center that allows us to serve more people with open-ended programming. Home schoolers, after-school groups and scouts have participated in this space. We are also pleased to share our expertise with other District programs and spaces, collaborating on Preschool Parties, PPD summer camp, and as part of Juneteenth, the Horizon collaboration w district 150, Community Sing and Sign, Trunk or Treats, the Autism and neurodivergent resources fair, and PPD Riverfront events to name a few. Some of these efforts cross-promote and engage patrons with collaborative programs that share a title but that rotate across locations to encourage shared target audiences to try new spaces and places.

Michael Dixson stated that other examples of these program types include Rec N Roll which has offered more than 50 free opportunities to play and get active in 2024. This mobile program, offered in partnership with the Greater Peoria Family YMCA, helps us reach youth and families who may not have the time or resources to go to traditional District facilities. This philosophy is seen in our increased emphasis on sports opportunities that include clinics and shorter engagements that are cost-effective and easier for busy families to fit into their schedules. In addition to year two of Rec N Roll, 2025 will also see the continuation of Streets Belong to Me, a PPD signature event that celebrates youth's role in keeping our community safe, Yoga in the Park, which offers free yoga on Saturday mornings from Memorial Day to Labor Day across a variety of District parks, and Parks on Tap, which brings food, drink and entertainment to multiple parks and events each warm season. In addition, my team and I have been able to take sports and recreation to local schools during PE and after school, while also engaging with social service agencies to offer programming in their spaces as well. In addition to the ways already mentioned, we continue to take our expertise on the road with our travelling naturalist program, the ZooMobile, and our non-sports support of in and out of school programming with local districts. We have also prioritized this method of outreach with our Streets Belong to Me signature series hosted in at least three different local parks each year. Simply put, Athena's emphasis on supporting patrons didn't care about where this support happens and neither do we.

Melissa Sierra stated that Athena's emphasis on well-being and engagement of our communities also shines through in our events, especially those designated as Signature Events in the District. Earth Week, World Wide Day of Play and Be Anything!, the Streets Belong to Me series, Cultural Festivals, and ZooTober are all focused on adding vibrant, diverse experiences to our community's inventory of fun. Signature events are defined as those events that, because of their scope, message, and reach, demand coordinated supports across the District to maximize their impact. In 2025, our signature and community event working group will continue to meet year-round to ensure coordination of resources to maximize the support of our communities.

Jenny Swanson stated that the recreation-type funds are the primary drivers of fees and charges in our organization. In Greek mythology, the Golden Fleece was a symbol of wealth, power, and prosperity. The hero Jason, along with the Argonauts, embarked on a perilous journey to obtain this treasure, understanding that it held the key to securing the future of their kingdom. The quest was not just about the immediate gain; it was about investing in a resource that would sustain and empower their people for generations to come.

Max Lakes stated that in our organization, investing in revenue generation is our quest for the Golden Fleece. By focusing on initiatives that generate income, we create the resources necessary to sustain and support other essential parts of our budget. Just as Jason and the Argonauts understood the importance of securing the fleece for their kingdom's prosperity, we recognize that strategic investments in revenue generation are crucial to maintaining the vitality of our public services.

Greg Walker stated that this approach ensures that we are not just relying on existing resources but actively seeking new opportunities to enhance our financial stability. By doing so, we can continue to support our core mission while also ensuring that we have the flexibility to innovate and grow. Like the Argonauts, we are on a journey to secure the future prosperity of our organization and community. In 2025, our District will celebrate the much-anticipated opening of the reimagined Golf Learning Center. This project, as you are aware, has been funded in part by

the State of Illinois. With this grant assistance, which has been shepherded by Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth, our dollars have stretched farther and the potential revenue stream that comes with the project will help to grow the dollars that are brought into the Golf Fund, and just as importantly, grow the game of golf.

Max Lakes stated that as we near the end of 2024, Peoria Zoo is focused on both operational and capital change. Investment in special events like ZooTober shows great promise, with nearly 9000 people attending ZooTober events in our first year of coordinated programming during the month. The series of three weekend events also shows great promise for the growth and evolution of our food and beverage offerings. In addition, the Zoo and Peoria Zoological Society are in the midst of master planning and a feasibility study that together will set the stage for the launch of a capital campaign to fund the renovation and reimagination of the older parts of Peoria Zoo, raising both animal care and visitor experience to the high levels offered by the Africa! exhibit.

Becky Fredrickson stated that there are multiple projects planned across these funds. Highlights include installation of the newly approved FRC playground, replacement of both the RiverPlex Arena floor and the Lakeview Rec elevator, and upgrades to the Peoria PlayHouse water table and real tools exhibits. Central Park Pool repairs are also noted here and will be discussed further.

Brianna Cobb stated that in contrast to the per acre subsidy calculated for General Fund locations, the Recreation type funds rely upon a per user subsidy. As part of our July leadership training, staff were directed in a consistent way to track participants for budgeting purposes and you may see some fluctuation across budget years that is due to a change in expectation rather than a change in usership. Regardless, as we move forward you will be able to compare these numbers confidently across departments as a result of staff's new understanding and the expectation set forth by leadership.

Becky Fredrickson stated that within the Central Park Pool analysis, we remind you of the conversation that we had in public sessions last month. Central Park Pool is leased to the Peoria Area Water Wizards for their private use. As part of this agreement, the District has a limit on capital repairs that we have surpassed in years past in order to maintain the integrity of the building. In addition to the operating expenses shown here, there are also dollars allocated in the 2025 bond issue focused on repair needs at the facility. As we approach the renewal of this agreement with PAWW, the long-term viability and needs of the building, which is partially owned by Peoria Public Schools, will need to be reviewed in more detail.

Nick Conrad stated that within the RiverFront summaries, which begin on page 71, the District shows a department for Play in Peoria. This is a collaborative effort that features both public and private organizations across the region and focuses on highlighting the innovation that is the heart of Peoria. Our District role is to participate in planning and to help facilitate a concert or concert series as part of the weeklong event. Our Peoria Park District Foundation has also established a fund to hold tax-deductible donations to support the effort.

Matt Freeman stated that we note that the Golf Fund's financial summaries have added a new program line to allow for tracking of Golf Learning Center operations for traditional golf uses separate from the enterprise efforts that are under construction. This will give us a clear way to evaluate the effectiveness of the investment, while also being able to critically analyze the

financial position of our courses separate from this revenue generator. Financial summaries for the Golf fund may be found starting on page 88 of the budget book.

Scott Loftus stated that in regards to the RiverPlex financial summaries, this budget does assume the receipt of an OSF mission grant, but does not contemplate any increase in membership rates, which is being considered mid-year by the partners. No changes will be made without presentation to and approval by the Peoria Park District Board of Trustees and the Greater Peoria Family YMCA Board of Directors.

Jenny Swanson stated that key efforts in 2025, by commitment, are highlighted. As part of our community survey, one preliminary data point showed that 70 percent of responders were not aware of the scope and scale of the District's scholarship program. In 2025, the District's marketing team, along with our leadership team, will work on a campaign focused on celebrating the value of this offering and work to encourage more engagement from both applicants and donors who can help to grow the reach of the program.

Executive Director Cahill stated that within our environmental education efforts, we look forward to exploring how conservation is defined by our different departments and where there are similarities and differences that can be celebrated and accentuated. We are also prioritizing opportunities for passive education with signage explaining our pollinators and perennial plantings and how they help our environment. As we proceed with our alternate energy consultant, we will have multiple opportunities for internal education of staff as well, which we are excited to participate in and apply to our daily habits here in the District.

*Note: At 7:00 PM, President Johnson called a brief break/recess. The Board reconvened at 7:17 PM, with all Trustees present.*

Trustee Bertschy asked how the amount of tax subsidy is determined for each fund as it seems to be varied for each one. Executive Director Cahill stated that it's both philosophical and practical. In recreation, there is a good mix of focusing tax subsidy on things that are beginner programs or life long learning, things that help with maintaining health and wellness. Something more specialized, the District tries to have that subsidy be less.

Nick Conrad stated that as far as vibrancy, the Rec-Type Funds put the FUN in fund and our work with signature events is our opportunity to showcase our expertise and impact to our community and the region. While these are the most visible of our work, we also contribute to vibrancy with the spaces we provide and the collaborations we participate in.

President Johnson stated that although he does want to get through the budget presentation, he wants Trustees to feel free to ask and have answered their budget questions.

With more budget presentation ahead, Vice President Sierra recommended that this meeting be adjourned, with the presentation reconvening at the next Board meeting next week.

Executive Director Cahill stated that there are still the Museum, Police, and Non-Operating Funds to be presented, in addition to the final commentary.



Trustee Bertschy stated that he appreciates staff making themselves available for several hours earlier this week to answer Trustees' budget questions, and it's not an easy process. Due to the late hour, he would like to continue this at the next Board meeting. Trustees Covington, Harant, and Montez agreed.

Trustee Bertschy stated that he appreciates the time staff has taken this evening to be here and the enthusiasm of the presentation that took place. Big thank you to everyone.

President Johnson stated that on behalf of the Board, they appreciate all the work staff does and today's presentation has been great.

**9. CALENDAR OF CONSENT ITEMS**

None at this time.

**10. PENDING BUSINESS**

None at this time.

**11. CITIZEN REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

None at this time.

**12. COMMUNICATIONS**

None at this time.

**13. OTHER BUSINESS**

None at this time.

**14. ACTION STEPS REVIEW**

None noted at this time.

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:18 pm, Trustee Bertschy MOVED TO ADJOURN. Motion seconded by Vice President Sierra and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustees Bertschy, Covington, Harant, Hill, Montez, Vice President Sierra, and President Johnson. (Results: 7 Ayes; 0 Abstain; 0 Nays)

Full discussion can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6trOBaRfLU>

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Respectfully Submitted by Alicia Woodworth  
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary