

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS HELD AT 5:30 PM ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2024 AT THE NOBLE CENTER FOR PARK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, 1125 WEST LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA, IL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Trustee and Chair Timothy Bertschy, Trustee Steve Montez, and Executive Director Emily Cahill

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Trustee Reagan Leslie Hill

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Trustees Timothy Bertschy, Laurie Covington, Joyce Harant, Steve Montez, Vice President Alexander Sierra (v), and President Robert Johnson  
Note: (v) = Attended Virtually

**STAFF PRESENT:** Executive Director Emily Cahill, Brent Wheeler, Matt Freeman, Becky Fredrickson, Scott Loftus, Shalesse Pie, Karrie Ross, Attorney William Streeter, and Alicia Woodworth

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Trustee Bertschy presided and called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**3. CALL FOR A MOTION TO PERMIT MEMBER TO ATTEND MEETING REMOTELY**

No request to attend meeting electronically was received.

**4. MINUTES**

**4.A. Approval of January 17, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

Executive Director Cahill MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes of the January 17, 2024 Finance Committee meeting. Trustee Montez stated that the statement “Vice President Sierra, for clarifications purposes, asked isn’t the District waiting on state funding that was allocated in FY21 forward, correct?” when actually it was he that asked the question and therefore, asks for a modification of the minutes. Vice President Sierra stated it can be changed, but he also asked that question. Trustee Bertschy proposed leaving the sentence as is and amend by adding “Trustee Montez asked what projects are currently affected by outstanding funding.” Executive Cahill MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes as amended. Amended motion seconded by Trustee Montez and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustee Bertschy, Trustee Montez, and Executive Director Cahill (Results: 3 Ayes; 0 Nays).

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**5.A. Review of Accounts Payable**

The Finance Committee members present confirmed they had reviewed the current listing of accounts payable and bills and had no questions or comments. Trustee Montez MOVED TO RECOMMEND the accounts payable and bills be presented to the full Board for approval and payment. Motion seconded by Executive Director Cahill and carried on a unanimous aye of those present.

**5.B. Towing and Impoundment Ordinance Amendment**

Attorney Bill Streater stated that Brent Wheeler and Chief Green worked with Attorney Kevin Day on this item. Prior to the shift in record-keeping for Peoria Park District Police to a standalone ADSi tracking process in 2021, the District relied upon the City of Peoria for administration and record-keeping tied to towing and impoundment. State law requires the attached policy for a police department to be able to utilize impoundment as a penalty for violation of relevant criminal and traffic law. Without this authorization, the District has been unable to charge impoundment fees for any vehicles taken into custody through towing since its separation from the City of Peoria's record keeping system.

In response, staff has worked with legal counsel to amend sections of the conduct ordinance of the Peoria Park District as attached to allow for the seizure and confiscation of any property, thing or device in, or used in, the Parks in violation of the conduct ordinance. These amendments also allow the District to charge the impoundment fees as outlined under statute, with those funds retained by the District as revenue.

As such, it is recommended the amendment to the Conduct Ordinance and Intergovernmental Agreement. This proposed ordinance amendment is presented for review and will be voted on by the Board of Trustees at the March 13, 2024 Park Board meeting.

Trustee Montez MOVED to present this ordinance amendment and Intergovernmental Agreement to the full Board for its review and approval. Motion seconded by Executive Director Cahill and carried on a unanimous aye of those present.

**5.C. Travel Policy Revision**

Trustee Bertschy asked Karrie Ross to give a brief overview of this item. She stated that the District's current travel policy includes advancing of travel per diem allowances to both board and staff prior to approved travel. Over time, this policy has not been adhered to and/or is not used regularly or consistently, which causes a potential issue with the District's annual audit process.

After consultation with Trustees, the revisions are recommended to consideration and approval. Modifications also include language changes regarding staff use of personal vehicles for travel in order to clarify the language and make the policy clear to staff.

Executive Director Cahill stated that part of this recommended change to policy is to reflect actual practice. Per diem advances are not offered to staff and clarifying language has been added in regards to use of personal vehicle for travel. As a result, with feedback given to staff by multiple Trustees, there are accounting and auditing issues associated with the advanced per diems received by Trustees. There is a challenge with getting all travel-associated receipts necessary to document the full amount of the advanced per diem. As such, it would be recommended that the per diem advancement go away for audit and administrative reasons. Expenses would still be reimbursed and the pre-travel requirements would still be in place, as they are state law.

Trustee Bertschy stated that he would like to understand better if the advanced per diem is given without requiring receipts and the recipient keeps the entire per diem advance regardless of actual expenses incurred, or, is it an advance and with receipts, it is determined if a reimbursement by the recipient is required if expenses did not reach or exceed the advancement. He stated that if the per diem is advanced and receipts are not provided, the recipient should receive an IRS Form 1099 at the end of the year to reflect the advanced funds as income. Trustee Bertschy stated that this matter needs to be clarified for all of the reasons previously mentioned. It needs to be determined if advance per diems should continue to be offered, and what are the requirements of the advancement, post-travel.

Executive Director Cahill stated that the current policy is that a per diem advance requires the recipient to submit receipts and reimbursement of unused advanced monies within 10 days after completion of travel. If it is determined that receipts are not required and the recipient keeps the per diem regardless of amount spent, staff needs direction as to what that revised policy language should be.

Trustee Bertschy stated that this topic came up because staff approached him as Chair of the Finance Committee, about the fact that they are experiencing difficulty in obtaining receipts from advance per diem recipients, post travel. As such, he requested it be placed on the agenda for discussion.

Vice President Sierra stated that this policy revision is important and there is a need to have a policy and administrative process and procedure conversation. He does not believe that Trustees should have to incur and ultimately be reimbursed for expenses on their personal credit card relating to travel and event attendance, as many staff members have a Park District credit card for those expenses when traveling. He suggests that the Park District look into software that allows per diem advancement on a prepaid credit card that would allow the immediate downloading of receipts, eliminating the need for Trustees to submit the receipts post travel. The remaining unspent advanced funds would still be on the card, thus eliminating the policy requirement of reimbursement of unused funds. This would help with the administrative process and accounting/audit issues currently experienced.

President Johnson stated that he has concerns about this policy change and would like to have the item pulled from the Regular Board meeting agenda so that further discussion can occur at a later date. He thinks there's confusion about whether the advanced per diem is for the recipient to keep in its entirety regardless of expenditures, or not.

Trustee Bertschy stated that when it is brought back, he would like input from the District's auditors as to whether this can be done without considering it an advance and also to get a better understanding about what the law is on this topic.

Trustee Harant stated that she thinks that if someone requests an advanced per diem, then they have the responsibility to provide the appropriate documentation of expenditures and if they don't within the required 10 days after travel, it should be made a public document and report if not reimbursed.

Trustee Bertschy stated that he wants it to be made clear that this is not directed at any Trustee. This is directed at how to make the organization more efficient. Trustee Harant agreed and added that proper transparency needs to be adhered to with proper receipts and accounting reports as to how the money was spent.

**5.D. Review/Discussion Debt Policy**

Karrie Ross stated that the goal for this meeting was to review the current Debt Policy and talk about any amendments, if the committee requests. The Debt Financing policy is currently somewhat vague and may need more specifics. Staff can provide at the next meeting redlined policy amendments.

Trustee Bertschy stated that due to time constraints, this item will be discussed further at the next meeting.

**6. PENDING BUSINESS**

None at this time.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS**

None at this time.

**8. ACTION STEPS REVIEW**

1. Send memo clarifying what per diems are and how they are currently accounted for.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:17 p.m., Trustee Montez MOVED TO ADJOURN. Motion seconded by Executive Director Cahill and carried on a unanimous aye of those present.

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Respectfully Submitted by Alicia Woodworth  
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary