

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, HELD AT 6:30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2026 HELD AT THE BONNIE W. NOBLE CENTER FOR PARK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, 1125 WEST LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA, IL

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Trustees Joyce Harant, Reagan Leslie Hill, Alexander Sierra, Ron Silver, Mark Slover, Vice President Steve Montez, and President Robert Johnson

TRUSTEES ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Emily Cahill, Brianna Cobb, Becky Fredrickson, Karrie Ross, Willie Howe, Chief Aaron Watkins, Bob Streitmatter, Mary Harden, Spencer Wilson, Attorneys Kevin Day and Justin Gunn, Austin Detmers, Miles Howley, Megan Mally, and Alicia Woodworth

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Johnson presided and called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken.

3. CALL FOR MOTION TO PERMIT TRUSTEE TO ATTEND MEETING ELECTRONICALLY

No request was made to attend the meeting electronically.

4. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A moment of silence was observed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. MINUTES

5.A. Approval of Minutes of the June 24, 2026 Regular Board Meeting

Trustee Slover MOVED TO APPROVE the June 24, 2026 Regular Board Meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Vice President Montez and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

5.B. Approval of Minutes of the July 1, 2026 Special Board Meeting

Trustee Hill MOVED TO APPROVE the July 1, 2026 Special Board meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra.

Prior to a vote, Trustee Hill stated that she had questions regarding statements contained within the July 1 Special Board Meeting minutes. Addressing Attorney Kevin Day, she requested that he answer several questions for the record before the Board acted on approval of the minutes.

Trustee Hill first asked whether the Board has the legal authority to exclude an elected trustee from a closed session by majority vote. She explained that the matter was referenced in the July 1 meeting minutes and requested clarification of the legal advice reflected in those minutes.

Attorney Day asked Trustee Hill to repeat her question. Trustee Hill again asked whether the Board possesses legal authority to exclude an elected trustee from a closed session by majority vote. Attorney Day asked whether that specific issue had been discussed during executive session. Trustee Hill responded that it had not been discussed in executive session, but rather during the Board's strategy session. She explained that the question appeared in the July 1 minutes and that she wanted additional context placed on the record before approving those minutes.

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President Johnson asked Trustee Hill to identify where in the minutes she was referring. Trustee Hill directed the Board to the second page, second paragraph, noting that it referenced her asking Attorney Day what legal basis existed regarding excluding an elected trustee from closed session.

Attorney Day responded that the second paragraph of the July 1 minutes accurately reflected the legal guidance he had provided during the earlier meeting. Trustee Hill then requested that Attorney Day answer the question directly with a "yes" or "no," explaining that she had also submitted additional legal questions by email approximately twelve minutes before the earlier strategy session and wanted those questions answered and placed into the record.

Attorney Day declined to provide additional substantive answers, stating instead: "My guidance to the Board is accurately stated in the minutes that are before you to approve."

Trustee Hill replied that if Attorney Day was unwilling to answer the questions directly, she wished to read all of her questions into the record.

President Johnson questioned whether the discussion was appropriate during consideration of the July 1 minutes, observing that the purpose of the agenda item was to determine whether the minutes accurately reflected what had occurred at that meeting. Trustee Hill responded that because the legal issue was referenced in the July 1 minutes, she believed clarification of Attorney Day's legal advice was appropriate before approving those minutes.

President Johnson asked whether the additional questions Trustee Hill intended to ask had actually been raised during the July 1 Special Board Meeting. Trustee Hill acknowledged that they had not.

President Johnson then stated that questions not raised during the July 1 meeting could not properly become part of those meeting minutes. Trustee Hill replied that she was asking the questions "for the record."

President Johnson again explained that the questions were not reflected in the July 1 minutes because they had not been asked during that meeting. Trustee Hill indicated she would instead raise the questions later under New Business or Other Business. President Johnson agreed that would be the more appropriate time and reiterated that the Board was currently attempting to complete action on approval of the July 1 minutes.

Trustee Hill then rescinded her original motion to approve the July 1 Special Board Meeting minutes.

Following the withdrawal of the original motion, Trustee Sierra then MOVED TO APPROVE the July 1, 2026 Special Board meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Trustee Silver and carried as follows on roll call vote: Trustee Harant – Aye, Trustee Hill – Nay, Trustee Sierra – Aye, Trustee Silver – Aye, Trustee Slover – Aye, Vice President Montez – Aye, President Johnson – Aye. Results: 6 – Aye; 1 – Nay; 0 – Abstain

5.C. Approval of Minutes of the May 6, 2026 Special Board Meeting

Trustee Harant MOVED TO APPROVE the May 6, 2026 Special Board Meeting Minutes.
Motion seconded by Vice President Montez and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

6. CITIZEN REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Julie Banks addressed the Board regarding security services being provided at certain Park District special events.

Ms. Banks stated that she wished to make the Board aware that, to her understanding, the company currently contracted to provide security services at some Park District special events was not licensed to provide those services in the State of Illinois or in any other state. She advised that she had supporting documentation to substantiate her statement and requested permission to submit the information to the Board for its review. Ms. Banks thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and concluded her comments.

7. SPECIAL PROCLAMATION

7.A. National Park and Recreation Professionals Day

President Johnson read the following Proclamation:
National Park and Recreation Professionals Day July 22, 2026

WHEREAS, parks and recreation professionals help build stronger, healthier, and more connected communities by creating places where people can play, learn, explore, gather, and experience

WHEREAS, the dedicated employees of the Peoria Park District serve our community every day by caring for our parks, trails, recreation centers, pools, golf courses, camps, natural areas, and cherished destinations, including Peoria Zoo, Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum, Owens Ice Center, Peoria RiverFront, and many other public spaces and programs that enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike; and

WHEREAS, through their expertise, creativity, and commitment to public service, these professionals protect our community's natural and cultural resources, promote health and wellness, inspire lifelong learning, foster meaningful connections, and create memorable experiences that improve quality of life; and

WHEREAS, National Park and Recreation Professionals Day, celebrated during National Park and Recreation Month, provides an opportunity to recognize and thank the individuals whose daily work strengthens neighborhoods, supports conservation, and helps ensure that our parks and public spaces remain vibrant, welcoming, and accessible for generations to come;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Board of Trustees of the Peoria Park District hereby recognizes July 22, 2026, as National Park and Recreation Professionals Day, and extends its sincere gratitude and appreciation to every Peoria Park District employee whose dedication, professionalism, and passion make our mission possible and help create a more vibrant, healthy, and connected community for everyone.
Adopted this 22nd day of July, 2026.

8. STAFF REPORTS

8.A. Executive Director

Executive Director Emily Cahill reported that she did not have any formal announcements to present but noted that several staff members had prepared reports for the Board. She stated that she appreciated the opportunity for staff to share updates on their respective departments and indicated she would be available to answer any questions following the presentations.

8.B. Manager – Luthy Botanical Garden

Luthy Botanical Garden Manager Bob Streitmatter announced that Luthy Botanical Garden had been accredited as a Level II Arboretum through ArbNet, an international accreditation program headquartered at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois. He noted that Donovan Park had previously received accreditation and expressed satisfaction that both facilities are now recognized within the ArbNet system.

Mr. Streitmatter explained that the accreditation adds significant value to the Botanical Garden by increasing its visibility to a broader audience while encouraging continued focus on tree planting, collection management, and long-term stewardship. He noted that proper tree management is becoming increasingly important as the Peoria area has recently been reclassified into a warmer plant hardiness zone, requiring thoughtful planning for future tree selection and maintenance.

He further explained that he hopes this achievement represents the first step toward establishing a multi-site arboretum encompassing several Park District properties. He suggested beginning with the Glen Oak Park campus before expanding to include Donovan Park, Giant Oak Park, Bradley Park, Detweiller Park, and other locations containing notable tree collections. He stated that creating a GPS-based tree inventory would allow visitors to locate and learn about significant trees using their mobile devices, providing additional educational and interpretive opportunities while encouraging greater appreciation of the District's tree resources.

Trustee Slover asked how many tree species were required to achieve Level II accreditation. Mr. Streitmatter responded that Level II requires approximately 100 species of trees and woody shrubs, noting that Luthy Botanical Garden easily exceeded that threshold.

Vice President Montez asked what additional requirements distinguish Level II from higher accreditation levels. Mr. Streitmatter explained that Level II places greater emphasis on educational programming, horticultural activities, and public outreach. He stated that future levels require additional staffing and a stronger research component.

Executive Director Cahill informed the Board that the District intended to issue a press release announcing the achievement following the meeting, explaining that staff wanted Mr. Streitmatter to have the opportunity to share the accomplishment with the Board before it was released publicly.

President Johnson and several Trustees congratulated Mr. Streitmatter and thanked him for his leadership and continued dedication to the Botanical Garden.

8.C. Chief of Police

Police Chief Aaron Watkins presented the June 2026 Police Report. Chief Watkins reported that Park Police responded to 15 incidents during June, consisting of 10 criminal reports and five non-

criminal incidents. Officers also issued eight traffic citations, eight ordinance citations, and sixteen parking citations.

Chief Watkins explained that many of the parking citations issued at Bradley Park resulted from vehicles being left overnight by patrons of nearby businesses. He stated that the Police Department has begun working with local establishments along Farmington Road while also evaluating improved signage to discourage overnight parking within the park.

President Johnson thanked Chief Watkins and Park Police officers for their work during recent activities at Stadium Park, noting that he had personally received positive feedback from neighborhood residents regarding the officers' visibility and professionalism during weekend events.

Chief Watkins explained that officers have experienced an increase in unauthorized "pop-up parties" organized through social media. He stated that Park Police actively monitor social media platforms and respond when such gatherings are identified. He reported that officers encountered numerous violations, including vehicles parked on park property, alcohol violations, substance use, unauthorized merchandising, and unapproved vending activities. He noted that organizers had been selling wristbands for alcoholic beverages and that officers utilized every applicable Park District ordinance to address those violations.

Chief Watkins explained that enforcement activity at Sommer Park resulted from a lengthy investigation involving multiple incidents over an extended period. He stated that officers compiled information from several previous events before issuing citations to an individual responsible for repeated violations over multiple years.

President Johnson thanked Chief Watkins and Park Police for their continued efforts to maintain public safety throughout the District.

8.D. Superintendent of Human Resources

-Contributions Committee Scholarship Recognition

On behalf of Superintendent of Human Resources Shalesse Pie, Director of Equity and Inclusion Brianna Cobb presented the Employee Contributions Fund Scholarship Awards.

Ms. Cobb explained that the Employee Contributions Fund is entirely supported through voluntary employee payroll contributions of \$2.50 per paycheck and operates independently of the District's operating budget. In addition to providing scholarships, the fund assists employees during illness, hospitalization, and bereavement.

She explained that scholarship applicants are children or legal dependents of employees working more than 1,000 hours annually. Applications were evaluated based upon academic achievement, extracurricular involvement, educational goals, career aspirations, and personal accomplishments.

The committee selected four scholarship recipients, each receiving \$850, for a total of \$3,400 awarded.

Recipients recognized included:

- Savannah Grachek, attending the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater to study Supply Chain Management with a minor in Audio Production.
- Bailey Dilap, attending Illinois Central College majoring in Psychology with plans to pursue Counseling or Social Work.
- Ellie Cahill, attending Illinois Wesleyan University pursuing Nursing with a minor in Business Administration. A letter expressing appreciation was read in her absence due to work commitments.
- Tyler Loftus, attending Bradley University studying Electrical Engineering. His written message of appreciation was also read to the Board.

Ms. Cobb recognized the members of the Employee Contributions Committee for their service, including Scott Loftus, Shalesse Pie, Jaylen Jenkins, Nick Sutter Downs, Elona Mason, Tom Miller, Brittany O'Day, and herself.

President Johnson congratulated each scholarship recipient on behalf of the Board of Trustees and expressed appreciation to the Employee Contributions Committee for supporting future educational opportunities for employees' families.

8.E. Superintendent of Community and Special Events

Superintendent Nick Conrad opened his report by presenting a highlight video featuring the 2026 Jubilee Day celebration.

Mr. Conrad reported that the event attracted approximately 10,300 attendees, significantly exceeding the anticipated attendance of 2,000–3,000 visitors. He stated that relocating the celebration to the RiverFront provided additional capacity while creating a more vibrant festival atmosphere.

He noted several enhancements made during the event, including:

Expansion of food vendors from three vendors in 2025 to thirteen vendors in 2026.

Enhancement of the evening drone show through the addition of 50 drones and 15 pyrotechnic drones.

Financial assistance provided through an operating grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), secured with assistance from Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth.

Mr. Conrad thanked numerous Park District departments whose collaborative efforts contributed to the success of the event, noting that event operations began at approximately 9:00 a.m. and concluded around 1:00 a.m. following cleanup activities.

He also reviewed several recent and upcoming special events, including:

- Streets Belong to Me – Luau Edition, which attracted approximately 400 participants at Glen Oak Park.
- Red, White & Boom, during which additional security measures were successfully implemented in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies and emergency responders.

- The upcoming Streets Belong to Me Backpack Giveaway at Trewyn Park in partnership with the Peoria Fire Department.
- Upcoming cultural festivals, including Fiesta en el Rio, Soul Fest, India Fest, Irish Fest, Oktoberfest, and the Fine Art Fair.

Mr. Conrad encouraged Trustees to attend upcoming festivals using the event passes distributed prior to the meeting, noting that these events highlight the District's partnerships, cultural diversity, and community engagement.

President Johnson thanked Mr. Conrad and the Community and Special Events staff for the extraordinary amount of work required to successfully coordinate the District's special events and festivals.

Trustee Sierra asked whether all cultural festivals receive DCEO funding.

Mr. Conrad clarified that Jubilee Day was the only event currently supported through the DCEO operating grant. He explained that other cultural festivals receive more limited assistance through tourism funding administered by Discover Peoria and the City of Peoria.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.A. Finance Committee – Approval of Accounts Payable

Finance Committee Chair Trustee Slover reported that the Finance Committee had examined the bills submitted for payment and, on behalf of the committee, MOVED that the President and Secretary be authorized to issue orders on the Treasurer for payment of the accounts payable in the amounts presented. Motion was seconded by Trustee Silver. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

9.B. Planning Committee – Approved Minutes of June 3, 2026 Meeting

The Planning Committee Submits to the Full Board for Review the Approved Minutes of the June 3, 2026 Meeting

Planning Committee Chair Trustee Harant presented the approved minutes of the June 3, 2026 Planning Committee Meeting for review by the full Board.

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.A. Ordinance #418 – Disposal of Personal Property

Karrie Ross presented Ordinance No. 418, authorizing the disposal of surplus personal property owned by the Peoria Park District. She explained that this is an annual housekeeping item presented to the Board each year to authorize the disposal of equipment and other property that is no longer needed for District operations.

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO APPROVE Ordinance No. 418 – Disposal of Personal Property. Motion seconded by Trustee Hill. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

10.B. E-Z Go Golf Cart Purchase

Executive Director Cahill informed the Board that staff requested removal of the E-Z Go Golf Cart Purchase from the agenda.

10.C. Axon Camera Agreement

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO APPROVE the Axon Camera Agreement and authorize staff and legal counsel to finalize the Master Services Agreement. Motion seconded by Vice President Montez.

Before the vote, Trustee Harant stated that she had several questions regarding the proposed agreement.

Trustee Harant first asked about the confidentiality provisions contained within the Master Services Agreement, specifically requesting clarification regarding what information would be considered confidential.

Attorney Day explained that the confidentiality language related to information protected under the agreement and confirmed that the agreement accurately reflected those obligations.

Trustee Harant then asked whether Axon would notify the Park District if the company received a subpoena requesting information or video evidence.

Police Chief Aaron Watkins explained that all evidentiary video belongs to the Park District and is controlled by the District. He stated that requests for evidence would ultimately be processed through the Park District because the District owns the evidence, even though it is stored using Axon's services. Attorney Day added that the agreement also recognizes disclosures required by law, including subpoenas.

Trustee Harant next asked about Axon's cloud storage services and whether evidence would be maintained on Park District servers or on Axon's systems.

District IT staff explained that the system utilizes Axon's cloud-based servers rather than hardware physically located at the Park District. Staff noted that "cloud" simply refers to computers maintained by another provider. When Trustee Harant expressed concern regarding security of remotely stored evidence, Chief Watkins responded that law enforcement evidence is subject to significantly stricter security standards than ordinary commercial data and stated he was confident Axon complies with all applicable security requirements. Attorney Day added that the agreement specifically addresses Axon's responsibility to safeguard District information and that Axon must comply with applicable federal and FBI requirements governing law enforcement evidence.

Trustee Sierra asked whether the proposed system was the same camera platform used by the City of Peoria and whether information collected would become part of any national databases, including license plate recognition or facial recognition systems.

Chief Watkins responded that the agreement relates solely to the storage and management of body camera and in-car camera video evidence and does not involve license plate recognition or facial recognition databases.

Trustee Harant also asked about the retention schedule for recorded evidence, noting that the agreement referenced retention periods extending up to one hundred years.

Chief Watkins explained that retention periods are governed by the District's policies and applicable legal requirements. He stated that retention varies depending upon the nature of the

incident and that evidence involving serious crimes, such as homicide investigations, must be retained permanently or for extended periods as required by law.

Trustee Harant asked an additional question regarding preparation of police reports and whether reports and associated video evidence would be maintained together.

Chief Watkins explained that once video evidence is uploaded, it is digitally linked to the associated police report, although reports themselves are maintained in a separate records management system. Access to both reports and evidence is controlled by the District through established authorization procedures.

Trustee Hill thanked Trustee Harant for asking detailed questions and stated that she appreciated the discussion. She then asked Chief Watkins whether current Standard Operating Procedures adequately address the use of advancing technology and whether policies governing body camera usage would require revision.

Chief Watkins responded that the District already has Standard Operating Procedures governing body cameras because officers currently utilize Motorola equipment. He explained that while the transition to Axon may require updates to certain procedures, the District already has comprehensive policies regulating the use of body cameras and associated technology.

Trustee Hill also asked whether existing policies include safeguards preventing intentional or unintentional misuse of identifiable information.

Chief Watkins explained that every recording is permanently associated with a specific incident report, every access to recorded evidence is electronically logged and time stamped, and internal auditing makes unauthorized use readily identifiable.

Executive Director Cahill added that the District has established procedures governing release of video evidence and that all releases outside the agency require her approval. She further explained that the District's original body camera policies were developed through a federally funded grant involving multiple local law enforcement agencies and therefore were required to satisfy rigorous federal standards before funding was awarded.

Following completion of Board discussion, President Johnson called for the vote. Motion to approve carried by unanimous roll call vote.

10.D. Ratification of Phone Poll: Change Order – PlayHouse Exhibit Improvements

Trustee Harant MOVED TO RATIFY the phone poll approving the change order. Motion seconded by Trustee Slover. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

10.E. Appointment of Glen Oak Amphitheater Ad Hoc Committee Members

President Johnson presented the proposed membership of the Glen Oak Amphitheater Ad Hoc Committee.

Executive Director Cahill explained that the committee was being established to help move planning for the Glen Oak Amphitheater project forward and noted that Trustee Silver had assembled an excellent group of individuals representing a variety of backgrounds and expertise.

Trustee Hill asked whether meetings of the ad hoc committee would be subject to the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Attorney Day confirmed that the committee would be subject to the Open Meetings Act and that trustees and members of the public would be welcome to attend its meetings.

President Johnson thanked Trustee Silver for his efforts in organizing the committee and complimented him on the quality of the proposed membership. Trustee Silver thanked President Johnson and other Board members for their recommendations and assistance in identifying prospective committee members.

Attorney Day recommended that the Board formally accept the committee appointments through a motion.

Trustee Slover MOVED TO ACCEPT the proposed Glen Oak Amphitheater Ad Hoc Committee and its membership as presented. Motion seconded by Trustee Silver. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

11. CALENDAR OF CONSENT ITEMS

- 11.A. Bid – Sommer Farm Culvert Replacement**
- 11.B. Bid – Martin Luther King Jr. Park Shelter**
- 11.C. Bid – Martin Luther King Jr. Park Swings**
- 11.D. Bid – Martin Luther King Jr. Park Exterior Exercise Equipment**
- 11.E. Bid – Markwoodlands Park Dugout Shelter**
- 11.F. Bid – Peoria Zoo Boardwalk Strip Lights**

Trustee Sierra requested that Items 11.B (Martin Luther King Jr. Park Shelter), 11.C (Martin Luther King Jr. Park Swings), and 11.D (Martin Luther King Jr. Park Exterior Exercise Equipment) be removed from the Calendar of Consent for separate consideration. Trustee Sierra stated that he was pleased to see the continued investment in Martin Luther King Jr. Park and expressed appreciation to the City of Peoria for transferring funding to the Park District to support the improvements. He also thanked staff, specifically Becky Fredrickson, for the earlier presentation outlining the planned improvements for the park and stated that he was excited to see the project move forward.

Vice President Montez requested that Item 11.A (Sommer Farm Culvert Replacement) also be removed. Vice President Montez stated that he had questions regarding the location of the proposed culvert replacement. He explained that, following the heavy rainfall experienced during July, he had observed several areas along the roadway entering Sommer Farm that appeared to be eroding and wanted clarification as to whether the proposed project addressed those locations.

Staff explained that the project specifically involves replacement of the large culvert carrying the creek beneath the roadway, rather than the smaller roadside culverts. Staff acknowledged that Vice President Montez's observations regarding roadway erosion were accurate and noted that maintenance crews intended to stabilize those additional areas separately.

Vice President Montez asked what accommodations would be made while construction was underway because the roadway serves as the primary access route into Sommer Farm.

Staff responded that construction would be coordinated with park management to minimize disruption to programs and activities. It was anticipated that the work would be scheduled during the fall after the primary operating season had concluded.

Vice President Montez MOVED TO APPROVE Calendar of Consent item 11.A. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO APPROVE Calendar of Consent Items 11.B., 11.C., and 11.D. Motion seconded by Trustee Hill and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO APPROVE Calendar of Consent Items 11.E. and 11.F. Motion seconded by Trustee Harant and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

12. PENDING BUSINESS

None at this time.

13. COMMUNICATIONS

None at this time.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

President Johnson first referenced the District's ongoing Capital Improvement Program and asked staff about the approximate cost of constructing a splash pad comparable to the recently completed facility at Lakeview Park. Executive Director Emily Cahill advised that a splash pad of that size typically costs approximately \$1 million. President Johnson remarked that he would like to see a similar amenity considered for the Peoria Heights area in the future. Executive Director Cahill responded that, as future capital improvement projects are evaluated, potential projects are reviewed using the District's prioritization matrix and would be considered through that established process.

Executive Director Cahill reminded the Board of several upcoming District events, including the "Streets Belong to Me" program scheduled for the following day at Trewyn Park and the July 30 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new playground at Endres Park.

Trustee Hill then stated that she wished to place into the record a series of questions that she had previously submitted by email. She explained that the questions were the same ones she had attempted to raise during consideration of the July 1 Special Board Meeting minutes.

Trustee Hill first asked whether the Board possesses the legal authority to exclude an elected trustee from a closed session by majority vote.

President Johnson noted that the Board had already discussed that issue earlier in the meeting during consideration of the July 1 Special Board Meeting minutes and suggested that the Board rely upon the written information previously distributed.

Trustee Hill responded that, for purposes of transparency, she believed the public should hear the legal answer stated clearly during the meeting.

Before responding to the question, Attorney Day addressed the Board. He stated that while he understood and respected governmental transparency, he believed the Board should also protect the attorney-client relationship between legal counsel and the Board. He explained that legal advice provided to the Board is subject to attorney-client privilege and advised that he would defer to the direction of either the Board as a whole or the Chair regarding whether he should answer the legal questions in an open meeting.

Several Trustees then discussed whether answering detailed legal questions during Other Business was appropriate. Discussion centered on balancing governmental transparency with preserving attorney-client privilege. Trustees noted that legal advice is routinely provided to the Board in confidence and expressed concern that requiring legal counsel to publicly answer hypothetical legal questions could compromise that relationship.

President Johnson indicated that his preference was to follow the advice of legal counsel and to avoid placing privileged legal discussions into the public record unnecessarily. He stated that he wished to protect both the District and its attorney-client relationship with counsel.

Trustee Hill continued with additional questions that had previously been submitted to Attorney Day.

Trustee Sierra summarized his understanding of Attorney Day's prior legal guidance as permitting trustees, through official Board action, to exclude another member of the Board from a closed session. Attorney Day stated that Trustee Sierra's reading of the July 1 minutes and summary of his prior guidance were accurate. Trustee Sierra then stated for the record that, based on that legal guidance, it was permissible for trustees to exclude another Board member from a closed session through official Board action. Attorney Day declined to answer several subsequent substantive legal questions in open session, citing prior verbal and written guidance protected by attorney-client privilege, but did answer a procedural question concerning the public motion to enter closed session and the recording of votes, objections, and comments in the minutes.

The discussion continued among Board members regarding the distinction between legal advice that is appropriately discussed in open session and advice that should remain confidential. Trustee Hill stated for the record that the questions had been submitted by email nearly 20 days earlier and that she had not received written responses clearly answering all of them. She stated that she understood she was being directed not to ask the remaining questions publicly. Attorney Day clarified that he had not directed any trustee at any time whether the trustee could or could not speak, while reiterating his concern that public disclosure of legal guidance could jeopardize attorney-client privilege. President Johnson then concluded that sufficient discussion had occurred and closed that portion of Other Business, stating that he intended to follow counsel's guidance in order to protect the District. Trustee Hill asked that the record reflect that the discussion was being closed without answers to all of her questions.

Later during Other Business, Trustee Sierra raised a separate legal question regarding trustee communications.

Trustee Sierra referenced a July 10 communication distributed to the Board concerning email usage by trustees. He noted that one statement instructed trustees not to use email to discuss District business with other Board members and asked Attorney Day to clarify the intended scope of that guidance because, as written, it appeared overly broad.

Attorney Day explained that the guidance was intended to address compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. He stated that trustees should not engage in contemporaneous communications regarding public business with a majority of a quorum of the Board or any committee outside of an open meeting. He explained that this limitation was intended to prevent deliberations that could constitute an improper meeting under the Open Meetings Act and indicated that this is the standard he personally follows when advising public bodies.

Trustee Sierra acknowledged that clarification, explaining that he had initially interpreted the email as prohibiting trustees from communicating about any Park District business by email whatsoever. Attorney Day reiterated that the restriction specifically concerns contemporaneous communications involving a majority of a quorum regarding public business outside a properly noticed public meeting. Trustee Sierra thanked Attorney Day for the clarification.

Trustee Harant revisited the trustee-attorney communication policy adopted on July 1. Discussion focused on the process for an individual trustee to request legal research or an opinion from counsel and on the policy provision requiring such a request to be brought to the full Board for authorization. Trustee Harant expressed that the process creates an organized communication channel and does not prevent a trustee from asking the Board in open session to authorize a legal inquiry; the Board could then determine publicly whether the requested legal work was warranted.

Trustee Sierra expressed a different concern, stating that an individual trustee should not have to obtain approval before legal counsel may respond to that trustee. He referred to the policy's authorization process as potentially allowing the Board President, Executive Director, or Board to act as "gatekeepers" to legal guidance and questioned whether denial of Board authorization could leave an individual trustee without access to counsel on a matter related to the trustee's duties. Trustee Harant disagreed with that characterization and emphasized that requests would be presented to the full Board for a public determination rather than being privately denied by designated individuals.

The discussion continued regarding the purpose and effect of the policy, including whether the procedure was necessary, whether it differed from practices of other governmental bodies, and the distinction between managing or authorizing District-funded legal work and restricting a trustee's ability to raise a legal question. Trustee Harant specifically requested that this distinction be reflected in the minutes.

Discussion then shifted to trustee communications generally. President Johnson commented that he believed the Board should rely on facts before making accusations or conclusions regarding trustee conduct and stated that any concerns should be investigated before being discussed publicly.

During that discussion, Trustee Silver remarked that he believed a trustee had been abusing the email communication process. Trustee Hill requested that, if such an allegation was being made publicly, the trustee involved should be identified so that individual would have an opportunity to respond. Trustee Silver declined to identify any specific trustee, stating only that he believed misuse had occurred. President Johnson ended the discussion, indicating that the matter could be reviewed further and, if necessary, revisited at a future meeting after additional facts had been gathered.

Trustee Sierra concluded the discussion by emphasizing that he welcomes open dialogue among trustees conducted in good faith. He expressed concern that incomplete information or statements lacking context

can create confusion when placed into the public record. He thanked President Johnson for redirecting the discussion and maintaining order during the meeting.

15. ACTION STEPS REVIEW

None noted at this time.

16. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:07 PM Trustee Silver MOVED TO ADJOURN. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra and carried unanimously on voice vote.

Full discussion can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dt-L5kyPMLY>

Submitted by Alicia Woodworth
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary