

## **Taylorville Park District Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes April 28, 2025**

### **Manners Park Dining Hall**

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The Taylorville Park District Board of Trustees met Monday, April 28, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in Manners Park Dining Hall. President Marlane Miller called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Present: Marlane Miller, Sue Phillips, Sherri Craggs, Debbie Gatton, Ben Dempsey, Jessica Franks, Evan Mitchell, Tanya Reno.

Excused Absence: Blake Heimsness (new Board member)

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### **Swearing in of new Board Members**

Newly elected board members Sherri Craggs, Evan Mitchell and Deborah Gatton read the oath of office together. Oath documents were signed and notarized and will be filed in the park office. The fourth new board member, Blake Heimsness was absent due to a medical issue, will be sworn in at the next meeting. President Miller read the Board Member Code of Conduct and stated that new members must take State-required Open Meetings Act training. In addition, President Miller stated Board members, they will be Freedom of Information officers.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Trustee Reno made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 24 , 2025 meeting as submitted. Trustee Phillips seconded. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Marlane Miler—yes, Sue Phillips—yes, Debbie Gatton—yes, Sherri Craggs—yes, Evan Mitchell—yes, Tanya Reno—yes.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Trustee Reno announced the current fund balances:

General Fund	281,780.62
Museum (Chautauqua) Fund	107,568.45
Social Security	16,888.60
IMRF	125,479.11
Employee Incentive	8,105.33
Bond Fund	27,320.16
Lakeshore Golf	7,303.61
Skatepark Fund	30,471.31
Money Market Accounts:	487.73
	150,212.86
	300, 671.67

Trustee Craggs asked if the list of fund balances agree with the Profit/Loss report. President Miller said that she would expand on this issue later in the meeting.

### **Correspondence/Guests/Public Comments**

President Miller read a letter sent to her from Destiny Smith. Ms. Smith detailed her concerns about lack of park playgrounds designed for children with disabilities. In addition, she noted that there are no playgrounds set aside for toddlers and pre-schoolers, specifically. Miller said that there is a swing for children with disabilities but it is installed just outside the dining hall because it was vandalized at its previous location which was closer to the playgrounds. The Parks's current accommodations include ADA compliant sidewalks, a lift at the pool, and wheelchair accessible public restrooms. Jessica Franks, Recreation Director, reported that she has researched integrated, accessible playgrounds and has applied for a grant to cover the cost of installing this equipment at Jayne's park.

Guest Matthew Casner brought the board's attention to the overgrowth of bush honeysuckle throughout Manners Park. He explained that this plant is invasive and damaging to other plants due to toxins emitted through their roots. He distributed pictures of the trees and information obtained from IDNR. Links to additional information were included in the packet. He stated that there are four ways to eradicate the honeysuckle: burning, spraying, cutting them down/applying chemicals to the stumps, and pulling them out by the roots which is the most efficient option. Ben Dempsey, superintendent, said that his crew has cut down many honeysuckle bushes but those that grow around the pond are difficult to access due to the steep banks. Mrs. Franks said that removal of honeysuckle is an IPARKS initiative, as well. Mr. Casner reported that emerald ash borer and oak wilt are killing trees all over the State of Illinois, as well. In response to questions from Trustee Reno, Mr. Casner said that the best trees to plant are white oak, hickory and walnut since they support wildlife. Mr. Dempsey will follow up on these issues.

### **New Business**

Aaron Durham who represents the men's softball team was unable to attend due to work responsibilities.

President Miller and Trustees Phillips and Reno interviewed Linda Moomey for the vacant office administrator position. All three were impressed with her resume and relevant experience. They recommend hiring her to work 4 days per week at \$19.23 per hour. Discussion followed regarding how many hours she will work each day and whether she should be hired as a salaried or hourly employee, Trustee Sue Phillips said that she will call the Department of Labor and report their answers.

Trustee Reno made a motion to hire Linda Moomey as Office Administrator. Trustee Phillips seconded. Motion carried on a voice vote:

Marlane Miler—yes, Sue Phillips—yes, Debbie Gatton—yes, Sherri Craggs—yes, Evan Mitchell—yes, Tanya Reno—yes.

President Miller announced that accountant, Sheridan Pulley, has chosen to discontinue performing audits, including those for the Park District. Miller stated that she called accounting firms that Mr. Pulley recommended, and many other local and out-of-town firms, but only two responded. One of the two declined, but Sikich in Springfield agreed to audit the Park District at a cost of \$20,000.00.

Trustee Tanya Reno made a motion to approve the Sikich Company to perform the annual audit costing \$20,000.00

Trustee Craggs seconded the motion. The motion passed on a voice vote:

Marlane Miler—yes, Sue Phillips—yes, Debbie Gatton—yes, Sherri Craggs—yes, Evan Mitchell—yes, Tanya Reno—yes.

Trustee Phillips and President Miller met with two Sikich accountants to discuss the current status of the Park's accounts. Sikich will do a forensic audit in specific categories. They will do the audit remotely and will charge an hourly rate.

Trustee Reno made a motion to proceed with a forensic audit by Sikich accountants.

Trustee Phillips seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote:

Marlane Miler—yes, Sue Phillips—yes, Debbie Gatton—yes, Sherri Craggs—yes, Evan Mitchell—yes, Tanya Reno—yes.

The 2025 Budget that was passed at the March 24, 2025 board meeting was held in the office for the required 30 days. The budget will be submitted to the Christian County Clerk as Ordinance 2025-2.

### **Maintenance Supervisor and Recreation Director Reports**

Supervisor Ben Dempsey listed recent projects completed and/or in progress. Reconstruction of the wind-damaged Hafliger dugout is complete and will be painted in the near future. The crew is prepping ball diamonds for baseball and softball. A 3-bay sink has been installed in the Don Bragg concession stand per IDPH requirements. Also at Don Bragg, a new sign at the entrance to the facility will be installed May 7<sup>th</sup>. The maintenance crew will create a parking lot closer to the maintenance shed so that they will not use railroad property to park their personal vehicles. Nolen Plumbing cleaned the sewer lines at Jayne's Park and they are working well. On April 16, firefighters were called to extinguish a leaf fire that had gotten out of control. There was no damage to trees or property. Mr. Dempsey reported an increase in the number of homeless people in the park. He called the police twice for assistance. Dempsey will remain vigilant and handle incidents per park/city regulations.

Recreation Director Jessica Franks reported that Aaron Samson assisted in updating the concession stand at Don Bragg. The health department has checked the completed work and will submit official approval for use. Property adjacent to the Don Bragg sports Center along a portion of Franklin Street and on the west edge of the seller's lots is being offered for sale. The seller did not set a price. Superintendent Dempsey estimates that purchasing the properties could accommodate 40 additional parking spaces. Mrs. Franks spoke to two real estate agents (not representing the seller) who estimated \$15,000 for the smaller space on the west and \$50,000 for the Franklin Street space are fair purchase prices. They asked if the buyer would be interested in donating the larger property to the Park District, and by doing so, could reduce his tax obligation by \$15—17,500. If the land was purchased, the parking lot project could be delayed until funds were available.

Trustee Craggs made a motion to pursue the purchase of the smaller (west) property for \$15,000 contingent upon the seller's willingness to donate the larger (north) property.

Trustee Sue Phillips seconded. Motion carried on a voice vote:

Marlane Miler—yes, Sue Phillips—yes, Debbie Gatton—yes, Sherri Craggs—yes, Evan Mitchell—yes, Tanya Reno—yes.

The 40-Mile-an-Hour Club (classic car owners) will sell t-shirts that include the park district's name. The group will be in the park on concert dates 7/11/25 and 8/1/25. They asked if TPD would purchase 60 commemorative magnets that display a picture of the Manners Park Arch. The cost is \$180.00. They will sell the magnets on the dates of the car cruises in the park. Trustee Phillips made a motion to purchase 60 magnets for \$180.00. Trustee Mitchell seconded. Motion carried on a voice vote:

Marlane Miler—yes, Sue Phillips—yes, Debbie Gatton—yes, Sherri Craggs—yes, Evan Mitchell—yes, Tanya Reno—yes.

An anonymous person is willing to sell a set of greeting cards displaying prints of watercolorist Robert Johnson's paintings. The person did not set a price. An interested donor contributed \$50.00 toward the purchase of the cards which can be sold at special park events such as Christmas in the Park.

Mrs. Franks reported that Sawyer Falduto, Pool Fund Bond managers, reported earnings of \$31,459 since the inception of the fund. Fund total \$6,894,787.

Davis Memorial Christian Church, Taylorville Christian Church are conducting a "Rhythm of the Community" event in the Chautauqua building on June 13, 2025. They will invite other churches to participate.

Fundraising for Jayne's Park tennis courts totals \$12,209.00 to date. The recent food truck BBQ sales netted \$4000.00 (included in the total).

TPD contracts with Direct Energy to reduce electricity charges. They "use" Ameren's line, but bill separately for their services. Ameren bills for the gas component of the billings. TPD should continue to pay both companies.

#### **Ben Dempsey--Maintenance Supervisor Report**

Ben Morrison, local electrician, will upgrade the power box at the Chautauqua building. These upgrades will accommodate the bands' and food trucks' power requirements.

Concert managers submitted required stage dimensions for upcoming performances. After comparing the pros and cons of building a permanent stage in the Chautauqua building, Dempsey said that a modular stage would work well for TPD's needs. The portable sections could be used in total or individually in several locations and are easily stored on dollies when not in use. The setup would take two hours or less. The cost is \$20,825.54 which could be paid from the museum fund. President Miller said that the concession stand would have to be taken out of the Chautauqua building if museum fund money is used. Mrs. Franks said that renting a stage is \$3200.00 per use. Trustee Mitchell said that he can check with his contacts about using their stages.

Trustee Craggs made a motion to pursue the purchase of a modular stage for \$20,825.54. Trustee Mitchell seconded the motion.

Mrs. Franks reported that she has had several requests to rent the outdoor pavilion at Don Bragg. Discussion followed on the logistics of public vs. private access to outdoor areas. The matter was put on hold until more research is gathered.

Trustee Reno made motion to approve all reports. Sue Phillips seconded. Motion carried.

Trustee Reno stated that TPD pays \$65.00 for the D.J. service at the monthly Kids R Kids dances held in the Dining Hall. The payee has been Deborah Gatton in the past, but Mrs. Gatton is a new Park Board trustee. To avoid any conflict of interest, the new payee will be Kids R Kids. Trustee Gatton stated that the organization has a separate bank account under this name.

Tanya Reno made a motion to approve payment of all bills. Trustee Phillips seconded. Motion carried. President Miller made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Evan Mitchell seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Willison, Secretary Pro Tem