



**WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT
DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024
6:30 PM – MALLINCKRODT CENTER**

AGENDA

- 1.0 PARK DISTRICT DECENNIAL COMMITTEE MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**
- 2.0 ROLL CALL**
- 3.0 COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**
- 4.0 NEW BUSINESS**
 - 4.1 PRESENTATION: DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY**
- 5.0 SURVEY OF RESIDENTS IN ATTENDANCE FOR INPUT ON MATTERS DISCUSSED IN THE MEETING**
- 6.0 ADJOURNMENT**

If you are a person with a disability and need special accommodations to participate in and/or attend a Wilmette Park District meeting, please notify the Director's Office at 847-256-6100.



Wilmette Park District

**Decennial Committee on Local
Government Efficiency**

AGENDA

- Introductions
- Committee Purpose and Duties
- Meeting Schedule and Structure
- Review of Report Sections
- Discussion
- Survey of Visitors
- Adjournment

INTRODUCTIONS

The Committee consists of the following individuals:

- Kara Kosloskus, Board President
- Patrick Duffy, Board Vice President
- Cecilia Clarke, Board Commissioner
- Allison Frazier, Board Commissioner
- Julia Goebel, Board Commissioner
- Patrick Lahey, Board Commissioner
- Mike Murdock, Board Commissioner
- Steve Wilson, Executive Director and Board Secretary
- Kaine Osburn, Resident Member
- George Pearce, Resident Member

COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND DUTIES

- Purpose

- Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency Act, 50 ILCS 70/1, *et seq.*
 - Any local government that levy any tax (excluding municipalities and counties) must form a committee
- Study and report on local government efficiencies
- Every 10 years thereafter

- Duties

- Meet at least three times
- Review governing statutes, ordinances, rules, procedures, powers, jurisdiction, shared services, intergovernmental agreements, and interrelationships with other governmental units and the State of Illinois
- Connect data, research, and analyze as necessary
- Provide a written report to the Cook County Board by September 21, 2024

SCHEDULE AND STRUCTURE

- Schedule
 - At least 2 additional meetings, 3 in total
 - Monday's unless otherwise discussed
- Suggested Structure
 - Review Report Details
 - Review Homework
 - Discussion and Recommendations
 - Survey Visitors
 - Adjournment

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF DISTRICT

- The Park District was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of the Village of Wilmette in **1908**. All Illinois park districts, are governed by the Park District Code.
- Governed by a Board of **seven** (7) Commissioners
- Having a dedicated Board allows those elected representatives to remain focused solely on those facilities, programs, parks, and services.
- Because the Park District is a separate unit of local government, the revenue it generates can only be used for Park District purposes.
- The Park District does more with much fewer funding options. Unlike other units of local government that receive direct state funding as well as other numerous taxes, the Park District's only tax revenues come from a modest portion of a resident's overall property tax bill. In fact, despite its limited funding options, the District's share is only **4.07%** of the local tax bill in 2022.

ORDINANCES, RULES, POLICES AND PROCEDURES

- Board Policies and Procedures Manual
- Behavior Policy
- Comprehensive and Strategic Plans –
In process
- Entertainment Expense Policy
- Ergonomics Policy
- Ethics Ordinance
- Fair Share Policy
- Financial Assistance Program
- Fund Balance Policy
- General Conduct Ordinances
- Investment Policy
- Military Discount Policy
- Memorial Policy
- Naming Rights Policy
- Personnel Policy Manual
- Procurement Policy
- Public Comment Policy
- Purchasing Policy
- Seizure Prone Patron Policy
- Soccer Goal Policy
- Social Equity Policy
- Statement of Inclusion

SHARED SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS

- The Park District works diligently to provide the best possible programs, services, and facilities to our community at the least possible cost.
- Achieve this goal is by partnering with neighboring Park Districts, school districts, other units of local government within or near the community, state, non-profit organizations, and for-profit corporations.

Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA)

- NSSRA partners with **thirteen** local governments
- NSSRA utilizes all Park District facilities in addition to their own facility
- In 2022, NSSRA provided **338 programs** for people with disabilities in its thirteen partner communities, with **67** Wilmette Park District residents being served through these program offerings
- NSSRA supported **81** Wilmette Park District participants with **7704.82** hours of inclusive services in programs that were provided by the Wilmette Park District, which totaled **\$176,687**

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS - Other Local Units of Gov.

- Village of Wilmette
 - Centennial Comcast Station
 - Easement through Canal Shores for Sewer Line
 - Sanitary Tank at West Park
 - Storm Water for Temporary and Permanent Easement at 3 parks
 - Sustainability Coordinator
- District 39 - 2000-2050
- Village of Glenview
 - West Park Water Main Easement
- Various Other Units
 - ComEd Lease for Property along West Park
 - Cook County - North Shore Trail Feasibility Study IGA
 - MWRD Lease for Canal Shores, Gillson and Bateman Park Land
 - PTAB – Property Tax Appeal Board Consortium
 - Sublease Agreement with Canal Shores
 - U.S. Coast Guard Agreement

INFORMAL COOPERATION - Other Local Units of Gov.

- Elmwood Dunes Staffing
- Fair Share Concept
- Intergovernmental Working Group
- Mowing of Village Property
- Quarterly Meetings with Local Municipalities
- Shared Storage (Park District and Village)
- Special Events (3rd of July and Block Party)
 - Public Safety Protection
 - Planning and Execution
- Village Hall Office Lease

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS – State of Illinois

- Grant Programs
 - OSLAD
 - PARC
- Joint Purchasing Cooperatives
 - Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC – Trucks)
 - OMNIA Partners
 - Sourcewell

PARTNERSHIPS with ATHLETIC AFFILIATES

These partnerships save valuable resources for the community. Most of these organizations would be unable to construct and maintain their own sports fields, ice, courts, etc.

- APTA – Limited Paddle Tournament Play
- Loyola Academy –Field, Ice and Court Rentals
- New Trier – Pool, Ice and Court Rentals
- Spark Golf League
- USTA – Tennis Matches
- Wilmette Baseball Association – Field Rentals
- Wilmette Hockey – Ice Rental
- Wilmette Wings – Field Rentals

PARTNERSHIPS with COMMUNITY NON-PROFITS

- American Red Cross
- Boy Scouts of America
- Friends of the Green Bay Trail
- Go Green Wilmette
- National Charity League
- New Trier Extension
- New Trier Township Food Pantry
- Ouilmette Foundation
- Ouilmette Golf Club – Men's Club
- Student Government
- Women's Golf Association of Wilmette – Golf League
- Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce
- Wilmette Rotary
- Woman's Club of Wilmette

PARTNERSHIPS with FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- Chapman and Cutler, LLP
- Fat Shallot
- Gourmet Gorilla
- Illinois Funds
- The Lawn Restaurant
- Lauterbach & Amen
- NBC Universal – Online tee times, tee sheet management and marketing
- PDRMA
- Piper, Sandler & Co.
- Shark Shack
- UMB Bank
- Wintrust
- Various Recreation Vendors
 - Hot Shot Sports, Coach Abe, Chess Ed, Chicago Loves Dance, etc.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

- Use of Volunteers
- Youth Employment
- Joint Purchasing
 - Fitness Equipment
 - Golf Course Equipment
 - Parks and Planning Equipment
 - Vehicles
- Collaboration with other Districts on Best Practices
- Reliance on Non-Tax Revenue

TRANSPARENCY TO THE COMMUNITY

The Park District offers residents many opportunities to learn about the District as well as provide feedback including:

- Annual Budget Book and Comprehensive Financial Report
- Annual Property Tax Levy – Approved at an open Board Meeting
- Comptroller and County Financial Statements
- Monthly Board Meeting and Committee of the Whole Meeting - Public Comment, Meeting Minutes
- Monthly Board Brief Emails
- Monthly E-Newsletters
- Paper Newsletter – Explore *More!* – 3x a year
- Project Parks and Play Social Pinpoint Website
- Social Media – Event/program promotion, registration reminders, photo albums, etc.
- Website – Calendar, Bulletin Board, Nuts & Bolts, Projects and Plans, etc.
- Call or Email - Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at 847-256-6100 or email at connect@wilpark.org

TRANSPARENCY TO THE COMMUNITY

- Advisory Groups
 - Project Parks and Play – Comprehensive and Strategic Plan Advisory Panel
- Annual and Past Surveys
 - Center Fitness Club – Annual
 - Dog Park Location
 - Summer Camp – Annual
 - Playgrounds
 - Pickleball Locations
 - Project Parks and Play Community Wide Survey
 - Various Recreation Programs
- Public Hearings
 - Annual Budget and Appropriation Hearing
 - Gillson Landscape Plans
 - Hibbard Park Storm Water Project
 - Langdon Beach
 - Maple Park Playground
 - Platform Tennis Hut and Courts
 - West Park Playground

DISTRICT AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- 2023
 - Landmarks Illinois – Gillson Park – *In Process*
- 2022:
 - Aaa Bond Rating from Moody's Investor Services
 - Best Water Park Award
 - GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Reporting (2007-2022)
 - Illinois Department of Human Services Child Care Workforce Bonus
- 2018:
 - NSSRA Shining Star Partner Agency of the Year Award

DISTRICT AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Grants and Donations
 - ATPA Grants for Paddle Court Construction - \$30,000
 - Environmental Health Beach Program Grant- \$14,000
 - Invest in Cook Grant (North Shore Channel Trail Feasibility Study) - \$40,000
 - Midwest Grows Green - \$1,000
 - Yearly Bench/Brick Donations – Over 50 memorial benches and numerous memorial bricks
 - Ouilmette Foundation Scholarship Fund Donations - \$20,000/year
 - ComEd – Varies between \$5,000-\$20,000/year
 - Public Donations
- Additional Recognition
 - Various staff who are Certified Park and Recreation Professionals (CPRP)
 - B-20 Club Member (Green Fleet Partner Biodiesel)
 - Great Lakes Park Training Institute Board Member
 - IPRA/IAPD Joint Conference Committee Member
 - Midwest Grows Green Board Member
 - Midwest Institute of Park Executives Member (MIPE)

BENEFITS & SERVICES

The Park District serves the entire community from the youngest child to the oldest adult and all ages in between. It does so in a variety of ways.

- **FACILITIES** - The Park District offered a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities to the community last year:
 - 24 Playgrounds and 7 Picnic Shelters
 - 3,100 Linear Feet of Swimming Beach
 - Centennial Recreation Complex (Family Aquatic Center, 8 Tennis Courts, 2 Ice Rinks)
 - Community Recreation Center (Early Childhood Center, Center Fitness Club, Gymnastics Gym, Theater)
 - Lakeview Center and Beach House
 - Mallinckrodt Center
 - Platform Tennis Hut
 - Skate Park
 - Wallace Bowl
 - Wilmette Golf Club (Pro Shop, Restaurant, 18 Hole Golf Course, Driving Range and Practice Putting/Chipping Green)

BENEFITS & SERVICES

IMPROVEMENTS – The Park District completed the following improvements over the past 5 years:

- **2023**
 - Center Fitness Club Cardio Floor and Equipment Upgrades
 - Community Playfields Tennis/Pickleball Court Installation
 - Electric Car Charging Station (West Park)
 - Gymnastics Gym Foam Pit Upgrade
 - Keay Nature Center Path Revitalization and Installation of Nature Play Bump Outs
 - Keay Nature Center and Howard Park Parking Lot Resurfacing
 - Lakeview Center Renovation
 - Platform Tennis Hut and Court Expansions
 - Various Park Landscape Plans
 - Wilmette Golf Club Pond Stabilization

BENEFITS & SERVICES

- **2022**

- Center Fitness Club Functional Training Room Renovation
- Community Playfields Walking Path, Bathrooms and Shelter
- Electric Car Charging Station Installations (CRC, Golf Course)
- Maple Park Playground Installation
- Thornwood Park Tennis Court Resurfacing
- Various Park Landscape Plans
- Wilmette Golf Club Cart Path Installation
- Wilmette Golf Club Restaurant Renovation

- **2021**

- CRC Roof Replacement – Phase 3
- Gillson Park Tennis Courts Resurfaced

- **2020**

- CRC Roof Replacement – Phase 2
- Maple Park Tennis Courts Resurfaced

- **2019**

- Gillson Beach House Renovation



Questions?

DRAFT EFFICIENCY REPORT FOR THE
WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT
As of 2.2.24

**APPROVED BY THE PARK DISTRICT'S
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY**
ON _____ [INSERT DATE]



I. Purpose

The Wilmette Park District (“Park District”) formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on May 22, 2023, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, *et seq.* (the “Committee”).

DRAFT

II. Committee Membership

The Committee consisted of the following individuals:

- Kara Kosloskus, Board President
- Patrick Duffy, Board Vice President
- Cecilia Clarke, Board Commissioner
- Allison Frazier, Board Commissioner
- Julia Goebel, Board Commissioner
- Patrick Lahey, Board Commissioner
- Mike Murdock, Board Commissioner
- Steve Wilson, Executive Director and Board Secretary
- Kaine Osburn, Resident Member
- George Pearce, Resident Member

III. Committee Meetings

The Committee met as follows:

| Meeting Date | Meeting Time and Place |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| February 5, 2024 | 6:30 pm, Mallinckrodt Center |
| <hr/> | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | <hr/> |

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Park District's website or upon request at the Park District's administrative office.

IV. General Overview of Governing Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction

The Park District was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of the Park District in 1908. All Illinois park districts, including the Wilmette Park District, are governed by the Park District Code, 70 ILCS 1205/1 *et seq.*

Having a separate and distinct taxing body for parks, recreation, and conservation within the local community, which operates apart from general purpose governments, is extremely beneficial to the community for many reasons, as detailed further in this report.

- **Elected, non-partisan, non-compensated board.** The Park District is governed by a board of seven commissioners. Commissioners must reside within the boundaries of the park district and are elected at the Consolidated Election in odd-numbered years. Pursuant to state law, commissioners are non-partisan and serve without compensation.
- **Accessible and focused representation.** Having a dedicated board to oversee these essential facilities, programs, and services provides the community with increased access to their elected representatives and allows those elected representatives to remain focused solely on those facilities, programs, and services. This is contrasted with general purpose governments where elected representatives are responsible for broad oversight on a wide range of issues. This special purpose benefit is particularly advantageous when it comes to budget and finance oversight.
- **Increased transparency.** Having a dedicated unit of local government to provide park and recreation services also improves the relationship between the park district and its residents because of the transparency and openness related to the board and park district operations. Having detailed agenda and action items allows taxpayers to be better informed about the inner workings of their local government. When individual units of government are responsible for providing specified services like park districts, transparency is increased because action items and budget procedures are more detailed. Additionally, these items and budgetary decisions are subject to more scrutiny by locally elected officials than is the case with larger, multi-purpose governments with a multitude of departments.
- **Protection of revenues.** Because the Park District is a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for park district purposes. This assurance is contrasted with general purpose governments like cities, villages, and counties that provide a multitude of services such as fire, police, public works, economic development, etc., where revenues that are generated specifically for parks and recreation can be expended on these other services with limited, if any, input from voters.

- **Protection of assets.** Public parks and other real property owned by the park district is held in trust for the residents of the park district, and, subject to very limited exceptions, can only be sold or transferred if residents approve of the sale or transfer by a referendum. This is contrasted with general purpose units of government, which have authority to sell or dispose of property by a vote of the governing board.
- **Providing the Community More with Less.** The Park District does more with much fewer funding options. Unlike other units of local government that receive direct state funding, and income, sales, use, hotel/motel, motor fuel and other numerous taxes, the Park District's only tax revenues come from a modest portion of a resident's overall property tax bill. In fact, despite its limited funding options, the Park District share is only 4.7% of the local tax bill.

As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the management of day-to-day operations, the Park District has also adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures:

- Board Policies and Procedures Manual
- Behavior Policy
- Comprehensive and Strategic Plans – *In process*
- Entertainment Expense Policy
- Ergonomics Policy
- Ethics Ordinance
- Fair Share Policy
- Financial Assistance Program
- Fund Balance Policy
- General Conduct Ordinances
- Investment Policy
- Military Discount Policy
- Memorial Policy
- Naming Rights Policy
- Personnel Policy Manual
- Procurement Policy
- Public Comment Policy
- Purchasing Policy
- Seizure Prone Patron Policy
- Soccer Goal Policy
- Social Equity Policy
- Statement of Inclusion

V. List of Shared Services and Partnerships

The Park District works diligently to provide the best possible programs, services, and facilities to our community at the best value. One of the many ways the Park District achieves this goal is by partnering with neighboring park districts, school districts, other units of local government within or near the community, the State, non-profit organizations, and for-profit corporations. Below is a comprehensive list of the current partnerships, agreements, and other relationships that assist the Park District's mission of delivering the best possible services at the best value to our community.

1. Member in SRA

The Park District is part of the Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association ("NSSRA"). Special recreation associations are a form of intergovernmental cooperation among units of local government that are authorized under the Illinois Constitution, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, the Park District Code, and the Municipal Code. Their formation is rooted in a fundamental belief and recognition that "Recreation is for Everyone." They are shining examples of local government efficiency.

By partnering together, local communities are able to effectively and efficiently deliver more successful program opportunities to community members who have special needs. Furthermore, by participating in NSSRA, the Park District networks with twelve other local governments to provide many more program opportunities for our community members who have special needs and offers a choice between participating in NSSRA's programs or in programs that are provided by the Park District.

The Park District and NSSRA also achieve efficiency by utilizing existing facilities that are owned and operated by NSSRA's members, including the Park District. Utilizing these existing facilities allows NSSRA to deliver services to its member communities at a lower cost. Currently the Park District provides NSSRA access to the following facilities for their program offerings:

- Centennial Recreation Complex
- Community Recreation Center
- Gillson Park and Swimming Beach
- Lakeview Center
- Mallinckrodt Center
- Wilmette Golf Club

NSSRA also provides the support needed for participants with special needs who choose to register for the Park District programs or inclusive programming. NSSRA collects information on the registered participant and determines what supports are needed for that participant to be successful in this inclusive setting or the Park District program. This could include additional training of the supervisory staff, additional support staff, the use of adaptive equipment, behavior management, and/or other measures that will assist in the successful participation of this individual in the Park

District program. Although success may not look the same for everyone, NSSRA works with the Park District's staff to ensure the best possible results for all the participants in the program. The Park District's cost of providing these services would be much greater without its participation and partnership in NSSRA.

In 2022, NSSRA provided 338 programs for people with disabilities in its 13 partner communities. Seventy-six Wilmette Park District residents were served through these program offerings. Additionally, NSSRA supported 81 Wilmette Park District participants with 7704.82 hours of inclusive services in programs that were provided by the Wilmette Park District. The total amount paid to NSSRA for inclusion aids who served participants through the Wilmette Park District throughout 2022 was \$173,687.

The Park District is very proud of the ongoing collaboration with NSSRA. By working cooperatively with other local governments, not only are we better able to collectively serve all citizens within our communities, including persons with disabilities, but we are able to do so in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

2. Other intergovernmental agreements with other park districts, forest preserve districts, conservation districts, or municipal recreation agencies

- ComEd Lease for Property along West Park
- Cook County - North Shore Trail Feasibility Study IGA
- MWRD Lease for Canal Shores, Gillson and Bateman Park Land
- PTAB – Property Tax Appeal Board Consortium
- Sublease Agreement with Canal Shores
- U.S. Coast Guard Agreement

3. Intergovernmental agreements with other units of local government

- Village of Wilmette
 - Centennial Comcast Station
 - Easement through Canal Shores for Sewer Line
 - Sanitary Tank at West Park
 - Storm Water for Temporary and Permanent Easement at 3 parks
 - Sustainability Coordinator
- District 39 - 2000-2050 IGA
- Village of Glenview
 - West Park Water Main Easement

4. Intergovernmental agreements with the State of Illinois

- Grant Programs
 - OSLAD
 - PARC
- Joint Purchasing Cooperatives
 - Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC – Trucks)
 - OMNIA Partners
 - Sourcewell

5. Partnerships or agreements with athletic or similar affiliate organizations that operate sports or other leagues

- APTA – Limited Paddle Tournament Play
- Loyola Academy – Field, Ice and Court Rentals
- New Trier – Pool, Ice and Court Rentals
- Spark Golf League
- USTA – Tennis Matches
- Wilmette Baseball Association – Field Rentals
- Wilmette Hockey – Ice Rental
- Wilmette Wings – Field Rentals

6. Partnerships or other interrelationships with non-profits

- American Red Cross
- Boy Scouts of America
- Friends of the Green Bay Trail
- Go Green Wilmette
- National Charity League
- New Trier Extension
- New Trier Township Food Pantry
- Ouilmette Foundation
- Ouilmette Golf Club – Men's Club
- Student Government
- Women's Golf Association of Wilmette – Golf League
- Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce
- Wilmette Rotary
- Woman's Club of Wilmette

7. Partnerships with for profit organizations

- Chapman and Cutler, LLP
- Fat Shallot
- Gourmet Gorilla
- Illinois Funds
- The Lawn Restaurant
- Lauterbach & Amen
- NBC Universal
- PDRMA
- Piper, Sandler & Co.
- Shark Shack
- UMB Bank
- Wintrust
- Various Recreation Vendors
 - Hot Shot Sports, Coach Abe, Chess Ed, Chicago Loves Dance, etc.

8. Informal cooperation with other units of local government which save taxpayer dollars by eliminating redundancy

- Elmwood Dunes Staffing
- Fair Share Concept
- Intergovernmental Working Group
- Mowing of Village and School District Property
- Quarterly Meetings with Local Municipalities
- Shared Storage (Park District and Village)
- Special Events (3rd of July and Block Party)
 - Public Safety Protection
 - Planning and Execution
 - Day of Staffing
- Village Hall Office Lease

VI. Other Examples of Efficient Operations

Use of volunteers. One way in which the Park District reduces the burden on taxpayers is through the use of volunteers. Last year, over 100 individuals volunteered numerous hours of service to the Park District by way of the Wilmette Block Party event.

Youth employment. The Park District is a major employer of youth in the community. Last year, the Park District employed over 140 youth. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment serves as a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

Joint purchasing (if not listed above). The Park District participates in joint purchasing cooperatives pursuant to the Governmental Joint Purchasing Act (30 ILCS 525/0.01 *et seq.*) thereby saving taxpayer dollars through economies of scale. These include:

- Parks and Planning and Golf Course Equipment
- Vehicles

Wilmette Foundation. Last year, the Foundation donated \$20,000 to the Wilmette Park District Scholarship Fund, which helps alleviate the burden on taxpayers.

Collaboration with other park districts on best practices. Because park districts are not in competition with one another, they are more willing than the private sector to share best practices. These best practices help to avoid unnecessary costs and deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

Reliance on Non-Tax Revenue. Unlike most local governments that rely on a wide range of sales, use, and income taxes, the Park District is not permitted to assess these types of taxes. Additionally, although the Park District is an economic engine for the community and generates much revenue for the state and our community in the form of sales and motor fuel taxes, our Park District does not receive any of these revenues. Also, unlike Illinois cities, villages, counties, and school districts that received billions of dollars in direct financial assistance from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), our Park District did not receive any such direct federal aid. Our Park District also does not receive state funding under the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) or General State Aid (GSA) that these same cities, villages, counties, and school districts receive through the State budget.

Instead, the Park District provides all of the programs, facilities, and services to the community with a very modest amount of property taxes and from **non-tax sources** such as memberships, program registrations, and other user fees as well as private donations and grants.

VII. Transparency to the Community

The following information about the Park District may be obtained by citizens in the location listed.

| <u>Document</u> | <u>Location(s) Available</u> |
|--|--|
| <i>All documents can be found on the Wilmette Park District Website under the referenced sections unless otherwise noted by a **</i> | |
| Annual Budget | Park District Info/Department of Finance |
| Annual Budget & Appropriation Ordinance | December Board Packet |
| Annual Tax Levy | November Board Packet |
| Agenda and Minutes | Park District Info/Board of Park Commissioners |
| Annual Comprehensive Financial Report | Park District Info/Department of Finance |
| Annual Audit Opinion | Within the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report** |
| Bids and Requests for Proposals | Park District Information |
| Bids and Requests for Proposals | Park District Information |
| Capital Improvement Plan | Park District Info/Department of Finance |
| Comptroller's Annual Finance Report (AFR) | https://illinoiscomptroller.gov/ ** |
| Conduct Ordinances | Park District Information |
| Capital Improvement Plan | Park District Info/Department of Finance |
| Employment Opportunities | Park District Information |
| Policies, Ordinances and Disclaimers | Park District Information |

The Park District offers residents many opportunities to provide feedback. These include:

- The board of commissioners meets twice each month. Residents may provide public comment at every meeting.
- The Park District's annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance is available in tentative form at least 30 days prior to its adoption at an open meeting of the Park District board. Additionally, at least one public hearing is held prior to final action, and notice of the hearing is published in the newspaper at least one week prior to the hearing.
- The Park District's annual property tax levy is approved at an open meeting of the Park District board in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The Park District follows all public notice and hearing requirements under the Truth in Taxation Law prior to the adoption of this annual tax levy.
- Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at 847-256-6100 or email at connect@wilpark.org.
- Citizen advisory groups and focus groups allow for community input and feedback including:
 - Comprehensive and Strategic Plan Advisory Panel

- A variety of annual surveys are used to gather participant feedback including:
 - Annual and Past Surveys
 - Center Fitness Club – Annual
 - Dog Park Location
 - Summer Camp – Annual
 - Playgrounds
 - Pickleball Locations
 - Project Parks and Play Community Wide Survey
 - Various Recreation Programs
- Public hearings are common ways to gather community input. Past public hearings include:
 - Annual Budget and Appropriation Hearing
 - Gillson Landscape Plans
 - Hibbard Park Storm Water Project
 - Langdon Beach
 - Maple Park Playground
 - Platform Tennis Hut and Courts
 - West Park Playground

VIII. District Awards and Recognition

The District's achievements have been recognized in numerous ways.

Park District Achievements/Awards

- 2023
 - Landmarks Illinois – Gillson Park – *In Process*
- 2022:
 - Aaa Bond Rating from Moody's Investor Services
 - Best Water Park Award
 - GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Reporting (2007-2022)
 - Illinois Department of Human Services Child Care Workforce Bonus
- 2018:
 - NSSRA Shining Star Partner Agency of the Year Award

Grants and Donations

- ATPA Grants for Paddle Court Construction - \$30,000
- Environmental Health Beach Program Grant- \$14,000
- Invest in Cook Grant (North Shore Channel Trail Feasibility Study) - \$40,000
- Midwest Grows Green - \$1,000
- Yearly Bench/Brick Donations – Over 50 memorial benches and numerous memorial bricks
- Ouilmette Foundation Scholarship Fund Donations - \$20,000/year
- ComEd – Varies between \$5,000-\$20,000/year
- Public Donations – \$xxxx

Additional Recognition

- Various staff who are Certified Park and Recreation Professionals (CPRP) and Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE)
- B-20 Club Member (Green Fleet Partner Biodiesel)
- Great Lakes Park Training Institute Board Member
- IPRA/IAPD Joint Conference Committee Member
- Midwest Grows Green Board Member
- Midwest Institute of Park Executives Member (MIPE)

IX. Benefits and Services

The Park District serves the entire community from the youngest child to the oldest adult and all ages in between. It does so in a variety of ways.

1. Facilities

The Park District offered the following facilities to the community last year:

| OUTDOOR AMENITIES | | INDOOR FACILITIES | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--|------|
| 18-Hole Golf Course | 1 | Centennial Family Aquatic Center | 1 |
| Amphitheater | 1 | Centennial Ice Rink | 1 |
| Boat Launch Ramps / Access | 1 | Centennial Tennis Club | 1 |
| Dog Parks | 2 | Center Fitness Club | 1 |
| Driving Range | 1 | Community Recreation Center | 1 |
| Picnic Shelters | 7 | Early Childhood Center | 1 |
| Playgrounds | 24 | Lakeview Center | 1 |
| Skate Park | 1 | Mallinckrodt Center | 1 |
| Swimming Beaches (linear ft.) | 3,100 | Wilmette Golf Club Pro Shop | 1 |
| Swimming Pools | 1 | Wilmette Golf Club Restaurant (The Lawn) | 1 |
| OUTDOOR SPORTS COURTS | | Wilmette Platform Tennis Club Hut | 1 |
| Baseball Fields | 8 | INDOOR SPORTS COURTS | |
| Basketball Courts | 8.5 | Basketball Courts | 1 |
| Football Fields | 2 | Gymnastics Gym | 1 |
| Ice Rinks | 3 | Ice Rinks (1 full 1 studio) | 2 |
| Multiuse Tennis/Pickleball Courts | 5 | Tennis Courts | 8 |
| Platform Tennis Courts | 8 | Walking Track | |
| Skate Park | 1 | TRAILS | |
| Soccer / Lacrosse / Rugby Fields | 12 | Bicycle Trails (Miles) | 4.8 |
| Softball Fields | 7 | Cross-Country Trails (Miles) | 1.0 |
| Synthetic Turf Field | 1 | Multi-Use Trails (Miles) | 7.3 |
| Tennis Courts | 15 | Nature / Interpretive Trails (Miles) | 0.4 |
| Pickleball Courts | 6 | Physical Fitness Trails (Stations) | 12.0 |

2. Programs

The Park District offered 4,407 activity sections, serving 10,759 unique enrollees in 2023. District records also indicate that there was a total of 80,948 enrollments throughout the year.

3. Additional Services and Improvements

The Park District provided the following additional services to the community:

- Provide space in recreation centers for a variety of community groups and village, library, and school district needs
- Community Gardens
- Host Plant Sale with Go Green Wilmette
- Girl Scout Cookie Exchange
- Various clothing, food, and supply drives to benefit local charities and food banks.

The Park District completed the following improvements over the past 5 years:

- **2023**
 - Center Fitness Club Cardio Floor and Equipment Upgrades
 - Community Playfields Tennis/Pickleball Court Installation
 - Electric Car Charging Station (West Park)
 - Gymnastics Gym Foam Pit Upgrade
 - Keay Nature Center Path Revitalization and Installation of Nature Play Bump Outs
 - Keay Nature Center and Howard Park Parking Lot Resurfacing
 - Lakeview Center Renovation
 - Platform Tennis Hut and Court Expansions
 - Various Park Landscape Plans
 - Wilmette Golf Club Pond Stabilization
- **2022**
 - Center Fitness Club Functional Training Room Renovation
 - Community Playfields Walking Path, Bathrooms and Shelter
 - Electric Car Charging Station Installations (CRC, Golf Course)
 - Maple Park Playground Installation
 - Thornwood Park Tennis Court Resurfacing
 - Various Park Landscape Plans
 - Wilmette Golf Club Cart Path Installation
 - Wilmette Golf Club Restaurant Renovation
- **2021**
 - CRC Roof Replacement – Phase 3
 - Gillson Park Tennis Courts Resurfaced
- **2020**
 - CRC Roof Replacement – Phase 2
 - Maple Park Tennis Courts Resurfaced
- **2019**
 - Gillson Beach House Renovation

4. Other Benefits

While the Park District is a special purpose district, its impact to the community is multi-faceted and far reaching. For example, the Wilmette Park District's parks, recreational programming, and other opportunities improve the community's overall physical and mental health and wellness, thereby reducing health care costs. Before and after school and summer programs offer safe, convenient, and affordable childcare options for working families during critical times when school is not in session. These opportunities also help reduce juvenile crime.

- **Recreation and Leisure Opportunities:** Park Districts provide a wide range of recreational facilities and programs, including parks, playgrounds, sports fields, trails, beaches, fitness centers, and community centers. These amenities offer opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and leisure activities for individuals of all ages and abilities.
- **Before and after school and summer programs** offer safe, convenient, and affordable childcare options for working families during critical times when school is not in session.
- **Green Spaces and Environmental Preservation:** Park Districts contribute to the preservation of green spaces, natural habitats, and biodiversity within urban and suburban areas. Parks and open spaces serve as valuable ecological sanctuaries, promoting environmental education and appreciation of nature.
- The Park District's open space and trees help improve air and water quality and mitigate flooding.
- **Health and Well-being:** Access to parks and recreational facilities encourages a more active lifestyle, promoting and improving better physical health and mental well-being, thereby reducing health care costs.
- **Community Building:** Park Districts play a vital role in bringing communities together. Parks and recreational programs provide spaces where people from diverse backgrounds can interact, fostering a sense of community and social cohesion.
- **Youth and Family Development:** Parks offer safe and supervised environments for children and teenagers to engage in constructive activities. They provide opportunities for skill development, teamwork, leadership, and character-building experiences.
- **Cultural and Educational Enrichment:** Park Districts often host cultural events, festivals, and educational programs, enriching the community's cultural and intellectual life. These events foster creativity, encourage artistic expression, and promote learning.
- **Economic Impact:** A well-maintained Park District can enhance property values in the surrounding area, making it an attractive place to live and work. Parks and recreational amenities can also attract tourists and visitors, boosting local businesses and the economy.
- **Active Aging:** Park Districts cater to the needs of older adults by offering programs specifically designed for seniors, promoting active aging, and addressing social isolation.

- **Environmental Education and Sustainability:** Many Park Districts focus on promoting environmental awareness and sustainability. They offer educational programs on topics like conservation, recycling, and sustainable practices to instill a sense of responsibility for the environment among community members.
- **Emergency Preparedness and Public Safety:** Park Districts often collaborate with local authorities to develop emergency preparedness plans and provide spaces that can be used for disaster relief or evacuation centers during emergencies.

Overall, Park Districts play a crucial role in enhancing the overall quality of life for residents by providing opportunities for recreation, social interaction, education, and community engagement while contributing to environmental conservation and public health.

X. Recommendations for Increased Accountability and Efficiency

1. Intergovernmental Fees and Charges

One opportunity for efficiency would be the elimination of fees and charges assessed by other units of government. By way of example, below are areas that other units of local government charge the Park District even though the Park District's taxpayers are also taxpayers of these other units of local government. Such fees and charges, and the bureaucracy that accompanies them, inhibit the park district's ability to deliver programs, facilities, and services at the least possible cost.

- Building Permits (ex. Lakeview Center)
- Elevator License and Inspection
- Employee Background Checks
- Health Inspections
- Parking Decals
- Payment to third party plan reviewer (ex. Lakeview Center, Paddle Hut)
- Rent – Village Hall
- State and Local Liquor Licenses
- Water and Sewer

Other units of local government should recognize that intergovernmental fees often lead to inefficiency in the expenditure of taxpayer dollars through extra bureaucracy and administrative costs. In many cases, the unit of government assessing the fee ultimately benefits from the project or event, meaning it can recoup its costs through the extra sales tax or other revenue that will be generated. Where such fees are absolutely necessary, general purpose units of government should offset the fee by crediting the park district for all benefits they will receive from a project, event, or property. For example, open space that is protected and maintained by the Park District helps mitigate stormwater management costs, so assessing stormwater management fees on the Park District not only leads to inefficiency, but it is also shortsighted.

Governmental units should be discouraged or prohibited from charging more than their out-of-pocket costs associated with the activities covered by a fee that is assessed to another unit of local government with the same taxpayers. Put another way, one unit of local government should not profit by taxing another. Eliminating local permit fees is a way to reduce administrative costs without impacting overall public revenue. Local government best serves the people when it cooperates and works together. Some communities recognize this and do not charge fees to other units. All communities should be encouraged to follow that model to receive the best results for local taxpayers and to promote governmental efficiency.

2. Inefficiency of Other Governments

The Park District is also negatively impacted by the inefficiency of the state and other units of local government.

- Permit review process and final inspections for construction projects (ex. Lakeview Center)

3. Unfunded Mandates

Unfunded state mandates are another cost driver. While the Park District recognizes that there are benefits to some of these mandates, modifications could help alleviate some of the burden to the park district.

- a) Non-resident FOIA Requests.** Last year, the park district spent numerous hours in staff time and legal fees to fulfill FOIA requests. Often the individuals/businesses submitting the FOIA requests are from outside of the park district boundaries, and they appear to be serving a specific agenda, rather than assuring better local government. Specifically, the Park District received six (6) requests from SmartProcure in 2023 which took approximately 2.5 hours each to prepare by our Finance Department.

Under current law, resident taxpayers end up footing the bill for these non-resident or commercial requests. In order to help alleviate the burden for these non-resident requests the law could be amended to: (1) add a requirement that non-residents identify/explain the purpose of the request for information; (2) add a time limit on how far back a non-resident can request information; (3) staff time and costs could be included in the amount that is reimbursable for non-resident and commercial requests; (4) move back the deadline for non-resident requests 10 business days so that the park district does not have to delay services to its residents in order to comply with a non-resident request.

Sunshine laws are supposed to protect taxpayers by allowing them to shed light on any issue that is not exempt from FOIA. However, local government can be burdened by having to drop everything to rearrange priorities to meet FOIA deadlines, particularly if it has limited resources. Since local residents ultimately bear the expense of complying with FOIA, treating resident and non-resident requests differently would be justified.

- b) Criminal Background Checks.** All park districts are statutorily required to conduct criminal background checks on all employees pursuant to Section 8-23 of the Park District Code. The background checks must be done through the Illinois State Police (ISP). In 2023, the Park District spent \$8,559 for criminal background checks. The Park District does not recommend eliminating this mandate because it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of children and other park district patrons. However, the State should explore ways in which it could improve the current system and make it less costly for park districts to comply with the law.

The mandate also raises the fundamental question as to why one layer of government is forced to charge its taxpayers to comply with a State mandate when the State made the determination to impose the mandate. Put another way, if the State has determined that criminal background checks are necessary for public safety, the State should assist with compliance.

The Park District recommends studying whether there can be a more efficient background check process implemented through the ISP to reduce the time and expense it takes for background checks. Another suggestion is for ISP to waive the fee for checks on minors or waive all fees for name checks. If there is a “hit” from a name check, the fee could be charged for the more costly fingerprint check. Since it is a state mandate, perhaps the fee structure for park districts should also be reviewed to determine whether the fee being charged exceeds the actual cost of doing the check and, if so, perhaps the ISP could consider reducing its cost to local governments.

c) Prevailing Wage. One way to reduce burden on local government staff is to limit the prevailing wage requirement to larger capital contracts. This would free up tracking of the paperwork on small repairs and projects. One reason for creating a threshold requirement is the cost of the administrative burden relative to the cost of the actual project. For example, eliminating prevailing wage on smaller projects, e.g., those less than \$50,000, will result in more local bids and decrease the overall cost for these smaller public works projects.

d) Newspaper Publication. The newspaper is no longer the most effective way to provide notice. Websites are cheaper and reach more people. Permitting the park district to post the information on its website in lieu of newspaper publications would reduce costs.

4. Opportunities for Increased Transparency

As illustrated above, the Park District is very transparent in its operations. The following are opportunities for increased transparency:

- Annual Budget Book and Comprehensive Financial Report
- Annual Property Tax Levy – Approved at an open Board Meeting
- Comptroller and County Financial Statements
- Monthly Board Meeting and Committee of the Whole Meeting - Public Comment, Meeting Minutes
- Monthly Board Brief Emails
- Monthly E-Newsletters
- Paper Newsletter – Explore More! – 3x a year
- Project Parks and Play Social Pinpoint Website
- Social Media – Event/program promotion, registration reminders, photo albums, etc.
- Website – Calendar, Bulletin Board, Nuts & Bolts, Projects and Plans, etc.

- Call or Email - Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at 847-256-6100 or email at connect@wilpark.org

5. Opportunities for Other Intergovernmental Agreements

- ***[If your agency does not take advantage of efficiencies identified in Section V above, you may consider listing some of those opportunities here]***

6. Opportunities for Savings such as Energy Efficiency Projects, Joint Purchasing

- Solar Panels
- Transitioning to LED lights
- Car Charging Stations
- Updating Rooftop Units
- Timers on Outdoor Lights
- Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Purchases
- Electric/Battery Powered Tools and Equipment

XI.OTHER

[LIST ANY OTHER IDEAS OR SUGGESTIONS THAT DEMONSTRATE THAT A PARK DISTRICT IS THE MOST EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT FORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE PARK, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICES.]

Dated: _____ [INSERT DATE FINAL REPORT APPROVED BY EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE]

Signed: _____ [CHAIR'S SIGNATURE]