



## **WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT Committee of the Whole (Finance)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

*Monday, August 11, 2025*

*6:30 p.m. – Village Hall*

#### **PRESENT**

**Commissioners:** President Patrick Lahey, Vice President Allison Frazier, Kara Kosloskus, Patrick Duffy, Cecilia Clarke, Julia Goebel, Mike Murdock

**Secretary/Executive Director:** Chris Lindgren

**Staff:** Superintendent Sheila Foy, Superintendent Lindsay Thomas, Superintendent Josh Wallace, Superintendent Dave Merrill

**Visitors:** Walter Keats, Alan Golden, Mary Lawlor

#### **1.0 MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

##### **A. ROLL CALL TAKEN**

#### **2.0 COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

#### **3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT/RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

None.

#### **4.0 OLD BUSINESS**

None.

#### **5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

##### **5.1 2026 FEE & SALARY INCREASE DISCUSSION**

The board received a memo with tables of historical increases in salary.

Superintendent Foy explains that she pulled the history of levy and fee increases back to 2019. She also explains that she pulled the CPI-U as well, which is what we use to create the tax levy. Then, she pulled the CPI-W, which is what the cost of living adjustments for social security are based on.

Director Lindgren explains that the wage increases for the district have been slightly below the cost of living increases each year. Next year's cost of living is estimated to be 2.5%, so staff are recommending a 3% wage increase with a 4% fee increase.

President Lahey explains that he supports the proposed increases because the current 2.9% property tax levy is not our full levy, and he expects our miscellaneous revenue line to be less next year because we have less capital and less interest at a higher rate. We

will see a compression in budget, with having less dollars and, generally speaking, dollars buying less.

Commissioner Murdock states he would also like to talk about operating surplus. In 2025 the board approved a budget that represents \$500,000 step backwards. The bottom line is, he wants to see the operating surplus increasing every year.

President Lahey references an excel model he sent to the board which illustrates how the percentage of increase in fees and salaries affects the bottom line. Commissioner Duffy adds that grant money supplements the bottom line, as does efficiency of operation. Commissioner Clarke states that there were amounts budgeted that came back under budget in 2025, like the bus for example. Commissioner Clarke asks about how far we are ahead of budget this year. Superintendent Foy explains that most of the variances can be explained by timing differences right now.

#### Wage Increases

Commissioner Lahey moves on to staff wage increases. Director Lindgren says that most of the agencies around us are increasing staff wages by 4%; Northbrook, Glenview, Oak Park. Commissioner Goebel states she would be interested in the average salary at the agencies who are increasing wages by 4%, as she believes Wilmette is paying above salary margin. Superintendent Foy states there was a compensation study done 2 years ago. Commissioner Kosloskus states that this is the first time in her recollection that the board is considering increasing by 1% less than neighboring districts. Vice President Frazier states that she would like to look at the key positions and make sure they are competitive in order to retain staff. Commissioner Murdock states that he wants to make sure that staff are compensated fairly. President Lahey states that with a 4.5% increase in fees and a 3.5% increase in salary with a 5% increase in other expenses, we are keeping up with inflation and adding \$30,000. The board circles back to staff recommendation of a 3% wage increase and they are comfortable with that.

#### Fee Increase

Superintendent Merrill states that last year the board directed a fee increase and anything outside of that range of guidance we would talk about. Each business within recreation analyzes what the market can sustain in terms of fee increases. Having a target of 4% is helpful for the budgeting process and with the wide range of businesses across the recreation department, they will aim for an average of 4% across the board. Commissioner Goebel proposes a fee increase of 5%. Commissioner Duffy says he works from the bottom line, up. He trusts staff to balance the increases across the recreation businesses, with a goal of 4%. He agrees with the sentiment of generating more income in any way that we can, and try and keep our ration similar to where it has been over the last couple of years, but with the bottom line in mind that we have to try and increase our reserves.

Vice President Frazier asks President Lahey to give an overview of the financials. President Lahey states that employee benefits are always increasing by 8%. In addition, materials have gone up, as has the cost of hiring.

Commissioner Goebel explains that over the next several months the board will be looking at the budget from the top-down perspective of providing fee and salary increase guidance, as well as the bottom-up perspective, where the staff works closely with their managers to add up the budget. She asks the board to arrive at a fee increase today and finalize our other expenses.

For fee increases, Commissioner Kosloskus points out that an increase may mean a small amount to a family over the course of a season (i.e., \$20 or \$50 over the course of a program). Vice President Frazier says she is comfortable with guidance of “up to” 5%. Commissioner Duffy points out that we are not charging residents who don’t use our services. Taxes go towards the maintenance of our parks, and so he is in favor of increasing fees versus increasing taxes. Commissioner Goebel says that we have been able to keep the tax on residents moderate, consistent and minimal. The fees are being paid by those who consume our services. Commissioner Murdock is in favor of basing increases on 2024 actuals, rather than 2025 budget. President Lahey is in favor of increasing membership fees more than fee revenue. He stresses the importance of keeping up with inflation, because the last couple of years we have not been keeping up with inflation.

## **5.2 2026 BUDGET TIMELINE DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Goebel goes over the current schedule of meetings and says she does not want to the board to work through seven meetings during the busiest months of the year for many families. The board is made up of volunteers. She asks what the board can provide to staff in order to facilitate the budget process up-front. Commissioner Goebel also expresses that no one does their best work late into the night, so she would like to work with staff to figure out some times for meetings to be moved earlier in the evening and/or adding another day to lighten the agendas. The topics will be the same, but the date on which they are discussed may adjust.

## **5.3 KEY BUDGET TOPICS DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Goebel says the board is going to talk about maintaining a positive and increasing operating surplus, identifying the target operating surplus, understanding and setting the concept of savings, discussing capital and operating expenditures, and grants. Commissioner Murdock says he would like to get back to the 5-year capital model as well.

## **6.0 ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED SESSION**

There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Duffy moves and Commissioner Kosloskus seconds a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee of the Whole Meeting.

By a voice vote; **Motion Carried.**

Minutes Approved on **October 13, 2025.**