

Regular Meeting Minutes of the
Gurnee Park District Board of Commissioners
September 23, 2025

Board President Crews called the regular meeting to order at 7:00pm, led the Pledge of Allegiance and asked for roll call. Commissioners present: Gerry Crews, Chrissie Popper, Aaron Dalzot, Liz Nelson and Sarah Beckmann. Commissioners Absent: None. Also present: Mike Szpylman, Executive Director; Melissa Marsh, Director of Recreation; Kraig Owens, Director of Parks; Sumitra Potharazu, Director of Business Services; Jennifer Gilbert, Director of Marketing and Community Relations and Christina Richmond, Accounting Manager.

A motion was made by Popper to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on August 19, 2025. The motion was seconded by Nelson. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Nelson, Dalzot, Beckmann, Popper and Crews. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Popper to approve the minutes of the Executive session meeting held on August 19, 2025. The motion was seconded by Dalzot. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Nelson, Dalzot, Beckmann, Popper and Crews. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the total bills, payouts and payroll in the amount of \$1,522,788.41 presented on September 23, 2025, was made by Popper and was seconded by Nelson. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Nelson, Dalzot, Beckmann, Popper and Crews. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

The financial report and treasurer's report were reviewed.

The Board President opened the floor to visitors; there were no comments provided.

Department Directors reviewed their written reports with the Board.

Director of Parks and Planning Kraig Owens reviewed the parks report. Kraig announced that great progress is being made to complete the Hunt Club Park pathway connecting Washington Street to the Park and to the ComEd trail, improving safety and access to the park. Crews inquired about the Markus property – the windows have been removed due to the asbestos abatement. We will begin to board up the windows starting tomorrow to make sure the property is secured. The county currently has an easement for construction. Once the easement is complete, they will restore anything that was disturbed. Prior to demolition, the parks team will clear trees to improve access for demolition. Until then, we are performing standard property care.

Crews additionally inquired about the status of the ongoing sidewalk work being done in front of Hunt Club. Kraig shared that he participates in ongoing communication with the County Project Manager and project engineers. Crews shared that he was pleased with the property having the windows boarded up to diminish the opportunity for anyone getting hurt on the property. Kraig shared that security specifications are included as part of the demolition procedure (fencing, locks, etc.). The Gurnee Fire Department will sign an agreement with GPD in the near future to conduct training on the property.

Director of Recreation Melissa Marsh reviewed the recreation report. Melissa shared that the recent Bonfire and Brews event was a success with a great turnout. Commissioner Popper inquired about the Gurnee Days Trail Run that has been in place in the past. Mike shared that the event has since been disconnected to Gurnee Days and will be rescheduled to another weekend. Crews asked about the Personal Training services being down 43 clients – Melissa shared it is under review however, the program is still strong overall. Membership sales are still going strong as well.

Director of Business Services Sumitra Potharazu reviewed the business report. Open discussions are taking place with our financial services team to determine the advantages with issuing the annual rollover bonds in February instead of December to save money on interest. They have provided a different planning packet that is to our advantage for a 9-month rollover as opposed to an annual rollover. It will provide \$7,000 more in principal.

Commissioner Crews inquired about the Banking RFP. Mike shared that the best practice for GFOA is to perform this task every 5 years. Sumitra shared that her first GFOA Conference at Gurnee Park District was excellent.

Director of Marketing and Community Relations Jennifer Gilbert reviewed the Marketing and Community Relations report. Jennifer shared that we are conducting a large community survey to provide feedback on Gurnee Days. A separate stakeholder feedback survey will be sent out as well. This goal of these surveys is to guide the future of the festival and provide transparency as to what it takes to deliver what the community would like to see.

Commissioner Popper commended the district for the last-minute location change from Viking Park to the Ten Hotel for the Sounds of Summer Concert – “Are You Ready For It? A Taylor Swift Experience” due to adverse weather.

Executive Director Mike Szpylman reviewed his report. The Tree Dedication is scheduled for October 5th. Mike encouraged the board to attend if schedules allow. The Park Tour is scheduled for October 7th. Mike mentioned that he and Kraig are discussing the itinerary and logistics for the Park Tour. The Intergovernmental Picnic is scheduled for October 15th and will be hosted at Warren Township High School (Almond campus). Mike has registered a couple of slots for the Board for the IAPD Legal Symposium and has requested that if any board members are interested, they can RSVP directly to Mike.

ACTION ITEMS

A motion to approve the agreement with FC Lake County Soccer club for the use of GPD soccer fields was made by Popper and seconded by Nelson. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Nelson, Dalzot, Beckmann, Popper and Crews. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

In other business, Mike mentioned that the Village of Gurnee has invited GPD to their board meeting on Monday September 29th at 7:00pm. Mike will provide a short presentation about GPD. Mike also mentioned that the Amanda Wright lawsuit was an important case with PDRMA. The Appellate Court ruled in our favor.

Mike and Kraig are reviewing the Hunt Club Park neighborhood playground construction timeline. The engineers are there mapping the location. The company constructing the location has provided

the timeline and if all goes according to plan, we should expect the project to be completed by mid-November. We will plan to perform the formal playground ribbon cutting in the Spring at which time the playground will be renamed in prior GPD Board President Jim Goshorn's honor.

Crews thanked Mike and the rest of the Administrative team for consistency in maintaining open communication with the board.

A motion to adjourn was made by Popper and seconded by Dalzot. On voice vote, all voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 7:49pm.

Gerry Crews, President

Aaron Dalzot, Secretary