

Regular Meeting Minutes of the  
Gurnee Park District Board of Commissioners  
January 20, 2026

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, Sarah Beckmann and Liz Nelson. Commissioners Absent: None. Also present: Mike Szpylman, Executive Director; Kraig Owens, Director of Parks and Planning; Melissa Marsh, Director of Recreation; Sumitra Potharazu, Director of Business Services and Jennifer Gilbert, Marketing and Community Relations Manager.

A motion was made by Popper to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 16, 2025. The motion was seconded by Nelson. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Dalzot, Beckmann, Popper, Nelson 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 December 16, 2025. The motion was seconded by Nelson. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Dalzot, Beckmann, Popper, Nelson and Crews. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the total bills, payouts and payroll in the amount of \$1,114,245.03 presented on January 20, 2026, was made by Popper and was seconded by Nelson. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Dalzot, Beckmann, Popper, Nelson and Crews. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

The financial report and treasurer's report were reviewed and discussed.

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 noted demolition on the Markus property is now scheduled to begin on Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, it was postponed due to cold weather.

Director of Recreation Melissa Marsh reviewed the recreation report. Melissa shared that the Recreation team is currently recruiting two interns for the upcoming summer season.

Director of Business Services Sumitra Potharazu reviewed the business report. Sumitra shared that because of a collaboration between the Business Services and Marketing departments – the Park District earned a Distinguished Budget Award as well as special recognition for Strategic Goals and Strategies.

Director of Marketing and Community Relations Jennifer Gilbert reviewed the marketing report. Jennifer shared that she will be taking over Sponsorship in the interim due to staffing updates. The department is looking to potentially split the vacant position into two part-time positions; one that focuses on sponsorships and one that helps with coordination efforts on our social media and websites. Marketing will also be hiring an intern for this upcoming summer.

Executive Director Mike Szpylman reviewed his report. Gurnee Park District's Year in Review was enhanced with GPD photography and turned out nicely. The Hunt Club Park Rededication Ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Gurnee Days 2026 planning is still in progress, using input from community and stakeholder survey results. One change for this year is that we will bring back an evening kick-off event for Friday with music and a beer garden. Additionally, the Parade will be moved to Saturday morning. The Car Show and Farmer's Market will remain on Sunday. The Police and Fire Department's softball game will be moved up earlier in the day on Sunday, tentatively set for noon.

#### ACTION ITEMS

A motion to approve rescheduling the March Board Meeting to Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> was made by Popper and seconded by Dalzot. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Dalzot, Beckmann, Popper, Nelson and Crews. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Popper to enter into executive session at 7:45pm to discuss:

- a. The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee to determine its validity. – Sec. 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1)

Motion seconded by Nelson. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Dalzot, Beckmann, Popper, Nelson and Crews. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Popper to return to open session at 8:31pm. Motion seconded by Dalzot. On voice vote, all voted aye and the Board returned to open session.

A motion to adjourn was made by Popper and seconded by Dalzot. On voice vote, all voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

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Gerry Crews, President

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Aaron Dalzot, Secretary