Regular Meeting Minutes of the
Gurnee Park District Board of Commissioners
September 15, 2026

Board President Popper called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance and requested the roll call. Commissioners present: Christine Popper, Gerry Crews, Aaron Dalzot, Liz Nelson, and Sarah Beckmann. 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; Jennifer Gilbert, Marketing and Community Relations Manager; Rachel Laren, Supervisor of Community Programming and Events; Kari Hagen, Accounting Manager; and Steve Becker, Parks and Grounds Operations Supervisor.

A motion was made by Nelson to approve the minutes of the regular session held on August 18, 2026. The motion was seconded by Crews. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Crews, Dalzot, Beckmann, Nelson, and Popper. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Crews to amend the date on the minutes of the Executive session held on August 18, 2026. The motion was seconded by Dalzot. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Crews, Dalzot, Beckmann, Nelson, and Popper. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Crews to approve the minutes of the Executive session held on August 18, 2026. The motion was seconded by Beckmann. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Crews, Dalzot, Beckmann, Nelson, and Popper. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the total bills, payouts, and payroll in the amount of $1,273,983.51 presented on September 15, 2026, was made by Crews and was seconded by Beckmann. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Crews, Dalzot, Beckmann, Nelson, and Popper. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

The financial and Treasurer’s reports were reviewed and discussed.

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

Rachel Laren presented a recap of the 2026 Summer Events program, including event highlights and attendance totals.

Steve Becker presented the 2026 Grounds Maintenance Review, highlighting updates related to sports field management, turf tarp usage, trail maintenance, and tree care.

Department Directors reviewed their written reports with the Board.

Director of Parks and Planning Kraig Owens reviewed the parks report. Kraig updated the Board on the status of the building painting project. The Board acknowledged staff's prompt response to an HVAC equipment malfunction at Hunt Club Park. The Board discussed criteria used to determine whether projects are completed by staff or outsourced.

The Recreation Report was reviewed and discussed by Melissa Marsh. The Board discussed the capabilities and benefits of the Perry Weather System.

Director of Business Services Sumitra Potharazu reviewed the business report.

Director of Marketing and Community Relations Jennifer Gilbert reviewed the marketing report.

Executive Director Mike Szpylman reviewed his report and reminded the board of the Tree Dedication Ceremony and noted that the district won the Arts in the Park Award and will be participating in the ceremony on October 9th. Executive Director Szpylman discussed the Breakfast with Santa event, including scheduling considerations and Board participation opportunities.

ACTION ITEMS

A motion to approve the Southridge Park Playground Equipment Purchase was made by Nelson and seconded by Dalzot. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Crews, Beckmann, Dalzot, Nelson, and Popper. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the Southridge Park Playground Safety Resurfacing Purchase was made by Nelson and seconded by Dalzot. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Crews, Beckmann, Dalzot, Nelson, and Popper. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the Bid for Southridge Park Site Improvement was made by Nelson and seconded by Dalzot. Roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Crews, Dalzot, Beckmann, Nelson, and Popper. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

A motion to adjourn was made by Nelson and seconded by Beckmann. Roll call vote taken. Ayes: Dalzot, Popper, Crews, Nelson, and Beckmann. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

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Christine Popper, President Kari Hagen, Secretary