

Journal of Proceedings
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

February 19, 2026, 6:00 pm,
Museum of the Grand Prairie Education Center, Lake of the Woods, Mahomet, Illinois

The Champaign County Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners met at a Regular Meeting on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at the Museum of the Grand Prairie Education Center, Lake of the Woods, Mahomet, Illinois. Commissioner Knott called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioner Goodman called the roll. The following Commissioners were present: Knott, Bartlett, and Goodman. Commissioners Hundley and Toalson were absent with notice.

REMOTE ATTENDANCE – None

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS - None

PRESENTATIONS - None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes of Regular Meeting on January 15, 2026**
- B. Monthly Staff Reports**
- C. Disbursements for Approval**
- D. January Treasurers Report**
- E. R-2026-01 IMRF Authorized Agent**
- F. Approval of Travel Expenses in Excess of Policy**
- G. Approval of Leadership Scholarship Support Letter**

Commissioner Goodman made a motion to approve consent agenda items A. through G. Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted “yes”: Knott, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion carried.

FOREST PRESERVE FRIENDS FOUNDATION

Commissioner Bartlett provided an update on donor projects, including the Nature Center. The Foundation has met half of their total fundraising goal for the Nature Center Project. The Three Rivers Society event that was canceled in December will be held in April. Commissioners Bartlett and Goodman are participating in the Governance Committee meetings on behalf of the CCFPD Board of Commissioners as the Foundation works through the Memorandum of Understanding and the Bylaws.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioners noted positive things about the following items from staff reports and observations:

- The billboard campaign was well done and hopefully reached many people
- It was nice to see the media coverage about the grant funding
- Great to see the Snowflake Search taking place and the participation

- The Soaring to New Heights IAPD Conference was very informative and enjoyable. Matt Kuntz and David Leake did excellent on the Dark Sky presentation.
- The presentation by John Bien on the History of Homer Lake was really well done and well attended. John did a great job.
- It is exciting to know that Middle Fork has a Dark Sky park like those of National Parks, putting CCFPD in the same league as the larger entities.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Executive Director Announcements

Pearson formally introduced Michael Ambrose as the new HR Director for the Forest Preserves. Pearson updated the Board that the bidding process for the Nature Center construction has begun and our internal construction department has begun demolition of the Interpretive Center in preparation. The Museum of the Grand Prairie received new paint and carpet in what will be called, The Welcome Room, the front corner of the Museum that will provide a safe space for individuals experiencing sensory overload. Josh Schneman from Lake of the Woods Operations has been commissioned to paint a mural in that space. Pearson provided an update on the annual audit and stated the preliminary work is done and the audit team will be at Headquarters for two weeks in early March for the complete audit. The Bird Overlook at Lake of the Woods has been fully funded by a private donor and the site is being prepped for construction. Pearson thanked Commissioner Knott for being willing to provide the presentation on behalf of the Forest Preserves at the Legislative Breakfast on February 23, 2026.

B. Museum and Education Department Evaluation by the Museum Assessment Program

Kamryn Suttinger, Museum and Education Director, discussed the Museum's participation in a department evaluation by the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) as part of the 2026 Strategic Plan goals for the Museum. Suttinger detailed the three primary goals for the Map evaluation, detailed the timeline for the MAP process, and requested the Board's participation by requesting a Commissioner be available periodically to meet with the peer reviewer during site visits and/or any additional time upon request by the MAP peer reviewer.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Prairie State Conservation Land Acquisition Grant – Homer Lake

Commissioner Goodmand moved the Board Commissioner to authorize the application for a Land Acquisition Grant from the Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC) toward the purchase of land adjacent to Homer Lake Forest Preserve. Deputy Executive Director, Mike Daab, updated the Board on the status of the land acquisition. Daab stated the Forest Preserves are exploring several options for obtaining funds for the purchase, both internally and with the Foundation Board, as well as evaluating future land acquisition procedures going forward. Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted "yes": Knott, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion carried.

B. Approval of Bid for Homer Lake Sealcoat

Commissioner Bartlett moved the Board to approve the Base Bid and Add Alternates 1, 4, 5, and 6 for Sealcoat (Materials and Installation) at Homer Lake Forest Preserve from Evergreen Roadworks LLC for **One Hundred Sixteen Thousand Two Hundred Fifty-Eight Dollars and**

50/100 (\$116,258.50) and authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract. Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted “yes”: Knott, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion carried.

C. Approval of Bid for Rayburn Purnell Bike Path Resurfacing

Commissioner Goodman moved the Board to approve Bid Alternate 1 for Bike Path Resurfacing (Materials and Installation) at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve from Cross Construction Inc. for **One Hundred Sixty-Four Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Dollars and 00/100 (\$164,960.00)**. Sam Ihm, Planning Director, provided an update on the process for the resurfacing and the longevity the proposed process will maintain for the bike path. Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted “yes”: Knott, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion carried.

D. Approval of Purchase of Kubota F3710 Lawn Mower

Commissioner Bartlett moved the Board to approve the quote from Jennings Implement Co. for **Thirty-One Thousand and 00/100 Cents (\$31,000.00)** for a Kubota F3710 Lawn Mower for use at the Homer Lake Forest Preserve. Commissioner Goodman Seconded.

A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted “yes”: Knott, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion Carries.

DISCUSSION

A. Strategic Plan: 2025 Report and 2026 Work Planned

Pearson provided an update on the progress of the 2025 Strategic Plan and detailed the 2026 work planned. Pearson provided a summary of the items completed for 2025, including meeting an approximate 80% completion rate for the year. The work planned for 2026 includes continuing projects not completed in 2025, as well as possible implementation of an ambassador-type program to pilot at Homer Lake that will enlist the help of volunteers to answer questions and provide guidance to the public when visiting the preserves.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A.** At 6:28 pm, Commissioner Bartlett moved to go into a closed session for “The discussion of minutes of meeting lawfully closed under this Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes” as mandated by Section 2.06 and authorized by 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21)

Commissioner Goodman seconded. A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted “yes”: Knott, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion carried.

At 6:30pm, Commissioner Knott moved the Board back into open session. Commissioner Bartlett seconded. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

- B.** At 6:31pm, Commissioner Bartlett moved to go into a closed session for “The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of

specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body,” as authorized by 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)

Commissioner Goodman seconded. A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted “yes”: Knott, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion Carried.

At 7:26pm, Knott moved the Board back into open session. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS, continued

A. Release of Executive Session Minutes

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to release all unreleased executive session minutes for September 19, 2024 (except under 2(c)(1)), August 21, 2025 (under 2(c)(5), November 13, 2025 (except under 2(c)(5)) and January 16, 2026 (under 2(c)(1). Commissioner Bartlett seconded. A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted “yes”: Knott, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion Carries.

B. Destruction of Verbatim Recordings of Executive Session Minutes

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to authorize the destruction of verbatim recordings of all executive sessions held on or before September 6, 2024. Commissioner Bartlett seconded. A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted “yes”: Knott, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion carried.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Knott made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:27pm. Commissioner Bartlett seconded. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried.



Mark Toalson, Secretary
Board of Commissioners
Champaign County Forest Preserve District