

Journal of Proceedings
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
December 18, 2025, 6:00 pm,
Museum of the Grand Prairie Classroom, Lake of the Woods, Mahomet, Illinois

The Champaign County Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners met at a Regular Meeting on Thursday, December 18, 2025, at the Museum of the Grand Prairie Classroom, Lake of the Woods, Mahomet, Illinois. Commissioner Hundley called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioner Toalson called the roll. The following Commissioners were present: Hundley, Knott, Toalson and Bartlett. Commissioner Goodman joined at 6:07p.m.

REMOTE ATTENDANCE – None

PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING THE TENTATIVE APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE 2025-03 OF THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT IN THE COUNTY OF CHAMPAIGN, OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, FOR THE 2026 FISCAL YEAR.

There was no public comment regarding the Tentative Appropriations Ordinance 2025-03 and no comments from the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

Acting Executive Director, Mike Daab recommended canceling Executive Session for “The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired,” as authorized by 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5).

PRESENTATIONS - None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes of Regular Meeting on November 13, 2025**
- B. Monthly Staff Reports**
- C. Disbursements for Approval**
- D. November Treasurers Report**

Commissioner Toalson made a motion to approve consent agenda items A. through D. Commissioner Knott seconded.

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

FOREST PRESERVE FRIENDS FOUNDATION

Forest Preserve Friends Foundation President, Will Timmons, provided an annual update for projects completed in 2025 as well as fundraising goals for 2026. The Homer Lake Nature Center fundraising goal of \$500,000 will have reached \$250,000 by the end of 2025. The foundation will continue to raise funds for the Nature Center project through 2026. The Three

Rivers Society has roughly 40 current members who donate \$1,000 or more annually. The Stable Roots Endowment is going strong at approximately \$80,000 and will continue to increase as donors state their intent to add the FPFF as a beneficiary of their estate. Jenna Phillips, Donor Relationship Coordinator, is doing a fantastic job and just celebrated her 1-year anniversary with the Champaign County Forest Preserve District and the FPFF. Fundraising for 2025 broke last year's record and the FPFF has initiated a 100% Board giving plan.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

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

- Commissioners appreciate the snow removal at all the preserves, allowing the community to safely enjoy the outdoors and the programs continually being held.
- It is impressive to see 90% of trails have stewards.
- Nice to see the participation in the YES program at Centennial High School, as well as coordination and implementation of youth programs for schools in urban areas.
- Increased revenue at the campground and participation in activities there is great to see.
- Thank you to the staff and volunteers for all the programs throughout the year and keeping the community involved and interested in the preserves.
- Excellent year for golf surpassing annual revenues since pre-COVID times.
- Kudos to Natural Resources for all they do to maintain native resources and remove invasive species.
- The CCFPD Holiday Party was enjoyable and nice to see everyone networking between departments.
- The Night Lights display is impressive and great to see so many staff volunteering and so many of the community enjoying it.
- Thank you to Marketing for always keeping CCFPD in the news and highlighting all the activities and events at all the preserves.
- Curious and intrigued about the device translators that museum and education staff use to translate for individuals who do not speak English.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Executive Director Announcements

Deputy Executive Director Mike Daab commented that the CCFPD Holiday Party was a great event and thanked the commissioners for attending. There was great camaraderie among the entire group. Daab thanked staff who have volunteered to work the Night Lights display and commented on how everyone, including staff and the community, seem to be in great spirits during the events. Daab commented that Victor Yelaska, CCFPD employee from Homer Lake, attended the event and, although he was not actively volunteering at the event, he helped staff and volunteers with issues they were experiencing with the lights after a few days of wet weather. The Nature Center bid approval should come in March of 2026. Staff from the Homer Lake Interpretive Center will officially move from that location to the Activity Center at Middle Fork Forest Preserve in January 2026. Daab provided an update on the Kickapoo Rail Trail and the potential to review which tracts to complete and which to maybe hold off on, depending on how much of a deficit there may be in the budget.

Executive Director Lorrie Pearson reminded the Board that her annual performance review will need to be completed in February 2026. Pearson will provide some background information to the commissioners in January 2026.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Commissioners Travel for 2026 IPRA/IAPD Conference

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to approve travel expenses for Commissioner Wendy Hundley and Commissioner Tim Bartlett to attend the 2026 IAPD/IPRA Soaring New Heights Conference, in an amount not to exceed **One Thousand, Six Hundred Forty-Two Dollars (\$1,642.00)**. Commissioner Goodman seconded.

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

B. Approval of LOW Streambank Stabilization Project Award

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to approve the LOW Streambank Stabilization Project Award (Materials and Installation) at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve from Wildlands Construction, LLC for **Three Hundred Seventy-Nine Thousand Sixty-Six dollars and ninety-three cents (\$379,066.93)**. Both Commissioners Knott and Goodman expressed concerns about the variance between the awarded contractor’s bid compared to the other bids that were received. Deputy Executive Director Mike Daab explained that the company awarded the project specializes in this type of work and was confident they could perform the work efficiently, resulting in less cost for the Forest Preserves, as well as providing references of their work with other organizations. Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

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

C. Approval of Middle Fork Automated Gates Project Award

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board to approve the Middle Fork Automated Gates Project Award (Materials and Labor) from SK Exteriors for **Thirty-Nine Thousand Six Hundred Seventy-Seven Dollars and 00/100 (\$39,677.00)**. Commissioner Goodman seconded.

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

D. Approval of Collections Policy Revisions

Commissioner Bartlett moved the Board to approve the Collections Policy Revisions addressing the role of the Collections and Exhibits Consulting Group, the process for conducting professional conservation, and the elimination of the Support collection classification. Commissioner Bartlett expressed appreciation for the staff maintaining and updating policies and is grateful for the proactive thinking involved in ensuring policies are current and forward-thinking. Commissioner Knott seconded.

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

E. Approval of Permanent Collections Deaccession

Commissioner Bartlett moved the Board to approve the Permanent Collections Deaccession of 22 taxidermy mounts currently at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center. Commissioner Knott expressed concern over the deaccession of vintage pieces. Mark Hanson, Curator for the Museum of the Grand Prairie, explained that these pieces are no longer in great condition, and

the museum has sufficient pieces in the collection for display at the Homer Lake Nature Center. Commissioner Toalson seconded.

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

F. Approval of Land and Water Reserve Application

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board to approve the Land and Water Reserve Application authorizing staff to submit a proposal to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission seeking permanent legal protection of 246.41 acres within Homer Lake Forest Preserve through a Land and Water Reserve registration. Commissioner Knott expressed concern about how restrictive legal protection will be regarding the potential for expansion of the Nature Center or other projects at Homer Lake. Phil Borsdorff, Natural Resources Director at CCFPD addressed those concerns and stated the restrictions only apply to a portion of Homer Lake along the Salt Fork and is intended to expand on the Forest Preserves’ dedication to protecting wildlife species and resources in that area. Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

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

G. Approval of Purchase of LOW Golf Course Chemicals

Commissioner Goodman moved the Board to approve the purchase of chemicals (materials and delivery) at Lake of the Woods Golf Course from Helena for **Forty-Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty-Eight and 19/100 (\$48,758.19)**. Commissioner Toalson seconded.

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

H. Approval of Resolution 2025-17: Fiscal Structures and Responsibilities Policy

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board to approve Resolution R 2025-17: Financial Structure and Responsibilities Policy. Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

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

I. Approval of Resolution 2025-18: Transfers and Commitments

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to approve Resolution 2025-18: Transfers and Commitments. Commissioner Toalson seconded.

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

J. Approval of Ordinance 2025-03: 2026 Annual Budget and Appropriation

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to approve Ordinance 2025-03: 2026 Annual Budget and Appropriation. Commissioner Knott stated for the record that the Ordinance has been discussed several times in prior meetings and Brock Martin, Finance Director, has done a great job putting a clear budget that is easy to interpret. Commissioner Hundley commended Martin for transitioning the finance office to new and more efficient software to enable more accuracy with transactions and reporting. Commissioner Toalson seconded.

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

K. Approval of Resolution 2025-19: Authorizing Application of a USDOT BUILD Grant

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to approve Resolution 2025-19, authorizing the application for a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant, administered through the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) for construction of the Kickapoo Rail Trail (KRT). Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

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

DISCUSSION - None

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Knott made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 6:48 pm. Commissioner Toalson seconded. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried.



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