

Journal of Proceedings
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 16, 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, April 16, 2026, at the Museum of the Grand Prairie Education Center, 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, Bartlett, Toalson and Goodman.

REMOTE ATTENDANCE – None

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS - None

PRESENTATIONS - None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes of Regular Meeting on March 19, 2026**
- B. Monthly Staff Reports**
- C. Disbursements for Approval**
- D. March Treasurers Report**

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

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

FOREST PRESERVE FRIENDS FOUNDATION

Commissioner Bartlett provided an update on the Foundation’s April meeting at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve Activity Center where the Homer Lake Interpretive Center staff are temporarily located until the Nature Center project is complete. Bartlett stated the edits made to the Foundation Bylaws and Memorandum of Understanding were reviewed and should be wrapped up soon. The funding gap for the Nature Center project was also discussed and options that were presented at the March Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners were reviewed. Immediately following the Foundation Board Meeting, the Foundation hosted the Three Rivers Society event where donors were given a tour of the Interpretive Center. Foundation President Carter Billingsly presented the development plans for the Nature Center and Programs Manager Stacey Clementz provided a reptile presentation for the attendees. The next meeting for the Foundation will be the Marketing Meeting on April 22, 2026.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

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

- Pleased to see how often the Forest Preserves are in the media and the exposure for all the programs and events taking place
- Glad to see the land acquisition grant application has been submitted for Homer Lake

- Encouraged by participating in the YES program again this year, kudos to staff for making that happen and encouraging high school youth to work in nature
- Impressed by the new stickers, they look great
- Excellent attendance at the Snakes on Spring Break and Raptors Up Close
- Kudos to the staff for the many, many things happening and all the work that goes into the programs, the projects and the overall movement at each of the preserves
- Great to see the Sustainability Committee created and look forward to the important work that will come of it
- Excited to see the Discovery Garden taking shape and looking forward to completion
- Enjoyed Hidden Acres and seeing all the bluebells in bloom
- Compliments to the idea of early voting and participation with the county
- Congrats to the finance staff for the Certificate of Achievement from the Government Finance Officers Association

STAFF REPORTS

A. Executive Director Announcements

Deputy Executive Director, Mike Daab provided an update on the drought situation in the area. This area has received enough rain for the flowers and plants to bloom and the lakes to fill up, but the preserves are not completely out of drought conditions. Several projects are in process at several different preserves, field trips and programs are in full swing and summer camps are open for registration. The Grand Opening at Oxbow Ridge will be May 7. Annual Employee Evaluations are in process. The greenhouse restrooms will open the week of April 20th. Facility rentals are increasing as we approach graduation and wedding season. KRT construction in St. Joseph is moving along well and the communities seem to be pleased with the results.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Rejection of Nature Center Construction Bids

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to reject all bids for the construction of a Nature Center addition at Homer Lake Forest Preserve. Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

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

NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Bid for Fuel Supply and Delivery

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board to approve a four-year bid for supply and delivery of unleaded gasoline and diesel fuel from United Fuel Co. for **23.0 cents above the average price for unleaded gasoline and 23.0 cents above the average price for diesel** and authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract. Commissioner Knott seconded. Brock Martin, Finance Director, explained that there will be a slight increase in costs with this contract, but the amount above the average price is to cover expenses at the vendor’s end. Martin also explained that a four-year contract is typical and helps budget costs over that period.

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

B. Approval of Landowner Agreement with Pheasants Forever and the USFWS to Restore Wetland Habitat

Commissioner Bartlett moved the Board to approve the Landowner Agreement between the Forest Preserves, Pheasants Forever, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and authorize the Executive Director to execute the agreement. Commissioner Toalson seconded. Philip Borsdorf, Director of Natural Resources and Mike Daab, Deputy Executive Director expressed their excitement and anticipation for this partnership, stating that the wetland habitat has needed restoration after failing in recent years and this is the perfect partnership to ensure the restoration for the benefit of waterfowl and migratory birds.

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

DISCUSSION

A. Nature Center Design-Build Options

Mike Daab, Deputy Executive Director, Sam Ihm, Planning Director and Mike Fry, Construction Manager, discussed the consideration to proceed with a design-build process, as opposed to a competitive bidding process, following the rejection of all bids. Daab explained that Forest Preserve legal counsel has approved moving forward with the current purchasing policy. A meeting is scheduled with Morton Buildings to discuss options, and photos of example steel-frame buildings were presented to the Board. Commissioner Bartlett suggested speaking with Vermilion County as their Nature Center is similar to the building being discussed. Daab discussed the draft timeline for the design-build, including the issuing a Request for Proposals and when site work would begin. The Board was receptive to the suggestions and offered support throughout the process.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Knott made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 6:32pm. Commissioner Toalson seconded. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried.



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