

Journal of Proceedings
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
September 18, 2025, 6:00 pm,
Museum of the Grand Prairie Classroom, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 900 N
Lombard, Mahomet, Illinois

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

REMOTE ATTENDANCE – None

PUBLIC COMMENT

MaryEllen Wuellner, representing both the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation, as well as the Friends of the KRT Foundation, spoke about the 30-year history of the KRT project and the financial challenges that have been present since the beginning. MaryEllen discussed the involvement of Champaign County Design and Conservation Foundation in the early part of the KRT project and stated they, along with the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation, are all behind coming together to support whatever needs the Forest Preserve District may have to get this process going again and bridge the gap with funding. MaryEllen commented that there are more resources available today than there were when the project first started and suggested the potential involvement of the Urbana Park District and their Foundation, as well as other possible involvement from government agencies in the community.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS – None

PRESENTATIONS –

A. 2026 Budget Update #2

Brock Martin, Business and Finance Director, presented the 2026 budget update. Brock discussed the recommended personnel changes, including moving some positions from part-time to full-time permanently, adding a part-time Assistant Golf Professional position and increasing the hours for the Collections Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator. Brock presented the 2026 recommended Capital Requests for projects, including several projects that will carry over from the 2025 budget to 2026, such as the KRT Trail, Nature Center, Discover Greenhouse, and Buffalo Trace. Brock suggested a completion timeline for the budget to have a working draft of the full budget in October for approval in November, then final budget approval in December.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes of Regular Meeting on August 21, 2025**
- B. Monthly Staff Reports**
- C. Disbursements for Approval**
- D. August Treasurers Report**

E. Approve R-2025-12 Financial Signatories

Commissioner Toalson made a motion to approve consent agenda items A. through E. Commissioner Bartlett seconded. A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted “yes”: Knott, Bartlett and Toalson. Motion carried.

FOREST PRESERVE FRIENDS FOUNDATION

Lorrie Pearson, Executive Director of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, provided an update on behalf of the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation. Lorrie discussed the upcoming Whiskey Hike fundraiser at Buffalo Trace on October 19. Commissioner Bartlett commented that the Foundation Board Members will begin reaching out to potential donors for the Nature Center as they launch the Nature Center Fundraising Campaign. Brock Martin announced the change in how funds are allocated in the 2026 budget to utilize funds needed for small projects.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioners noted the following items from staff reports and observations:

- The new boat launch at Homer Lake is an excellent addition and proved very beneficial for an individual with knee issues, as well as anyone with mobility issues.
- Congratulations to the golf course for 20 years of certification with the Audubon Society.
- Nice to hear about the family of quail spotted at Middle Fork Forest Preserve. That’s a good sign.
- Thank you to the staff for all they do for the public and for the updates in the Board packet.
- Wonderful, well-attended Changing Landscapes event at the Museum of the Grand Prairie. The staff did a terrific job. Everything was perfect, great food, great fun, and great friends. Donors were hopefully pleased. Staff should be proud of their work.
- The Discovery Garden project is really taking off and looking good. It will be a great destination and add to the wonderful collection of plants and opportunities at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve.
- Congratulations to the golf course on doing well and increasing their numbers.
- Everything looks good at Homer Lake Forest Preserve. Noticing the area for the wetland, excited for that project to begin.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Executive Director Announcements

Pearson thanked the Board Commissioners for speaking at the Changing Landscapes event at the Museum of the Grand Prairie. Pearson confirmed that the spillway project was completed. Lake of the Woods won Best Park, beating Allerton for the first time in the local People’s Choice Awards. Lake of the Woods operational staff have completed the sediment clearing for the boat launch at River Bend. Pearson announced the Pollinator Garden project has been completed. Multiple departments assisted in planting, and the project was fully supported financially by the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation. Mike Daab, Deputy Director, congratulated Brock Martin for his efforts in finding ways to financially support small projects in their entirety.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Homer Lake USFWS Wetland Agreement

Commissioner Toalson moved the to authorize the Executive Director to execute the 10-year cooperative Landowner Agreement with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Illinois Pheasants Forever for habitat improvements at Homer Lake Forest Preserve. Philip Borsdorf, Director of Natural Resources, commented on the small changes in the landowner's agreement. The Homer Lake Operations team dug trenches to locate field tiles and confirmed this project would include repairing tiles for neighboring landowner drainage as necessary. Commissioner Knott seconded. A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted "yes": Knott, Bartlett and Toalson. Motion carried.

B. Approval of Bid for Sprayer at the Golf Course

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board to approve the quote from MTI Distributing for **Sixty-Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety-Seven and 55/100 Cents (\$69,897.55)** for a multi-pro 5800 Sprayer at the Lake of the Woods Golf Course. Commissioner Knott seconded. A roll call vote was taken. The following commissioners voted "yes": Knott, Bartlett and Toalson. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION

A. Kickapoo Rail Trail Bid Results

Sam Ihm, Planner for the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, explained that the CCFPD is in a position where the lowest bid for the KRT project is higher than the budgeted amount for the project. Sam stated that the CCFPD has several options to explore and is interested in exploring all options to prevent the low bidder from withdrawing and to avoid rebidding the project due to the cost. The bids for the KRT project are good through October. One option is to truncate sections where CCFPD does not have agreements with the railroads. Commissioner Bartlett discussed getting legislators or foundations involved in possibly providing support. Bartlett urged CCFPD to make the project whole as it has been ongoing for 30 years, and the community is counting on completion. Commissioner Knott suggested spending the money CCFPD currently has on the project and truncating it to move the project forward. MaryEllen Wuellner suggested a final fundraising effort, not to interfere with the Nature Center campaign. All options will be considered, and an update will be provided at the Board of Commissioners' Regular Meeting in October.

NEW BUSINESS, CONTINUED - None

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bartlett declared Regular Meeting adjourned at 6:47pm.



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

