

Journal of Proceedings
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
November 13, 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, November 13, 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, Bartlett and Goodman

REMOTE ATTENDANCE – None

PUBLIC HEARING REFERENCE THE TAX LEVY ORDINANCE 2025-02 OF THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT IN THE COUNTY OF CHAMPAIGN, OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, FOR THE 2025 TAXES DUE IN 2026.

Sandra Lynn and Donna Cox, both from Champaign, Illinois, spoke to the Board regarding their concerns of increased taxes imposed on citizens in 2026.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS - None

PRESENTATIONS - None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes of Regular Meeting on October 16, 2025**
- B. Monthly Staff Reports**
- C. Disbursements for Approval**
- D. October Treasurers Report**

Commissioner Goodman 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, Bartlett and Goodman. Motion carried.

FOREST PRESERVE FRIENDS FOUNDATION

Commissioner Bartlett shared that staff provided updates regarding progress at Oxbow Ridge, the Discovery Greenhouse, Lake of the Woods improvements and the KRT project. Bartlett shared the Night Lights sponsorship opportunity for businesses in the community. The Whiskey Hike sold 150 tickets and the feedback from attendees was positive. The Three Rivers event is scheduled for December 11. The Nature Center campaign promotional video has been released, and the digital campaign has begun. Bartlett mentioned that Foundation members were interested in attending and speaking at future CCFPD Board meetings to provide updates on the Nature Center fundraising.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

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

- Great to see that The Museum of the Grand Prairie's social media stats, including views, shares, likes and comments have more than doubled from the previous month.
- The success of the Middle Fork Campground Halloween event was fantastic to see and it's impressive that the campground is already 50% booked for this same event next year.
- Multiple Foundations are working together to bridge the gap for fundraising for the KRT project.
- Thank you to the CCFPD staff for all the work they are doing on the KRT project, and the news story that was done on the project was positive and well done.
- Great to see the uptick in facility rentals and golf stats.
- The education programs coordinated for the fall have been great and positive feedback has been received by those participating.
- Whiskey Hike was a success and went well. Very positive feedback was received from participants.
- Kayak rental totals were impressive for the first season. Looking forward to what next year brings.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Executive Director Announcements

Pearson updated an update for Oxbow Ridge and said the aim is for a springtime Ribbon Cutting. The Photo Contest has wrapped up, and the calendars that include the winning photos are being printed and will be distributed to staff and commissioners at the Holiday Party, scheduled to take place December 3 at noon at Elk's Lake Pavilion. Commissioners are invited and should RSVP by November 21.

Deputy Director Mike Daab introduced and welcomed Aaron Hoyle-Katz as the new Planner and provided his background and education. Daab also provided insight into the damage at Homer Lake caused by beaver activity. The lake has had at least an 18" drop in water level that is assumed to be causing the destructive beaver activity. Daab provided an update on the use of a geothermal system at the Homer Lake Nature Center. The initial cost is a concern. CCFPD is weighing the options to determine if the upfront costs of the system will provide long-term cost savings and benefits. Both Commissioners Bartlett and Hundley provided feedback about other government agencies that have invested in geothermal and the benefits they have witnessed as a result.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Ordinance 2025-02: Annual Tax Levy for 2025 Taxes Due in 2026

Commissioner Goodman moved the Board approve Ordinance 2025-02, the Annual Tax Levy for 2025 Taxes due in 2026. Brock Martin explained that the tax levy isn't proposing that an individual taxpayer will pay 34% more in taxes, and that this truly only affects the line item on property taxes specifically for the Forest Preserves. The tax levy suggests that with new development throughout the county, tax revenue may increase by 34% and the Forest Preserves want to make sure they get their share of the potential growth. Current homeowners will not be affected. Martin confirms that he does not have all the numbers for the County Treasurer's Office and won't have that information until roughly March of 2026; however, the Forest Preserves are required to submit the levy by December of 2025. Pearson added that the legal verbiage required to be used in the notification published in the newspapers is misleading and contemplates a separate page on the CCFPD website with Frequently Asked Questions for the

levy so taxpayers can refer to that and that would lessen the confusion surrounding the levy for years going forward. Commissioner Bartlett seconded.

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

B. Resolution 2025-16: 2026 User Fees

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board approve Resolution 2025-16: User Fees. Brock Martin explained that the Golf Clubhouse rental contracts and fees will be adjusted to align with the other facility rentals through Forest Preserves. Martin also mentioned that the golf club rental fees are being increased because the clubs available for rent have been provided by a golf vendor and are of a higher quality than what is currently being offered. Martin explained the increase in the Lake of the Woods boat rental fee is due to the increased cost of going paperless for rental fee payments and waivers. Lake of the Woods trialed electronic payment and waiver signatures for the 2025 season and the community feedback was positive. An increase in fees will be required to offset the cost of using electronic means. Commissioner Knott seconded.

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

C. Approval of 2026 Management Plan and Budget

Commissioner Goodman moved the Board to approve the 2026 Management Plan and Budget. Brock Martin explained the budget was similar to the draft that was presented in the October Board Meeting. There were a few significant changes to the budget for a project that will have expenses carried over to 2026 and the Homer Lake kayak rental contract installment should be for 2025/2026. Commissioner Toalson seconded.

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

D. Ordinance 2025-03: Annual Tentative Budget and Appropriation

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board to approve Ordinance 2025-03: Annual Tentative Budget and Appropriation. Brock Martin explained what the annual tentative budget and appropriation for 2026 is and why the appropriation is higher than the budget. Having the appropriation higher than the budget is a benefit if there are opportunities that arise, like land acquisition or new technology programs, that were not included in the initial budget. 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 Auditors for 2025-2027 Audit Years

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to approve the proposal from Lauterbach and Amen for audit services for the fiscal years ending December 31, 2025, 2026 and 2027, with an option to add 2028 and 2029 in the future. Brock Martin explained that L&A’s proposal would be a significant cost savings to the Forest Preserves. L&A only does government audits and works with several government agencies in the Champaign County region. This firm has the capability to work directly with Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund and Park District Risk Management Association to obtain finance information that previously had to be requested by Forest Preserves

finance staff, avoiding delays waiting for requested information and reducing the time spent by finance staff to obtain the required information. Commissioner Goodman seconded.

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

F. Approval of Quote for Discovery Garden Shelter

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board to approve the Quote for Discovery Garden Shelter from Enwood Structures for **Twenty-Four Thousand, Three Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$24,350.00)** and authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract. Mike Daab explains that a smaller structure was approved previously, but after consulting with the Forest Preserves’ education and botanical garden staff, it was decided that a larger structure was needed to accommodate programs. The requested quote amount was the result of bids sought by the Forest Preserves for the larger structure. Commissioner Knott seconded.

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

G. Approval of Quote for Tree and Brush Removal at Lake of the Woods

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board to accept the quote and authorize the Executive Director to execute a contract for the removal of trees and brush within the Stream Barb project area along the Sangamon River at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve for **Nine Thousand, Six Hundred Dollars (\$9,600)** to Oak Bros Tree Care & Removal. Commissioner Knott seconded.

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

H. Approval of Revisions to Policy 6-9, Social Media

Commissioner Toalson moved the Board to approve revisions to Policy 6-9, Social Media. The proposed revisions offer a clear and structured approach to how the Forest Preserves interacts with social media and other digital platform users. The updates will help ensure transparency, professionalism, and legal compliance in all online interactions. The changes have been reviewed by legal counsel. Commissioner Knott seconded.

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

I. Resolution 2024-15: 2026 Board Meeting Schedule

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to approve the proposed 2026 Board meeting schedule. Lorrie Pearson explained a few changes to the 2026 meeting schedule pertaining to the 2027 budget, including moving the October meeting to the Champaign Public Library to allow the community to attend budget conversations, as well as moving the study session usually held in December to October to ensure the final budget and appropriations can be approved at the December Board meeting. Commissioner Goodman seconded.

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

J. Approval of IAPD/IPRA Credentials

Commissioner Knott moved the Board to approve the Credentials Certificate designating a District representative to serve as a delegate to the Illinois Association of Park Districts' Annual Business Meeting. A brief discussion was given on the conference details and the purpose of the Credentials Certificate. Bartlett is to be listed as a delegate and Lorrie Pearson is first alternate on the Credentials Certificate. Commissioners Hundley and Bartlett will attend the Soaring to New Heights Conference in January 2026. Commissioner Toalson seconded.

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

DISCUSSION

A. Line of Credit to Address Cash Flow

Brock Martin seeks Board direction to pursue an agreement with BankChampaign for a \$3M line of credit. Martin explains that the Forest Preserves has four large grants over \$1M in process that operate on a reimbursement basis so there will be some overlap between expenses paid out and reimbursement from the grants. The line of credit would bridge that gap. BankChampaign was sought out as the Forest Preserves currently have a relationship with them and the line of credit would be separated from the Forest Preserves primary deposit accounts. Martin stated he would like to have the loan finalized and ready to be available to use by February. Commissioners requested that Martin do due diligence and return to the Board with offers and interest rates from at least three banks for comparison so the Board could be well-informed prior to deciding on whether to move forward with the line of credit.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:15pm, Commissioner Knott moved to go into a closed 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).

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

At 7:44pm, Commissioner Hundley moved the Board go back into open session. Commissioner Goodman seconded. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Knott made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:44pm. Commissioner Bartlett seconded. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried.



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