

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 – 6:08PM  
PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON - PRESIDING**

1. Karen Kinney, County Clerk, called the roll: (Record)

R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods  
**TOTAL PRESENT 14**

D. Adams, T. Foster, C. Layer, B. Perkins, B. Vyncke

**TOTAL ABSENT 5**

Madam Clerk Kinney stated, "We have a quorum."

2. President Swanson stated, "Thank you, friends, for being with us tonight. I will have to suspend the agenda, as our speaker Nina Struss, Prairie Rivers Network River Health & Resiliency Organizer is making her way here as we speak.
3. Commissioner McNeil moved to approve the August 20, 2024, Commission Minutes, as presented. Commissioner L. Moreno seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS - (NONE)** (Three calls were made.)

5. **PRESIDENTS COMMENTS:**

President Swanson stated, "Just a few items under the President's Comments. As we expected, camping has started to slow down a little bit, however, there are lots of people still coming out and enjoying the preserves. If you look at some of the results of the month...you know last month, we celebrated Loud Thunder first hitting \$30,000.00 for the first time...it was the best August on record. So, again, kudos to you as Commissioners for your foresight in making the investments that made possible this exemplary performance figures we are seeing from the preserves and staff of the District. That said...we are going to dive into the agenda and break for our speaker when she's able to arrive."

6. Commissioner Mielke moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2024 Forest Preserve Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$30,971.78 as presented. Commissioner McNeil seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 14**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner Simmer moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Forest Preserve Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$290,553.46 as presented. Commissioner Enburg seconded.

Commissioner Moreno-Baker moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioners Mielke and L. Moreno seconded.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 14**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Sowards moved to waive the reading and approve the FY 2024 Transfers of Appropriation, as set forth in your packet. Commissioner L. Moreno seconded."

Commissioner Simmer moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Burns seconded.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 14**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked, "Mr. Craver? Do you happen to have your cell phone with you?"

Mr. Craver answered, "Yes."

President Swanson added, "Apparently, our speaker has misplaced the email that I sent her about this." (Chuckles) "If I could give you her number, so I can continue to conduct the meeting...uh, could you text her or maybe call her? Oh, wait a

minute, she is here...she's let's see...through security and heading upstairs, okay. Thank you. Alright."

9. Commissioner Morthland moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolution regarding FY24 Liability Fund Additional Appropriations as set forth in your packet, as presented. Commissioner L. Moreno seconded.

(Note\*\* The Resolution is in .pdf format and begins on the next page)

## RESOLUTION

Re: FY 24 Liability Fund Additional Appropriations

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are required in the Forest Preserve Liability Fund #133 for the necessary expenses incurred for the 2024 Fiscal Year, and

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are required for unemployment payments, and

**WHEREAS**, funds are available from unappropriated funds in the Forest Preserve Liability Fund #133, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. An amount of \$8,540.08 be transferred from unappropriated funds in the Forest Preserve Liability Fund #133 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$8,540.08	133-32 636.00	Insurance

SECTION 3. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2024.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner Dewith moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 14**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner McNeil moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolution regarding FY25 Appropriation Amendments to the General Fund of the District, FY25 Niabi Zoo Improvements ARPA Grant Appropriations. Commissioners L. Moreno and Sowards seconded.

(Note\*\* The Resolutions are in .pdf format and begin on the next page)

**RESOLUTION**  
RE: General Fund FY 25 Appropriation Amendments

**WHEREAS**, the Illinois Department of Revenue estimates Personal Property Replacement Tax distributions will be less than initially adopted, and

**WHEREAS**, the FY 25 appropriation was adopted in the amount of \$455,000 and Department of Revenue estimates distributions in the amount of \$288,510, and

**WHEREAS**, to maintain a balanced budget, expenditures throughout the General Fund shall be decreased and service fees shall be increased in calendar year 2025 for camping and golf, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. Revenues in the amount of \$166,490.00 shall be decreased in the Forest Preserve General Fund #130 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$166,490.00	130-32-10 335.15	Personal Property Replacement Tax

SECTION 3. Revenues in the amount of \$125,000.00 shall be increased in the Forest Preserve General Fund #130 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$100,000.00	130-32-92 347.03	Indian Bluff Golf Fees
\$10,000.00	130-32-10 361.10	Investment Earnings
\$5,000.00	130-32-90 347.00	Illiniwek Fees
\$5,000.00	130-32-91 347.00	Loud Thunder Fees
\$5,000.00	130-32-92 362.57	Concessions

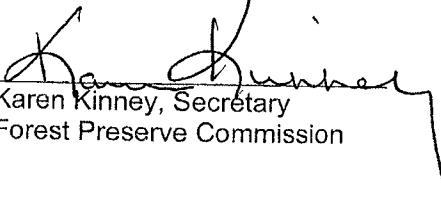
Section 4. Expenditures in the amount of \$41,490.00 shall be decreased in the Forest preserve General Fund #130 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$5,000.00	130-32-10 411.00	Salaries & Wages
\$5,000.00	130-32-92 411.00	Salaries & Wages
\$11,490.00	130-32-90 411.00	Salaries & Wages
\$5,000.00	130-32-90 413.00	Employee Health Benefit
\$10,000.00	130-32-91 411.00	Salaries & Wages
\$5,000.00	130-32-91 413.00	Employee Health Benefit

SECTION 5. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2024.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

**RESOLUTION**  
FY 2025 Niabi Zoo Improvements ARPA Grant Appropriations

**WHEREAS**, the Forest Preserve District was granted funds from Rock Island County for improvements at Niabi Zoo, and

**WHEREAS**, design and engineering for the improvement projects has been performed, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. Expenditures in the amount of \$75,524.99 shall be increased from grant revenue to be received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$75,524.99	131-32-35 767 ARPA24-60	Infrastructure over \$15,000

SECTION 3. Revenues in the amount of \$75,524.99 shall be increased from grant revenue to be received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$75,524.99	131-32-35 331.10ARPA24-00	Federal Grants-General Government

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2024.



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Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission



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Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner Burns moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods  
**TOTAL YES**      **14**

**TOTAL NO**      **0**

Motion carried.

11. Commissioner Mielke moved to approve the low bid for a Wiedenmann Terra Spike GX18 (aerator) in the amount of \$42,500.00 from Van Wall Equipment, as presented. Commissioner Sowards seconded.

Commissioner Mielke moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner McNeil seconded.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods  
**TOTAL YES**      **14**

**TOTAL NO**      **0**

Motion carried.

Commissioner Burns stated, "We skipped the FY24 Liability Fund Resolution."

President Swanson reiterated, "Oh, the FY24 Liability Fund. Thank you, Mr. Burns. It takes a village to keep me on track, props to Mr. Burns."

(9a). Commissioner Burns moved to approve the FY24 Liability Fund Resolution, as presented. Ms. Enburg seconded.

(See Line Item 9)

Commissioner Brunk moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Sowards seconded.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods  
**TOTAL YES**      **14**

**TOTAL NO**      **0**

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated, "Again, thank you, Mr. Burns."

(NOTE\*\* It was actually the FY25 Transfers of Appropriation on the Agenda that was inadvertently missed and therefore, no action was taken and will be presented at the next meeting in October for approval. The FY24 Liability Fund Resolution was approved in Line Item 9 of these minutes.)

12. President Swanson stated, "At this time, we are joined by Ms. Castro. And if she is so willing, she has an update on the Quad Cities Power Station Real Property Tax Assessments Settlement. Ms. Castro, this is the Tax Assessment Settlement Agreement and the floor is yours. Thank you for being with us."

Ms. Castro stated, "Thank you. I was not present at last month's meeting for the Forest Preserve District, but I believe that the Quad City Power Plant Agreement that contained the agreed upon figures for the six-year agreement...the rates were presented to this committee for approval. Correct me if I am wrong about that. I know that they were presented to the County Board...so, I may be getting the two a little bit confused."

President Swanson stated, "I think the Commission has been at least for the Executive meeting...Mr. Craver, did we talk about this in the full Commission?"

Mr. Craver answered, "Yeah, the presentation was done at the county meeting by the attorney from Robbins & Schwartz."

Ms. Castro stated, "Okay."

Mr. Craver added, "It was then approved by a vote by both bodies."

Ms. Castro stated, "Okay. So, the overall numbers were presented to you in terms of what the Nuclear Power Plant has agreed to in terms of taxation...Assessed values for all the parties. What was not included in that agreement was what is called Exhibit C. And that Exhibit lays out the tax rates for each of the ten districts that are going to benefit from this agreement. In the prior 2016 agreement, the parties used the 2016 tax rate. And so, with this agreement, the understanding...I think amongst all the taxing bodies impacted was that we were going to proceed with the 2023 tax rates in place. Now, the thing that has...um, Blackhawk College has a difference of opinion with regard to that. The college has passed an additional tax rate that is going to fall in place beginning with 2024. And, Blackhawk College would like that included in this figure...in this allocation. So, what the other taxing bodies have to determine is whether they are in agreement to that...um, Blackhawk has a couple of proposals in terms of how to change that allocation so that their new additional tax rate is included in this. Basically, Blackhawk is looking for an additional end result over the term of the agreement is that Blackhawk will an additional \$1 million dollars. And so, now we have to figure

out how that is going to impact the rest of the bodies. Either everyone can be impacted and buy a reduction in what they are going to receive in their allocation or a few taxing bodies may agree...um, there was a conference call on Friday, last week, where the Cordova Library District was not on board with Blackhawk's proposal. We have another conference, zoom conference call this Friday to further discuss the positions of the taxing bodies. I don't know what this will do. I should...in terms of different allocations...Blackhawk College has indicated that they are willing to explore legal options with regard to the taxing bodies options are. Exelon is out of the equation because they have agreed to these dollars, right? So, their position is not going to change. It is just the allocation amongst those taxing bodies that are going to be impacted. So, um...ya know...think about that and what position the Forest Preserve wants to take. They are allowed to make that same assessment...do you fight, do you agree to a reduction, um...do a handful, perhaps? And, I don't know yet whether other taxing bodies are willing to take a decrease their proportionate share of those dollars available to us. I don't know the answer to that and so, I just wanted to put that in your mind. The only thing to consider is, the Assessor...um, ya know...this will delay Assessments and her obligations with the State, I believe. There isn't a...all taxing bodies have the ability to object to this. So, we have to notify, publish it...it's going to delay our tax process in assessment in public publication of the rates. This also has to be approved by the courts, assuming we have an agreement on this from all of the parties. It could result in a few snags, but the attorneys that represent the school district, the Erie School District...um, I am certain are, well...they are preparing a game plan. I don't know what that is though tonight."

President Swanson asked, "Are you okay with questions?"

Ms. Castro answered, "Yes...absolutely."

Commissioner L. Moreno was recognized.

Mr. L. Moreno asked, "Ms. Castro, do you know if they had for some reason, were they excluded from prior conversations for some reason...and if so, why now? I would also ask this of their attorney at the time."

Ms. Castro answered, "You know, the way this agreement was negotiated was done differently than years prior. It's my understanding that Blackhawk has been in communications with the school district attorneys about requesting...making user request to have this new levy included. You know...um, I take them at their word. Um...you know, I think they'll...yes, my feeling is that those conversations have been had. I don't know what happened with them. I don't know why they weren't considered. I believe it's because of the way the agreement was negotiated the last time, but I don't have any basis for that. That's my understanding that they...that Blackhawk has made their concerns known to the Robbins Schwartz attorneys."

Mr. L. Moreno stated, "Thank you."

President Swanson asked, "Oh...do you have another comment?"

Mr. L. Moreno stated, "It's something I would like to talk to Richard is, what's happened at Blackhawk is the guy that was present last year isn't there...so, the old President and an old Administration...and now, you have a new President come in and wants to change it. I don't get that."

President Swanson stated, "I think it's, obviously, going to be beneficial...I'll get to you in just one second Dr. Simmer...to, if we can, have the Commission on the same wavelength as the County Board when that decision time comes. And, just a thought on that. Dr. Simmer, please."

Commissioner Simmer was recognized.

Mr. Simmer asked, "This Schedule C...that's not been presented last month?"

Ms. Castro answered, "Correct."

Mr. Simmer asked, "So, does that...are we able to vote when we are not totally up-to-date with all the information?"

Ms. Castro answered, "No. It does not because the purpose I am bringing that to the Boards attention at that point in time is to make you aware of what Exelon was...the numbers that they were agreeing to, the overall numbers, right? Because, if you recall...the 2000 agreement, it started with 2016; was a high dollar amount and then it decreased over the remaining years. This agreement does the opposite. This agreement starts at \$16 million and it goes up from there; which I think is beneficial to everyone and I think that's how it should be. Um...that being said, ya know um, what each perspective taxing body sees, again...it was based on the tax rates in place at the time in the year that the agreement was renegotiated. And so, again, that's how it was done in 2016 and I believe everybody's assumption was that the same thing was going to happen this year, but for Blackhawk making this request. They have a planned levy that is beginning with the tax year 2024. Ya know...other taxing bodies, again, could also raise the same issue. What if we have a plan likely during the term of this agreement? Why shouldn't we factor that into account and thereby get a bigger piece of the pie, if you will. And so, ya know...that's the issue that we are having...it's amongst the taxing bodies and has nothing to do with Exelon's agreed amounts."

Mr. Simmer asked, "Most have seen before, is it likely that its disbursed out (inaudible) where they bail out...but um, ya know...is this one of those votes where all groups are in or out or if one objects to it?"

Ms. Castro answered, "I don't think so because there may be some taxing bodies that are fine with Blackhawk College, ya know, including the 2024 levy into their assessment and thereby...their reduction, ya know...their portion being reduced by whatever proportion. Blackhawk is presentative on those things, either everybody's share gets reduced...um, ya know, I found one thing interesting where I noted in one of their proposals, they showed that the county was taking the brunt of it."

Mr. Simmer stated, "Yeah? I don't."

Ms. Castro added, "Right. I mean, that is one of their choices."

Mr. Simmer stated, "I suggest they have a bake sale."

(Group laughter)

President Swanson stated, "Just to clarify, and please correct me if I am wrong...what we are talking about here is...is still more than what we would have gotten prior to this negotiation. It's just less than we thought we were getting a month ago. And, if that's correct, I wonder if...and I always refer to you, Ms. Castro because you are the negotiator on our behalf, maybe if the Blackhawk College District wants to go up to here (holds hand high) and we have to come down (lowers hand)...maybe we can scale back and not get what they thought they were going to get and then us, so that we all get a little bit of the pain rather than Blackhawk being the sole body that gets 100% of its wishes and everybody else takes it on the chin. I don't know if that negotiable or not."

Ms. Castro answered, "Well Blackhawk in an email has basically, said ya know...that therefore, he doesn't believe, Mr. Frommel, doesn't believe that his Board will support that."

President Swanson asked, "Is there any action that you need from us this evening?"

Ms. Castro answered, "It would be helpful to know what direction you want, whether you want to proceed in or you want to agree to Blackhawk's whatever, you know whatever District strategy you wish...um, and however you want me to communicate that to me is fine, but some direction would be helpful, even perhaps informally."

Commissioner L. Moreno was recognized.

Mr. L. Moreno asked, "Mr. Rothsberger has been doing this for seven or eight years, so it's surprising he is waiting until this moment to bring up an objection. Again, my

concern is that all of the other parties have done their due diligence...and now, this new President is doing something different and now he wants us and everybody else to give him what he wants. That's my concern."

Ms. Castro answered, "In the email, Mr. Frommel indicates that he's been communicating since at least August of this year. And, I think that's probably fair because those numbers...the final numbers were presented to everybody. Exelon's final numbers were presented to everybody around that time to the rest of the taxing bodies. So, again, there will be another zoom on Friday, so we will be able to know whatever the direction the County and/or the Forest Preserve wishes to go. I can't make those decisions for you."

Mr. Simmer. "Sure...sure, right."

Commissioner Morthland was recognized.

Mr. Morthland asked, "Just very quickly, I would, as someone else who has had deep understanding to the workings of Blackhawk College, I would echo Dr. Moreno."

President Swanson asked, "Mr. Craver, if you wouldn't mind...if you've got some input on this? I am always a little bit leery about having up to 19 people play quarterback. We've got a very good coach working here in the room. Mr. Craver, any thoughts you would like to carry or that you would like to share with us?"

Mr. Craver answered, "I did share that email with the Board where you could break down and see what the facts of the current agreement are and what Blackhawk College is proposing. I believe Ms. Castro and I have attended all the meetings that the school district asked us to and, in that email, like I said, stated we were initially contacted back in August, I believe, of 2022. I would think that Blackhawk College had some kind of knowledge or intention of going out for this Bond Issue. And, it was kind of a shock to...on the zoom call, I think it is fair to say that many of us were shocked that those folks were trying to change the terms of the agreement. There was never...well, Mr. Frommel may have approached the school district and the attorneys back in August, but there was no mention of the intention of the college going out for a Bond Issue and ensuring that portion other levies were doing their due diligence to see what the other taxing bodies have done. I think that it was an assumption by all the taxing bodies would proceed with this agreement and their portions would be set based on what their levies were in 2023. I think once those numbers came out, and while they issued the Bond Issue and did file it with the County Clerk, as they are required by law probably to do so...the time to take a look at what their projected tax levy would have been...would have been last year. They should have levied for those dollars appropriately or checked with the Assessor's Office to see what the other taxing

bodies were doing to ensure they were capturing the revenue that they were supposedly going to be depending on. That's my opinion."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you, Mr. Craver. A possible solution here...I don't know that we need an actual vote, and I am also going to be looking at Ms. Castro to see if this is doable...that is, if the Commission is okay with empowering the President and the District Director in consultation with the County Board Chairman and county staff to be in communication with Ms. Castro...because, obviously, this is a rapidly developing situation I think is changing as we speak. Uh...if you would be okay with that? If there is anything of any hugely substantial to communicate, we will do that immediately, but because we've got a time stamp on this thing in terms of preparation of assessments and revenues and budgets and everything else...would that be an acceptable course forward? I'm looking for a consensus...and I am gonna hear from Mr. Morthland."

Commissioner Morthland was recognized.

Mr. Morthland stated, "Thank you, Mr. President. Isn't a new conversation a new negotiation and wouldn't we have to authorize that through closed session?"

President Swanson stated, "If that's the result, I don't know it has to be in closed session. But, I mean...if that is the result of the conversation. I am just saying, for right now because the situation is so dynamic, uh...I think Mr. Brunk, myself, Mr. Grafton, Mr. Craver would be in close communication with Ms. Castro and then ask and see if we would need a new agreement, right? It could be, right? I know we got stuck with what we had before...I saw Mr. Brunk and Dr. Simmer."

Commissioner Brunk was recognized.

Mr. Brunk stated, "Thank you. Ms. Castro, your comments a few minutes ago as far as what Dr. Simmer inquired about whether or not this would require a new vote from the Board...err, the Commission, I am sorry. That agreement, basically, as I recall had the amount that Constellation would pay in total, correct?"

Ms. Castro answered, "That's correct."

Mr. Brunk stated, "I don't believe there was any agreement beyond that, correct?"

Ms. Castro answered, "Correct. That is correct. The allocation of the taxing bodies was not included that Exhibit C that was presented last month to the County Board."

Mr. Brunk stated, "Okay. So, either direction that the Commission or the county goes with this wouldn't necessarily...wouldn't need a vote on a new agreement or are you...?"

Ms. Castro answered, "I don't believe it would...not at this point in time. I will know more on Friday. I think your proposed resolution in terms of how to address these issues would be appropriate at this time. At this point, ya know...I would hope that we could along with the other taxing bodies, come to some agreement. Perhaps there are some recommendations there will be as we talk on Friday. Maybe things will resolve, maybe not. Maybe there are other solutions that other taxing bodies are contemplating that we are just not aware of. So, that's my hope that we are able to overcome this issue, but if not...then, if we hit a brick wall, I will certainly come back and inform everybody and we will see what...we'll see how Blackhawk responds to whatever the other taxing bodies positions are and then that would probably further require a more in depth conversation, if there is some...what I would call real threat litigation from Blackhawk."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you first, Dr. Simmer. Oh, yeah...please."

Mr. Brunk stated, "Thank you, Ms. Castro. I was going to say just for clarification with the numbers...if I remember the number correctly for Rock Island County, we could be getting approximately \$30,000 annually, give or take...I was speaking with President Swanson for a little bit earlier about the conversations I have had over the last couple of days with some people regarding this matter to try and assess what is fully going on and what the thought processes are that are out there."

President Swanson recognized Dr. Simmer and then Mr. McNeil."

Mr. Simmer asked, "I did... If uh... How many different taxing districts are there in total? Was it six or seven?"

Ms. Castro answered, "There are a total of ten. So, with Rock Island County...there are nine others."

Mr. Simmer asked, "So, if we pass it by one vote, Blackhawk gets their way?"

Ms. Castro asked, "Pardon?"

Mr. Simmer reiterated, "If it passes by one vote, Blackhawk gets what they want?"

Ms. Castro answered, "Well no...all of the individual taxing bodies impacted would have to...I believe would have to agree to the plan."

Mr. Simmer stated, "Okay."

Ms. Castro added, "It's not... Because we are all independent. So, no...all of us would have to agree. I suppose if...you know, a taxing body decided to give up

enough of the share to where it equates to the number that Blackhawk wants, you know...then, nobody else would be impacted. I don't know that...I have not done that or looked at that. I don't know if that's the right possibility, it might be...but um, you know if maybe if the school district...let's just for simplicity sake decides to say, okay Blackhawk...we don't want to hold up the agreement, we'll agree to your figure and give up our percentage so that nobody else has to worry about it, right? That's..."

Mr. Simmer stated, "Right...well, Rich has been deeply involved with that and Dr. Moreno has been involved in this stuff. And I think that it's been a year ago they should have been planning and doing their due diligence on their part. And, planning on their part was poor. And, I think that poor planning on their part doesn't constitute the dynamic change for us now. I am not for that. I think that's crazy. They are better than that."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you, Dr. Simmer. Mr. McNeil."

Commissioner McNeil was recognized.

Mr. McNeil stated, "Just a quick question. I am just curious...how often this happens? Is there any precedent from any taxing bodies from around the state you can learn about? This seems unusual."

Ms. Castro answered, "I don't know the answer to that because I don't know."

Mr. McNeal stated, "Okay."

Ms. Castro added, "I don't do enough of this. It's a good question and I will ask of it...ask the attorneys on Friday."

Mr. McNeil stated, "Okay, thank you."

President Swanson states, "Thank you all, again, just looking for an informal resolution. I don't know that we need that, at this point. Is there a general consensus that this plan of Mr. Brunk, Mr. Craver, Mr. Grafton, myself in the county and the Forest Preserve work with Ms. Castro for the next couple of days and see what happens? Is everyone okay with that? Right now, we are talking about the Commission's perspective. Not seeing any objection to that, that's what we'll try to do and Ms. Castro, if you have a moment before we wrap up...I want to make sure we are on the same page about Friday."

Ms. Castro answered, "Certainly."

President Swanson stated, "Okay. Thank you. Is there anything else on this matter? Well, thank you very much for spending the time to shed some light on this

because it has been hard to follow it all through all of this. So, thank you...I appreciate that. Now, friends...in a moment we are going to ask for a motion to go into a closed session, but I am so grateful that Ms. Struss is here. And, I am sorry about the crossed wires, but we are grateful she's here. Nina Struss represents the Prairie Rivers Network River Health & Resiliency Organization. And, did you have a handout you wanted to share?"

Ms. Struss stated, "I do."

President Swanson stated, "I would suggest that maybe Mr. Craver could help out with that and we'll get you started at the microphone as soon as you are ready. Ms. Struss, the floor is yours."

Ms. Struss stated, "Thank you."

President Swanson stated, "Good evening."

Ms. Struss stated, "I am from the Resiliency Organizer for the Prairie Rivers Network. And, if you haven't heard of us before, it's not surprising. I didn't know about Prairie Rivers Network until I started working for this organization a little over a year ago. We are an environmental non-for-profit based out of Champaign, but we do work around the entire State of Illinois. And, of course, with my position here in the Quad Cities, we are kind of crossing those state lines as well...working within the bi-state region. And, my primary responsibility this last year has been working on a climate assessment for the Quad Cities in collaboration with the US National Wildlife Federation and the University of Illinois Discovery Partners Institute. This assessment was released in April of this year. This is a one-page flyer of some of the higher-level findings on this assessment as well as the QR Codes; which you will find the full assessment online. I do also have some printed copies with me here today, if anybody is interested. But basically, what this report initially did was, we went to community stakeholders here in the Quad Cities to gather their input into what they thought would be the biggest climate risks here across the Quad Cities through the end of the century. And so, it is no surprise that flooding...both river flooding and flash flooding were big concerns of the community members, as well as increasing weather events like extreme heat, as well as other extreme weather events. And utilizing that information, we worked with the Discovery Partners Institute to be able to develop...well, they did the work of developing some climate models for the Quad Cities. In our assessment, we have three different time lines for each of these models that you can see if you look at our risk time line for early century, mid-century and end of the century. And what those climate models have, show the possibility that flooding as we know it here in the Quad Cities could potentially change. Not only seeing more frequent floods, but more damaging floods as well. Also, to note...that the flooding may not always come from the main stems of the Mississippi and the Rock Rivers. We are seeing more instances of flooding from extreme precipitation from extreme weather events. And so, additionally, we also took a look at extreme heat and how that could

potentially change. And, some of that data is on the back of this handout as well. But, one of the alarming statistics that we saw was that right now, the average hottest experiences are about two days above 95 degrees for our summers and by the end of the century, we could see up to about two months' worth of temperatures above 95 degrees. And so, utilizing this information that we had, we continue to go back to the community and make sure we were ground truthing our findings to make sure we weren't missing anything, finding gaps and looking for good information. Additionally, too, what we found was The Discover Institute saw within these climate models is...that they also took a look at what nature-based solutions could do help to decrease our risk. So, if you are not familiar with what nature-based solutions are...because I had no idea, that is we are looking at mechanisms that help control those extreme weather events like river flooding or extreme heat. So, things like trees...planting more trees, obviously, as well as concert and conservation practices from a farming perspective and as wide...err, large as weapons like making a marsh to help provide those larger nature benefits to even the smallest things like green roofs, permeable pavements and even rain gardens to help soak in that extra water. So, within our assessment, we do have those same flood models that we had previously. But, you will see a before and an after of nature being able to be limited by nature-based solutions. What the assessment found is that with the limitations of these nature-based solutions, on soaking up that excess water...we found, you could see a reduction in those flood risks and the flood risks here in the Quad Cities. So, part of my job...through the release of this assessment was to continue to go to the people we had initially talked with as well as engage new groups and new stakeholders also, making sure that they understood these findings we weren't missing, but additionally, to ask what do you think it takes in order to have nature-based solutions included in these conversations. And, with all of our conversations, we continue to develop here in the Quad Cities. We are never going to stop developing. So, funding, of course, was a really big concern and also a hurdle in order to be able to move nature-based solutions forward and getting the process started. Research also came up; which is extremely important, trying to find ways to quantify those results...how do we prove that planting more trees will decrease the heat every year. And, then education too. So, providing education components to people who are in important decision-making positions but also to those who are our youth to make sure they understand why it's important to be looking at these moving forward. And so, since the release, I've been doing a lot of that part...a lot of those education conversations. And, I really think it's important to mention that this is not a presumptive plan. We do provide ideas and inspiration for potential opportunities like bringing in the tree's solution in the report and those from the community members. But, really what this tool is...it's a hope to be utilized as a tool to start conversations around ways that we can rethink the way that we build here in the Quad Cities to decrease those extreme weather risks that we have here or that we potentially will have here as we move forward in the century. Currently, right now, we are in a nest phase of this work. I spent the majority of my summer engaging the same, but lots of new people meeting with

the cities and other municipalities...all 5 cities in terms of, especially storm water management and the parks and recreations departments. We've been able to meet with several different groups and lots of non-profits in the Quad Cities just to engage their understanding and their recommendations and who we should be talking to and also gathering their ideas on whether or not they know of any current projects or ideas for future projects that could be championed through this work of nature-based perspectives. And so, through the summer, we have been combing through those ideas and our hope is to start moving forward and providing some assistance on this, helping some of these organizations find funding resources or provide tactical assistance if that's something that is necessary too. Right now, we have a horticultural project that is on our radar that we are waiting to start moving forward as well as looking at this project. I just wanted to take the opportunity today to increase the awareness that this is a tool that is out there and also making sure that while it can be kind of scary as you look through it, there is a lot of hope in there too in terms of working with nature. Our data shows a potential for that and hoping to...the more that people know about nature-based solutions and the more people know about this assessment, the hope is that more of these types of projects will come up in conversations as we continue to develop here in the Quad Cities. So, I would welcome any questions if anybody has any, additionally, if there are any individuals, organizations or people that you feel we should be talking to about this assessment and should be having conversations with...that's part of my job. It's one of the parts that I love about this job. And, just continuing to make sure that we are having the conversations that we need to have."

President Swanson stated, "And, I will be happy to be taking questions from any folks...but, I will say...and we'll hear from Mr. Dewith in just a second...I've heard of and I am going to expand this presentation by encouraging you to use that QR Code. If you look at some of the modeling of our county. If you grew up here during the 1965 flood levy was built in Rock Island...that's no longer going to be a rock-solid guarantee when you start looking a generation or two out. And, significant portions of the City of Rock Island in our county start going under water; which is pretty scary. So, please, Mr. Dewith."

Commissioner Dewith was recognized.

Mr. Dewith stated, "Yeah, I also hope that you are talking with the colleges and whatever."

Ms. Struss reiterated, "With the colleges?"

Mr. Dewith answered, "Yes."

Ms. Struss answered, "Yes. So, we have been in conversations with some..."

Mr. Dewith interrupted, "St. Ambrose?"

Ms. Struss asked, "What was that?"

Mr. Dewith stated, "The Biology Department."

Ms. Struss answered, "At Augustana and such, mmm hmm. And some of those conversations are starting to move forward this fall as well."

President Swanson stated, "Thanks, Mr. Dewith. I appreciate that. Are there any other questions for Ms. Struss? Well, I am so grateful you were able to spend some time with us. Thank you very much for being with us."

Ms. Struss answered, "Absolutely. I have some physical copies of the report here too."

President Swanson added, "And, I will say to my fellow Commissioners, I do have her contact information and so, if you have an organization that you would like Ms. Struss to present to...and this project, I will also note, involves the National Wildlife Preserves. So, we are very fortunate that the full scope of that Federation is looking at our stretch of the river."

Ms. Struss added, "Yeah...they are very supportive of the Quad Cities, absolutely. Thank you."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you so much for your time. We appreciate it. Now, in order to stick with the printed agenda, you see it...we will first have opportunity for Comments from Commissioners. Are there any general comments, status of the preserves...I hope you've had a chance to get out and enjoy some things. Alright."

13. **Comments from Commissioners: (NONE)**

14. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve all Routine Reports from the Director and Departments Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission, as presented. Commissioner Morthland seconded. (Record)

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked, "Ms. Palmer, do you have anything you want to lift up from your report?"

Ms. Palmer Stated, "I do not. Thank you."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you. Mr. Craver, do you have anything that you want to lift up from your reports?"

Mr. Craver stated, "No, but we did have a very good month."

President Swanson stated, "Yes, it has been."

15. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to go into closed session, as per 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(2)  
– Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or  
their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more  
classes of employees. Commissioner Mielke seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-  
Baker, R. Morthland, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 13**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried. Time is 6:55pm

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Time is 7:33pm

16. Commissioner Simmer moved to go back into open session. Commissioner Woods  
seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated, "Friends, I see no further business before us. The next  
meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission will be Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at  
5:30pm, in these chambers, following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board  
in the Rock Island County Office Building, 1504 Third Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois.  
Friends we are in recess. Thank you for your time."

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting recessed at 7:33pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



KAREN KINNEY  
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY  
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

KK:ro