

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**NOVEMBER 13, 2024**

**PRESENT:** Committee members –L. Moreno, E. Sowards, D. Mielke, K. Swanson.

**ABSENT:** R. Simmer, J. Woods, C. Layer.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeff Craver, District Director; Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo Director; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; Ben Mills, Loud Thunder Ranger; April Palmer, Auditor; Nick Camlin, Treasurer.

President Swanson called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 9:31 AM on Tuesday, November 13, 2024, in the second floor conference room of the County Building in Rock Island, Illinois.

D. Mielke, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, L. Moreno.

**TOTAL PRESENT 4**

J. Woods, C. Layer, R. Simmer.

**TOTAL ABSENT 3**

President Swanson called for a motion approving the October Committee meeting and the closed session minutes.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to approve the October Committee meeting minutes. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$444,621.15.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$444,621.15. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the transfers of appropriations.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the transfers of appropriations. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the resolutions regarding FY25 Niabi Zoo ARPA Grant Appropriations.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the resolutions regarding FY25 Niabi Zoo ARPA Grant Appropriations. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson made three calls for public comment. There were no requests for public comment.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the 2024 Levy Ordinances for the General Fund, Niabi Zoological Preserve Fund, IMRF Retirement Fund, Liability Fund FISSA Fund, Audit Fund, and Development of Forests and Construction of Improvement Fund.

**MOTION:** Ms. Woods moved to approve the 2024 Levy Ordinances for the General Fund, Niabi Zoological Preserve Fund, IMRF Retirement Fund, Liability Fund FISSA Fund, Audit Fund, and Development of Forests and Construction of Improvement Fund. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the ordinance authorizing the issuance of tax anticipation warrant in anticipation of tax levied for the Niabi Zoo fund for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to approve the ordinance authorizing the issuance of tax anticipation warrant in anticipation of tax levied for the Niabi Zoo fund for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson moved to approve the abatement ordinance pursuant to ordinance #11-01-17 in the amount of \$342,827.50.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the abatement ordinance pursuant to ordinance #11-01-17 in the amount of \$342,827.50. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson moved to approve the abatement ordinance pursuant to ordinance #2016-0401 in the amount of \$355,250.00.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to approve the abatement ordinance pursuant to ordinance #2016-0401 in the amount of \$355,250.00. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the changes to RICFPD benefits policy.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to approve the changes to RICFPD benefits policy. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Mr. Mielke asked if there was no longer a deferral period.

President Swanson stated that these changes are to bring the District in line with the County's policies. Believe there is still a deferral period, but this is making it easier to manage.

Mr. Craver stated that he believed it used to be ninety days, and now it's the first of the month following 30 days of employment. It's what a lot of folks have been asking for on the County's side. This program is the County's program, and the District is able to participate.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the proposed IMEG Agreement.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the proposed IMEG Agreement. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Mr. Craver stated that a year or so ago I submitted a request to the Illinois Climate Bank for a grant for electric vehicle charging stations. The District was notified that it was selected for the program. The grant is a 20% match, and the project is projected at \$410,000.00. Therefore, the award is a little over \$100,000.00. The IMEG agreement is to do with that project. IMEG will provide information on the infrastructure needed for the project, and advice on the best placement of the stations.

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked if there was anything else needed for the Illinois Climate Bank discussion on the agenda.

Mr. Craver stated that it did not need anything other than consensus, which was effectively granted when approving the agreement.

President Swanson called for a motion to enter closed session as per ILCS 120/2 (c) (1) (c) Exceptions: (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. Also, (11) Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to enter closed session. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Mielke, E. Sowards, L. Moreno, K. Swanson.

**TOTAL YES**      **4**

**TOTAL NO**      **0**

Motion carried.

Closed session began 9:43 AM

Closed session ended 9:57 AM

President Swanson called for a motion to return to open session.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to return to open session. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked if there were any questions for staff regarding the routine reports.

There were no questions.

President Swanson commented that in Mr. Craver's report the District had to do a change order for Niabi. The change order was due to the lack of suitable foundation for the cathouse repairs and the improperly attached fencing. Want to left that up for the full Commission because that's a vestige of a previous chapter in the zoo's history. When we didn't do things necessarily by the book. There were shortcuts. It's so refreshing under Mr. Jackson's leadership and Mr. Craver's leadership that the District has turned a page. We don't go with a special friend's cousin who happens to know how to pour concrete or we think he does. The District is using IMPACT agreements, and more quality. Hope people pay attention to that. The investments that the District makes now in quality pay off for generations down the road. The only other thing I'd like to left up is that, you may have noticed, there's going to be a t-shirt for Amôwa. When will those be available? Definitely want to make sure that I'm able to buy one before it's gone.

Mr. Craver answered that it would be available, hopefully, in the next week. Currently working out the details of sale processing orders.

President Swanson stated that no matter what it looks like, the funds go to support the Larry Toppert Fund, which means it's helping the forest preserves.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve all routine reports from the Director and Department Heads as presented.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to approve all routine reports from the Director and Department Heads as presented. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Ms. Palmer noted that the Auditor's Office had received the draft of the audit, and it is being reviewed now.

Mr. Craver noted that the District had been awarded \$200,000.00 for the project improving the bike path. That grant came from the DNR [Illinois Department of Natural Resources].

President Swanson called the meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM.

Submitted by:  
Cassie Sullivan  
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant