

**LAKE BLUFF PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 26, 2018**

The Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Lake Bluff Park District, Lake County, Illinois, was held at the Lake Bluff Park District Recreation Center, 355 W. Washington Avenue, Lake Bluff, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Douglass.

The following Commissioners were present when the roll was called: S. Ehrhard, B. Gordon, K. McKendry, C. Mosbarger, F. Pitera, B. Wallace and R. Douglass.

Staff members present were Ron Salski, Executive Director; Jim Lakeman, Superintendent of Recreation, Safety and Outreach Services; Ed Heiser, Superintendent of Facility Services; Rob Foster, Superintendent of Golf, Park and Facility Maintenance; Dana Hansen, Preschool and Early Childhood Director; Cheryl Mosqueda, Superintendent of Finance and Human Resources; Dawn Dahl, Administrative Assistant; and Marcia Jendreas, Recording Secretary.

Also present was Attorney Scott Puma, Ancel, Glink, Diamond, Bush, DiCianni & Krafthefer P.C.; and a large number of citizens.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Mosbarger moved, seconded by Commissioner Gordon, to approve the February 26, 2018 Agenda as submitted.

On the roll call, the vote was as follows:

AYE: S. Ehrhard, B. Gordon, K. McKendry, C. Mosbarger, F. Pitera, B. Wallace, R. Douglass

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

DISCUSSION

Facts About the Lake Bluff Golf Club and Its Future – Presentation

President Douglass welcomed everyone in the audience and said the Board was present tonight to hear thoughts and comments about whether the Lake Bluff Park District should continue to operate the Golf Club. The Park Board has worked hard to always be financially responsible with our tax dollars. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the Board has established long term financial sustainability. Tonight, the Park District staff will share the financial data and details about the Golf Club operation, including assessment reports from experts. You will see the Club's financial impact on the Park District's overall budget.

Special Board Meeting of February 26, 2018

President Douglass explained the meeting format. He said that if a decision is made to close the Golf Club, it will still remain open through the end of the 2018 golf season. Any discussion of future uses of the property will not occur until after the 2018 season.

Executive Director Salski explained that he will show a presentation that contains facts and history about the Lake Bluff Golf Club. This presentation will be available for viewing on the Park District website. He said that the Board and staff want community input into the final decision. He noted that the Billy Casper Golf contract is ending at the end of the 2018 season, and the Clubhouse needs to be shut down in January 2019, for significant repairs, including some which need to meet the needs of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Total cost for these repairs is \$600,000 to \$700,000.

Executive Director Salski outlined the timeline of events regarding the Golf Club since 2001, and he reviewed the revenue situation after Billy Casper Golf was hired. He noted that there is a decline in golf participation and there is a saturated market. 80% of the golf rounds are played by non-residents. The cost-recovery shortfall to goal is \$384,000. The financial loss of the Golf Club for the past 12 years has been \$3 million and projected loss is \$5.4 million from 2018 to 2029. The Golf Club requires the highest tax subsidy of any of the Park District programs and facilities.

Executive Director Salski explained various scenarios/options that were explored by Sikich LLP and staff, such as an 18 hole golf club with no building, 18 hole golf club with a modular facility, 9 hole club with and without building and no golf club. Billy Casper Golf has recommended against the nine-hole course because even though maintenance would be reduced slightly, revenue would drop significantly. He said without the golf club, staff would just mow the area and create paths and there would be a slight positive operational cash flow.

Executive Director Salski stated that the Park Board Commissioners need to make an important decision regarding the golf club and they want input from the citizens. He opened the meeting for public comments.

Statement of Visitors / Public Input

Greg Sledd, Libertyville, said he has been golfing at the Lake Bluff Golf Club for many years and said it brings many non-residents to the community who not only golf, but shop and eat in Lake Bluff as well.

Mary Ann McCormick, Lake Forest, is a long time golfer and complimented Superintendent Rob Foster for maintaining the course in great condition for a lot of years. She suggested contacting the Lake County Forest Preserves to see if they would take over operation of the golf course.

Ed Richardson, Lake Bluff, played on the course since 1968 and he begged staff and Board to save the golf course and possibly contact Lake County Forest Preserves.

Michael Coleman, Lake Bluff, said his biggest fear is not knowing what would happen with the property if the golf course is closed. He also noted that if the golf club building is shut down, there would be nowhere for pool patrons to go for a decent lunch.

Jeff Schaoll, Lake Bluff, complimented Billy Casper Golf on their operation of the golf course. He commented that Forbes Magazine reports that golf participation is now on an uprise and felt that the Park District was using outdated information.

Special Board Meeting of February 26, 2018

Peter Capps, Lake Bluff, wondered if the Park District considered putting the land up for sale, and said there are a lot of rumors that the land will either be plowed under or sold to townhouse developers. He asked that the Park District continue to be transparent with what will happen to the land in the future.

Todd Nugent, Lake Bluff, said his family also uses the golf course for walking and cross-country skiing. He suggested maybe a different pricing model could be used for golfers and was concerned with what will happen to the property.

Al Trefts, Lake Bluff, said the golf course is a huge benefit to the community and represents approximately 40% of the total open space in the community. He said he is a member of Lake Bluff Open Lands (LBOLA) and they have proposed to the Park District and Village that the area from Route 176 north be opened up so that the public might better view the golf course and hopefully attract more business.

David Szaflarski, Lake Bluff, said that the golf course is part of the fabric of our area and the open space is valuable. He said to keep no stone unturned to keep the golf course open.

Charles Bagdon, Lake Bluff, thanked the Park Board for the excellent job they are doing and for having this meeting. He hoped the Park District would ask Lake County Forest Preserve to operate the course and felt that some fees should be increased.

Benjamin Hans, Lake Bluff, said he is a senior at Lake Forest High School and has never been a huge golfer, but has had some special moments on the course with his relatives. He said that Lake Bluff needs facilities to attract a new generation to the town and the golf course is important.

Rory Spears, Arlington Heights, said he does a lot of golf reporting and feels that a golf course and golf club building can be renovated for a lot less money than the numbers he has heard tonight. He said that oftentimes, it is the golf club that makes money for the park districts, more so than a pool or tennis courts. He also didn't feel that having outside management was needed or profitable for the course. He hoped the Lake Bluff Golf Club would remain open.

Caryn Wilcox, Lake Bluff, said she represents the 90% of residents who do not use the golf course and she said the numbers are alarming for subsidizing the course for a small number of residents.

Cliff Chiovero, Lake Bluff, said the grounds crew does a great job and it's the best golf around. He felt that prices should be increased so the course remains open.

John Marozsan, Lake Bluff, suggested a referendum to cover future capital needs. He thought residents might be willing to pay more taxes to keep the golf course open.

Katie Davis, Lake Bluff, said she is here on behalf of her east Lake Bluff neighborhood. She said they love the open land and private beach and golf course which is also used for hiking and cross-country skiing. She said they have not heard before this meeting that the golf course was in trouble, or more residents might have joined. She commented that other courses nearby are private and many people cannot afford to join them. If the Lake Bluff course closes, she felt the kids would be deprived of being able to play golf.

Special Board Meeting of February 26, 2018

Dick Driver, Lake Bluff, said he brought his tax bill and about 6% goes to the Park District and that amount comes to \$1,200. He feels there are other programs running that have a deficit also, and he doesn't think that the golf course should have to pay for itself.

Duncan Ward, Lake Forest, said he has spent a lot of time golfing in Lake Bluff and loves the open lands. He said he would hate to see it turn into condominiums.

Glenn Mordini, Lake Bluff, said he believes that tax dollars subsidize most of the Park District programs. He felt the other courses were probably experiencing the same problems, so if Lake Bluff Golf Club remains strong, hopefully it will survive.

President Douglass thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and said that the Board is still actively collecting information. He reminded everyone that they can view information presented tonight on the Lake Bluff Park District's website. He also said that if anyone has further questions, they can jot them down on one of the notecards available in the back of the room and give them to staff. An answer to the question will be posted on the website.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion was made by Commissioner Gordon, seconded by Commissioner McKendry, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

President Douglass

Ron Salski, Secretary

Marcia Jendreas, Recording Secretary

Approved this 19th day of March 2018
Board of Commissioners
Lake Bluff Park District