

**Chicago Heights Park District
Park District Board of Commissioners
Regular Board Meeting
January 11, 2021
7:00 p.m.**

Meeting called to Order: The Regular Board meeting of the Chicago Heights Park District Board of Commissioners was called to order at 7:13 p.m.

Motion: On a motion to reschedule the Regular Board Meeting for January 11, 2021 to be rescheduled for another date to include Zoom set up to allow public participation by President Benavidez, second by Commissioner Leon. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Zuniga, and President Benavides. The following nays were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Mancina and Commissioner Strazcek. The motion did not pass. Discussion followed: Commissioner Mancina asked why the meeting is being rescheduled. President Benavides replied that the meeting was being rescheduled to ensure safety due to Covid-19 guidelines and get the Zoom information out to the public. Commissioner Mancina asked if everyone must leave the room? President Benavides stated that all board members, Clerk, Attorney and Assistant Superintendent will have to remain in the room. Due to Covid-19 President Benavides asked everyone to leave the room and those who would like to speak fill out the Public Participation Form. President Benavides agreed to everyone to stand in the hallway during the meeting while being 6 feet apart.

Pledge of Allegiance: Upon roll call, the following board members were recorded present: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Mancina, Commissioner Strazcek, Commissioner Zuniga. and President Benavides. Commissioner Nichols-Brown was recorded absent. A quorum was established. Discussion followed: President Benavides announced to everyone that due to the Covid-19 restrictions only 10 people can be in the room. He asked that everyone leave the room. However, we would like everyone to sign the Public Participation Form for anyone that would like to participate. Commissioner Strazcek informed President Benavides stated in Superintendents Perez report from the last meeting that the amount was #25 people could be in the social room. Commissioner Mancina stated that we have been in violation in the past few meetings because with the Board, Clerk, Superintendent, Police and Attorney we have been over the #10 count. President Benavides stated that was not true. The park board attorney informed the public that due to COVID-19 -19 and for safety that we must operate within the current Covid-19 guidelines. President Benavides informed the board and the public that that next month he would be glad to offer the meeting on Zoom. Commissioner Mancina asked could we go into the gym to host the meeting? He informed everyone that the meeting can not be moved into the gym. Commissioner Mancina stated that the meeting was publicized at 1400 Chicago Road it does not say just the social room, so why can't it be in the gym? President Benavides stated that we could not have the meeting in the gym. The attorney explained that certain rules pertaining to the word "attend". The public can submit their names so they can participate in public participation.

Motion: On a motion to take a 5-minute recess to discussion with the park district attorney pertaining to Covid-19 guidelines for the current meeting by Commissioner Leon, seconded by Commissioner Zuniga. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner

Leon, Commissioner Zuniga, and President Benavides. The following nays were recorded: Commissioner Mancina, and Commissioner Strazcek. Motion passed.

Meeting called to Order: The Regular Board meeting of the Chicago Heights Park District Board of Commissioners was called back to order at 7:18 p.m.

Roll Call: Upon roll call, the following board members were recorded present: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Mancina, Commissioner Strazcek, Commissioner Zuniga, and President Benavides. Commissioner Nichols-Brown was recorded absent.

Motion: On a motion to reschedule the Regular Board Meeting for January 11, 2021 to be rescheduled for another date to include Zoom set up to allow public participation by President Benavidez, second by Commissioner Leon. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Zuniga, and President Benavides. The following nays were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Mancina and Commissioner Strazcek. The motion did not pass. Discussion followed: Commissioner Mancina asked why the meeting is being rescheduled. President Benavides replied that the meeting was being rescheduled to ensure safety due to Covid-19 guidelines and get the Zoom information out to the public. Commissioner Mancina asked if everyone must leave the room? President Benavides stated that all board members, Clerk, Attorney and Assistant Superintendent will have to remain in the room. Due to Covid-19 President Benavides asked everyone to leave the room and those who would like to speak fill out the Public Participation Form. President Benavides agreed to everyone to stand in the hallway during the meeting while being 6 feet apart.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve Regular Board Meeting on December 14, 2020 by Commissioner Leon, seconded by Commissioner Zuniga. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Mancina, Commissioner Zuniga, and President Benavides. Commissioner Strazcek abstained. Motion passed.

President Report: President Benavides started his report by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. He stated that these are challenging times for everyone. He stated that he would like for everyone to participate in the park district meetings. However, due to Covid-19 we cannot have everyone attend the meetings. He said that the board must move on and conduct business.

Treasure Report: None given.

Superintendent Report: Superintendent Perez was not present. Assistant Superintendent DeButch informed the board that Superintendent Perez report was submitted with their packets. If you have any questions, you may contact Superintendent Perez.

Attorney Report: The attorney reported that there are not any for December.

Public Participation: None.

Commissioners Report

Commissioner Kyles. No given.

Commissioner Leon: None given.

Commissioner Mancina: Commissioner Mancina stated to the Board of Commissioners and the audience in the hallway that she was very disturbed to the recent news regarding a forensic audit at the Chicago Heights Library and that she was sure that the board will agree with her that there are too many similarities of vendors and individuals named in that report that work for and do business with the Chicago Heights Park District. The former Library President is the Golf Course Manager for the Chicago Heights Park District. She stated that current park district employees were listed in that report as doing independent contract work at the Chicago Heights Library. She also stated that other independent contractors listed in the report have been hired here at the Chicago Heights Park District, but more disturbing is that the former Chicago Heights Library Director sits on the Board of Commissioners for the Chicago Heights Park District and we find out from that forensic audit at the Chicago Heights Library that the current Janitorial Service working at the Chicago Heights Park District is her husband's company. She said she has expressed her concerns as far as early 2020 about our Chicago Heights Park District Superintendent not having the authority not to spend more than \$10,000, or to hire vendors that are not legally qualified to do the work at the Chicago Heights Park District. She also stated that not until September 2020 does the Chicago Heights Park District Superintendent present a new purchasing policy that allows him to spend and enter of contracts up to \$25,000. She stated that not until September 2020 does the Superintendent present the Janitorial Contract and retro dates to January 2020. Commissioner Straczek and I both oppose these items. Our auditors for the past years were BKD the Library's forensic audit was completed by BKD. However, without any discussion, BKD is terminated from doing the annual audit for the Chicago Heights Park District. She stated that the audit that was due October 30, 2020 is yet to be completed and it is overdue. With all the similarities of vendors, employees and unauthorized spending between the Chicago Heights Library and the Chicago Heights Park District we have a duty as board members to investigate this matter. Therefore, I 'm calling on this board to approve that a forensic audit be conducted and ask the state attorney to include the park district in any criminal investigation that it undertakes to the Chicago Heights Library. I make a motion to hire an independent CPA firm to conduct a forensic audit of the Chicago Heights Park District. The Attorney informed Commissioner Mancina to make her motion under New Business. She agreed to do so.

Commissioner Strazcek: Commissioner Strazcek seconded the motion that Commissioner Mancina stated in her remarks to having a forensic audit done for the. The Attorney informed Commissioner Strazcek to make his motion under New Business. He agreed to do so. He stated that he had no report.

Commissioner Zuniga: None given.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Motion: On a motion to hire an independent CPA firm to conduct a forensic audit of the Chicago Heights Park District based on her comment during her report by Commissioner Mancina, seconded by Commissioner Strazcek. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Mancina, Commissioner Strazcek and President Benavides. Motion passed. Discussion followed: The Attorney stated that this was not on the agenda. The public must be aware of the entire agenda. Commissioner Mancina then stated that she and Commissioner Strazcek would like to call for a special meeting on this Thursday, January 14th at 7 p.m. She asked the Attorney if the special call meeting must be a verbal request only or would it have to be a written request? She stated that it is the law that (2) Commissioners can call a special call meeting to discuss the matter in her report. Commissioner Strazcek enquired what is the timeline to request a special call meeting. The Attorney asked for time to investigate the legal process to call a special meeting. He informed her to move forward with her request and he will investigate the legal process for this request. Commissioner Mancina stated that she did not want to wait because this is a serious matter. Commissioner Mancina stated her request again. Commissioner Strazcek stated that he would also like for the special called meeting be announced that it will be in the gym and on Zoom. President Benavides stated that he would like to move the meeting to Thursday, January 21st at 7 p.m. to give time for everyone to attend. Commissioner Mancina asked why we must wait so long to have a special call meeting, President Benavides stated that he would not be able to attend the special call meeting that Commissioners Mancina and Strazcek has requested.

Motion: On a motion by Commissioner Mancina to hold a special called meeting on Thursday, January 14th at 7 p.m. to hire an independent CPA firm to conduct a forensic audit of the Chicago Heights Park District, seconded by Commissioner Strazcek. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Mancina and Commissioner Strazcek. The following nays were recorded: Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Zuniga, and President Benavides. Motion did not pass. Discussion followed: Commissioner Mancina asked the attorney to call a special meeting you do not have to the majority to vote for it to pass. He stated that he did not think so.

Motion: On a motion to hold a special called meeting on Thursday, January 21st at 7 p.m. to hire an independent CPA firm to conduct a forensic audit of the Chicago Heights Park District, by Commissioner Kyles, seconded by Commissioner Zuniga. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Zuniga, and President Benavides. Commissioner Mancina and Commissioner Strazcek both abstained. Motion passed. Discussion followed: Commissioner Strazcek asked if this meeting could be advertised with announcement of social distancing. President Benavides stated that he has no issue with his request.

Submission of Bills: On a motion to pay the bills for the month of December 2020 by Commissioner Leon, seconded by Commissioner Zuniga. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Zuniga, and President Benavides. The following nays were recorded: Commissioner Mancina and Commissioner Strazcek. Motion passed.

Motion: On a motion to purchase a vehicle for under 30,000.00 and go out to bid if required Commissioner Leon, seconded by Commissioner Zuniga. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Zuniga, and President Benavides. The following nays were recorded. Commissioner Mancina and Commissioner Strazcek. Motion passed.

Adjournment: On a motion to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting by Commissioner Leon, seconded by Commissioner Strazcek at 7:35 p.m. The following ayes were recorded: Commissioner Kyles, Commissioner Leon, Commissioner Mancina, Commissioner Strazcek, Commissioner Zuniga and President Benavides. Motion passed.

Secretary

Date