

## APPROVED

The monthly meeting of the Ridgeville Park District Board of Commissioners took place on Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Ridgeville Park Community House (908 Seward St, Evanston, Illinois). Meeting agendas and digital packets were made available at [www.ridgeville.org/governance](http://www.ridgeville.org/governance) prior to the meeting.

Commissioners Present: Diana Anton, Amanda DePalma, Shawn Jones, Matthew Mitchell (President)

Commissioners Absent: Michael (Mick) Morel (Vice President)

Also Present: Gerald Gibbs (Treasurer), Julie Larson (Minute Taker), Marlon Rodas (Director of Parks and Recreation)

Citizens: none

President Matthew Mitchell called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Mitchell noted that Amanda DePalma would be late. Natalie Sallee and Mick Morel would be absent.

### Roll Call

Diana Anton: present

Amanda DePalma: absent at beginning of meeting

Shawn Jones: present

Matthew Mitchell: present

Mick Morel: absent

### Citizen Comment Part 1:

There were no comments at this time.

### Approval of Minutes:

**Motion #1:** Shawn Jones moved to approve the minutes from the December 14, 2023 Board meeting. Diana Anton seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

### Approval of Bills:

Abi Leveille prepared and shared with Commissioners prior to the meeting: "Ridgeville Park District- General Account Bills Summary January 11, 2024" and "Ridgeville Park District- General Account Bills Detailed Report January 11, 2024." Marlon Rodas noted, among other items: *City of Evanston Utilities Dept*, a check which needs a signature for a deposit for ice rink water fill; *Stratus* for cleaning (we are currently interviewing new cleaning services); *Rodas* for staff holiday lunch; and *Sallee* reimbursement for state conference. Rodas noted that Abi Leveille stepped up to complete bills and process payroll during a staff turnover in the Office Manager position. Likewise, all RPD staff stepped up to do a great job, especially during the holidays.

**Motion #2:** Shawn Jones moved to approve payment of January 2024 bills in the amount of \$23,065.12. Matthew Mitchell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Petty Cash Expenditures:

Abi Leveille prepared and shared with Commissioners prior to the meeting: "Ridgeville Park District Petty Cash Summary January 11, 2024" and "Ridgeville Park District Petty Cash Details January 11, 2024." Marlon Rodas noted, among other items: conference expenses, *Sam's Club* for winter camp snacks, and the *Wine Goddess* for the Winter Solstice event.

**Motion #3:** Shawn Jones moved to approve payment of January 2024 petty cash expenditures in the amount of \$1,102.95. Diana Anton seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Monthly Report offered by Marlon Rodas, Executive Director of Parks and Recreation:

Marlon Rodas expressed that RPD is glad for the cold weather coming up next week in order to finally install the ice rink at Kamen Park. Our social media policy is being worked on with our equity consultant. Thanks to Gerry Gibbs, we filed the required Cook County paperwork. A new bathroom door was installed at the Community House and a new main door of the Community House will be installed next week.

Monthly Report offered by Natalie Sallee, Program Director:  
[The monthly report was included in the board packet.]

Monthly Report offered by Gerry Gibbs, Treasurer:

Gerry Gibbs shared that he was not able to process the financials due to the turnover in staffing and for other reasons. There was an outstanding \$5k healthcare bill that didn't get paid last month, which was discovered today by Abi Leveille and the situation was remedied. Leveille will be able to continue in the Office Manager position until a new person is hired for the job.

Monthly REDI Report offered by Marlon Rodas, Executive Director:

Aisha Robinson and Marlon Rodas met to discuss the survey ideas outlined at last month's meeting. One survey will be about community engagement and if RPD is in need/want of a new REDI committee. The second survey will be about DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). They will be looking at the 2020 survey to see where we will go in that regard this year. The 2020 results were eye-opening and can be shared in a future meeting. They are also looking at RPD's social media policy and comparing it to other park districts and DEI websites. Policy is attached to the board packet and will undergo some edits this coming month. A more finalized version will be presented at the February meeting.

Old Business:

There was no Old Business to discuss at this time.

New Business:

- **Motion to Appoint Natalie Sallee as Corporate Secretary (Rodas)**

**Motion #4:** Matthew Mitchell moved to appoint Natalie Sallee as the Corporate Secretary for the Ridgeville Park District Board of Commissioners. Amanda DePalma seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Discuss Little Beans Space (Rodas)**

Rodas shared with Commissioners that the vacated “Little Beans” space located on the SW corner of Oakton and Asbury has a gym, office space, recreation space, and is quite large (perhaps between 40k and 50k square feet). Rodas and Sallee toured the space twice and feel that it would be a great game changer for the park district but would also be a challenge to undertake. Little Beans did not renew their lease due to problems with the roof. The property owner is asking \$2.6 million. Rodas has recent experience purchasing land with the Grayslake Park District, purchased with a debt credit spread over 10 years. Gerry Gibbs researched sales prices of other comparable real estate in Evanston, and the \$2.6M seems to be a reasonable middle ground; however, considering the roof and other structural issues, he guesses that the price could be negotiated lower. If we do want to consider financing such a project, we would need additional revenue per year. A lease-with-purchase approach was discussed. Shawn Jones expressed that the venture feels like “putting the cart before the horse;” we should assess our programming needs first before purchasing a building. The City of Evanston and a private developer are also interested in the building.

[Amanda DePalma joined the meeting.]

It was noted that this is a once in a generation opportunity in our district, to purchase a building that is already set up as a rec center. If purchased, we would have the capability of increasing our staff, programs, etc. Rodas envisions using the building for camps, gymnastics. There has been a history of wanting a rec center for RPD. Rodas expressed that he thinks it is a great opportunity and would be willing to work hard to make it happen. Amanda DePalma also expressed that she likes the idea and would want to pursue it. Jones expressed that it will be important to see what the staffing and maintenance costs would be for the new building. A portion could be funded by philanthropists. Alternatively, would it make more sense to build a new rec center on the grounds of our current Community House? Rodas agreed to do a cost analysis of both purchasing the Little Beans property and building a new construction rec center on the site of the current Community House. Rodas will also research financing options. The board agreed NOT to consider a referendum at this time.

- **Discuss/Approve Social Media Policy (Rodas)**

Board members can review the current policy in the board packet. A more finalized version will be presented at next month’s meeting after making some edits with Aisha Robinson, equity consultant.

Call of the Commissioners:

- Anton: passed
- DePalma: passed
- Jones: passed
- Mitchell: passed

- Morel: absent

Citizen Comment Part 2:

There were no comments at this time.

Executive Session:

**Motion #5:** Matthew Mitchell moved to recess into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel and employee reviews. Amanda DePalma seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was recessed into Executive Session at 7:50 pm.

[The board returned from Executive Session at 8:05 pm.]

**Motion #6:** Matthew Mitchell moved to increase Marcos Cruz's wages by 10%, retroactive to November 27, 2023. Amanda DePalma seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

**Motion #7:** Matthew Mitchell moved to adjourn the meeting. Shawn Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Larson, Minute Taker