

Special Meeting (Referendum Open House)
January 19, 2019

A. Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag

At the call of President Sue Gulas, the Joliet Park District Board of Commissioners met for a Special Meeting (Referendum Open House) on Saturday, January 19, 2019, in the Joliet Regional Airport Main Hangar, 4000 West Jefferson Street, Joliet, IL 60431. The meeting began at 10:10am.

The Pledge of the Flag was led by Commissioner clement.

B. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: McGuire, Clement, Tatro, and Gulas
Commissioners Absent: Mutz

C. Details on the Proposition of Increasing the Limiting Rate for the Joliet Park District at the April 2, 2019 Consolidated Election

Deputy Director Brad Staab presented details on the Proposition of Increasing the Limiting Rate for the Joliet Park District at the April 2, 2019 Consolidated Election. Mr. Staab informed the public that the Park District is responsible for operating and maintaining 65 community parks, 23 facilities, 3 golf courses, the Joliet Regional Airport, and Splash Station Waterpark along with numerous programs and events such as Taste of Joliet and Back to School Fest. Mr. Staab did acknowledge that the Park District did go to the Joliet Park District residents for a 19.5 referendum in 2014 for specific projects. It was noted that the projects from the 2014 referendum were completed on time and within budget. Projects included improvements to 20 community parks; Pilcher Park roads, trails and security improvements; reforestry; lighting, camera and other safety and security improvements; as well as the construction of the Nowell Park Recreation Center.

Mr. Staab stated that there are still many facilities and parks that need to be improved. Improvements include replacing outdated playground equipment and improving walking trails, gazebos and pavilions at the remaining parks and renovating ballfields and facilities. Seven facilities that need renovations are Joliet Memorial Stadium, Bird Haven Greenhouse, Inwood Athletic Club, Splash Station Waterpark, Hartman Recreation Center, Inwood Ice Arena, and Joliet Regional Airport Main Hangar.

Mr. Staab noted that the Park District is also needs to address a Park Police program and other outstanding safety and security needs; resurfacing deteriorated parking lots; adding or improving Wi-Fi in district facilities; and maintaining existing operations, maintenance and programming.

Mr. Staab stated that the Park District does not have sufficient funds for the stated projects as well as ongoing operations and maintenance since the Park District has operated at a deficit the past four years and the reserves are being drawn down by hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. It was also noted that the Park District's current tax rate is less than one half of one percent and the average annual budget of other comparable park districts is more than double that of Joliet Park District. Mr. Staab addressed the fact that the local property taxes currently fund about 32% of the

Joliet Park Districts operations compared to 50% and higher of other park districts. Mr. Staab stated that the estimated tax impact of the limiting rate increase of 0.2558 is \$7.10 per month per \$100,000 of a home's market value.

D. Opportunity for the Public to Speak - 3 minute time limit
The floor was opened to the public for questions and comments.

One person (declined to give name) from the public inquired about the amount of rent that is being paid for office space and a private hangar at the Joliet Regional Airport. The person expressed his dissatisfaction with raising taxes before other cost saving actions are taken. The person also questioned the attendance and amount of revenue Splash Station brings in each year.

Commissioner Tatro stated that many of the Directors and staff have spent a life time in park and recreation and have not taken the decision lightly to ask the residents for a tax rate increase. The Park District is almost 100 years old and is in need of additional funds. Commissioner Tatro added that the parks, facilities and programs are greatly used by the public.

President Gulas noted that staff has taken measures to increase revenue and reduce cost. Some programs fees have been increased, staff positions have been combined, lease agreements for the pro shop and the restaurant at Inwood Athletic Club have been renegotiated, the Park District rented additional space to ATI Physical Therapy along with extending the life of the turf at the ATI Field. President Gulas also stated that within two years, replacement parts will not be available for the aging Ice Arena's cooling system.

Executive Director Tom Carstens stated that the Park District staff is providing facts to the public and the residents will have the ability to vote yes or no for the limiting rate increase. Mr. Carstens noted that if the referendum does not pass there will be tough decisions that will need to be made.

It was noted that the next two Open House meetings regarding the referendum will be on February 21 beginning at 6:30pm at the Hartman Recreation Center and March 12 beginning at 6:00pm at the Kathy Green Multi-Purpose Center.

E. Adjournment

With all agenda items discussed, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Tatro. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Clement and it carried unanimously. The time was 10:43am.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Talarico
Recording Secretary