

**KENDALL COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**AUGUST 24, 2017**

**I. Call to Order**

Committee Chairman Cullick called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:39 pm in the Kendall County Board Room.

**II. Roll Call**

Commissioners Davidson, Kellogg, and Cullick all were present. Commissioner Gilmour entered the meeting at 6:44 pm.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Kellogg made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Davidson. All, aye. Opposed, none.

**IV. Citizens to be Heard**

No public comments were offered by those in attendance.

**V. Approval to Forward Claims in an Amount Not-to-Exceed \$8,979.36.**

Commissioner Kellogg made a motion to amend the claims list total to \$9,018.36 in order to account for a procurement card over limit fee incurred in the amount of \$39.00, and to forward claims to Commission for approval. Seconded by Commissioner Davidson.

The Finance Committee reviewed the claims list.

Director Guritz reported that the over limit fee was incurred in the prior month was due to the timing of the District's payment for the previous month's activity. This amount will be credited to the District.

Commissioner Kellogg passed on compliments received from the public for land management activities at Hoover Forest Preserve.

Director Guritz reported that the water softeners and heaters have been installed at Hoover Forest Preserve. Jay Teckenbrock is working to shock the well and sanitize all service lines to preserve buildings.

Director Guritz reported that Emily Dombrowski attended the new teacher breakfast sponsored by SD 308 to promote field trip programming.

Director Guritz reported that a Facebook ad is running linking to the new Ellis Equestrian Center catalog. The fall newsletter will feature the updated second-event rental discount program, which will also be promoted within the District's social media channels.

Commissioner Gilmour entered the meeting.

Chairman Cullick called the question. All, aye. Opposed, none.

## **VI. Review of Financial and Cost Center Income Statements through July 31, 2017**

The Finance Committee discussed the financial and income statements through July 31, 2017.

Director Guritz provided an overview of the District year-to-date financial and income statements. Director Guritz reported that overall, the District has received \$647,000 in revenues, with \$671,646 in total expenditures for a net loss of (\$24,307).

The District is processing first-quarter payments for Natural Beginnings, which will significantly improve the environmental education cost center report.

Director Guritz reminded the Committee that when comparing last year's figures, \$42,000 of farm license base rent and yield payments was credited back to the prior fiscal year. The District will receive its share of the Henneberry Forest Preserve soybean yield towards the close of the fiscal year.

Director Guritz reported that Natural Beginnings is below full enrollment for the coming school year. The financial impact from lower-than-anticipated enrollment will impact both the current and upcoming fiscal year budgets.

Director Guritz reported on two minor Worker's Compensation claims reported that may result in charges against the District's deductible for the year.

Commissioner Davidson pointed out that the District is 16% below the previous year's ending balance (\$349,328 in FY 15-16 compared to \$293,365 in the current year), noting that expenditures are up \$71,000 year-to-date over last year.

Director Guritz stated that in addition to farm license revenue, timing for the Natural Beginnings first-quarter payments will not post until the August financial statements. The District also pre-paid the full amount of the Ellis tent when compared to the previous year. Overall, the District's total expenditures stand at 62.1% of the total budget for the year.

Director Guritz did state that there are program cost centers underperforming when comparing total revenues to total expenditures for the year, which will be addressed as part of the development of the FY 17-18 budget. Overall, the District should end up meeting or exceeding budget projections for the year.

Director Guritz stated that the budget forecast for weddings and house rentals for FY 17-18 is concerning, with only two contracts in hand for the upcoming year. This will be examined closer to the end of the fiscal year. If the budget situation for this program does not improve, the District will need to consider cuts in current staffing levels.

Commissioner Gilmour asked whether the District's Events Coordinator, Tina Villarreal assists with events held at Meadowhawk Lodge. Director Guritz stated that Tina does assist with wedding events at Meadowhawk Lodge, noting that other District staff extend support including part-time facility attendants.

The Finance Committee discussed the Ellis facility rental budget and expenditures.

Commissioner Cullick expressed concerns that the District has increased marketing efforts and expenditures for the program that does not appear to be having a positive impact on the number of event rental contracts. Director Guritz stated that he shares the same concerns, and has been reaching out to Tina Villarreal to gain perspective on what could be impacting sales. Director Guritz stated that there have been some challenges with communications in the current year, with customer service impacts, if any, not clearly understood.

Commissioner Gilmour suggested that other venues in Kendall County are not experiencing the same drops in participation.

Commissioner Cullick stated that the District needs to do more to target audiences beyond wedding receptions.

The Finance Committee discussed the need to increase the number of visitors to Ellis, sensing that part of the issue may stem from fewer visitors to the site on average.

The Finance Committee encouraged District staff to conduct community outreach efforts to increase awareness of Ellis facilities and services.

Ideas discussed included hosting chamber after hour events, and inviting other community and civic groups out to tour the site.

Commissioner Davidson inquired into whether the Kendall County Fair Association would be able to drive tractor-drawn hay wagons through Harris Forest Preserve. Director Guritz stated that this would need to be pre-scheduled to avoid shelter rental conflicts.

## **VII. Henneberry Forest Preserve Restoration Project – Whitetail Ridge HOA Correspondence and SemperFi Land, Inc. Change Order Review**

The Finance Committee reviewed correspondence received from the Whitetail Ridge HOA and outline for requests for improvements including future use covenants in exchange for granting the District approval to access the restoration project area through an open space parcel owned by the subdivision homeowner's association.

The Finance Committee reviewed a change order for SemperFi Land, Inc. in the amount of \$23,877.00. Of this amount, \$8,859.00 would support restoration of an additional 3-acre association-owned parcel; \$10,800.00 would fund establishment of a 1,200 foot X 10' turf trail; and \$3,922.00 would fund the restoration of an existing ag-lime trail on the 3-acre parcel, with the remaining funds put towards replacement of two subdivision parkway trees.

The Finance Committee discussed the question on restricting future use of powers of eminent domain within the subdivision parcels, and 1,000 foot set-back from subdivision boundaries limiting construction of facilities and parking area(s) within a 60-acre area of the forest preserve.

The Finance Committee discussed a possible alternative access through farmlands east and south of the restoration project area.

Commissioner Davidson suggested that there may also be a public access easement to the Reservation Woods woodlot areas owned by the District.

Commissioner Gilmour suggested that the biggest issue may be the cost of the change order. Director Guritz stated that the overall project costs are lowered by \$95,000 due to the anticipated Kendall County Highway funding support and grants received, and the change order would result in increased access into the preserve, and create a firebreak for future prescribed burning and other land management activities.

Director Guritz stated that ideally, a long-term maintenance access corridor is permanently established to support District land management and maintenance activity.

Commissioner Kellogg suggested that \$10,000 per acre would be a reasonable estimate for acquisition of adjacent farmland.

Commissioner Davidson suggested that adjacent lot owners could also be contacted to request permission, or to secure a lot crossing easement.

Director Guritz reported that the Committee of the Whole will be consulted to receive direction for moving forward with securing the needed access.

## **VIII. Ellis Equestrian Center – Draft FY 17-18 Budget Overview and Discussion**

Director Guritz presented an overview and draft budget for the Ellis Equestrian Center for discussion. Director Guritz reported that the Operations Committee has requested projections for the end of the year, and understanding how staff time is expended to support horse care and program services. The Equestrian Center is currently operating at a \$14,000 deficit for the year.

Director Guritz stated that this report will be presented at the upcoming Operations Committee.

## **IX. The Conservation Foundation – Grant-Funded Restoration Project Budget for the Farm Pond at Baker Woods Forest Preserve**

The Finance Committee reviewed a project budget for the Ellis farm pond restoration project.

The Finance Committee provided direction to present the project and budget to the Committee of the Whole for consideration.

## **X. OmniTRAX-Illinois Railway Hoover Crossing Agreement – Negotiations Updates and Directions**

Director Guritz provided updates on the request received from OmniTRAX-Illinois Railway regarding back-payment of annual crossing license fees, and payment for crossing improvements completed in October 2016. OmniTRAX has stated that they are owed \$66,339.00 from the District for the work completed.

Director Guritz reported that the District had submitted a \$2,750 application fee and crossing agreement application to Illinois Railnet in 2009, along with engineering drawings completed by HR Green-SEC Group, Inc.

Director Guritz stated that the “Exhibit A” included in the 2010 draft crossing agreement received from OmniTRAX includes crossing improvement cost estimates of \$66,339.30. Director Guritz stated that these costs were based on the SEC Group, Inc. drawings and prepared estimates, but that this was not the work actually completed in October 2016.

Director Guritz reported that the 2010 crossing agreement draft was referred to the State’s Attorney’s Office to support changes to the agreement, resulting in a re-drafted agreement in 2012 that was not presented or approved by the District’s Board of Commissioners.

Director Guritz stated that Assistant State’s Attorney Lisa Coffey will be attending the September Committee of the Whole Meeting to present an overview and recommended actions, and requesting direction from the Committee in order to state the District’s position and/or submit a counterproposal offer to OmniTRAX.

Director Guritz stated that information regarding the 2016 Illinois Commerce Commission court order has been sent as part of District’s communications to OmniTRAX representatives. Because direct discussions are underway, the District has not pursued efforts to re-engage OmniTRAX, City of Yorkville, and Illinois Commerce Commission pending outcomes of the current negotiations.

## **XI. Baker Woods – Farm License Agreement Competitive Bidding Discussion**

Director Guritz requested direction from the Finance Committee as to whether the 41-acre parcel at Baker Woods Forest Preserve should be competitively bid in fall 2017.

The Finance Committee provided direction to present the question to the Committee of the Whole in September.

**XII. Executive Session**

None.

**XIII. Other Items of Business**

None.

**XIV. Citizens to be Heard**

No public comments were offered by those in attendance.

**XV. Adjournment**

Commissioner Gilmour made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Kellogg. Commissioners Gryder, Kellogg and Cullick, aye. Opposed, Commissioner Davidson. Meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz  
Executive Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District