



Wheaton Park District

**Wheaton Park District Board of Commissioners
SUBCOMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday October 8, 2025
DuPage County Historical
Museum
102 E. Wesley Street, Wheaton, IL 60187
5:00 pm**

CALL TO ORDER –

President Vires called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., Commissioner Barrett, Commissioner Frey, Commissioner Kelly, and Commissioner Mee Commissioner Pecharich, Commissioner Welker were present.

Staff Present included: Executive Director Benard, Executive Assistant Siciliano, Director of Finance Simpson, Assistant Finance Director Meger, Director of Arrowhead Operations Novak, Superintendent of Planning Hinchee,

COMMUNITY INPUT

None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Buildings and Grounds

1. 2025 Ray Morrill Community Center Building Automation System Project- Review of Bid Results & Recommendations

Staff recommends approval of the proposal from Berg for building automation controls. This phase of the project will complete automation for the remaining equipment, excluding the air handling units. The air handlers are still under investigation to determine whether repair or full replacement is the best course of action. A total of \$1.3 million has been budgeted for the overall project. This recommendation is in line with the long-term plan to fully automate building systems, with future integration of mechanical systems to follow.

2. Ray Morrill Community Center- Full Size Lockers- Review quote from Prestige Distribution, Inc.

Executive Director Benard reported that, after a significant delay, a plan and cost estimate have been received to increase the size of several of the recently installed lockers. The proposed cost is approximately \$36,000 to enlarge 10 lockers per locker room.

Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the park district's ADA Compliance Officer, Michael Benard, at the park district's Administrative Office, 102 E. Wesley Street, Wheaton, IL Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Requests for a qualified ASL interpreter require five (5) working days advance notice. Telephone number 630.945-7726; fax number 630.665.5880; email dsiciliano@wheatonparks.org

Discussion Points:

- Commissioner Pecharich expressed concern, calling it “ridiculous” to replace brand-new lockers.
- Benard noted a significant number of users have reported dissatisfaction with the current locker size.
- Commissioner Mee confirmed numerous complaints, particularly regarding winter coats and clothes hangers not fitting properly.
- Commissioner Pecharich suggested installing a coat rack or alternative hanging solution, Commissioner Mee stated this would be too inconvenient due to location and accessibility.
- Commissioner Welker asked about the previous locker model; Benard responded that older, more traditional school-style lockers were used before.
- Commissioner Kelly requested a comparison of locker depth with those at other gyms (e.g., Lifetime Fitness). He is not in favor of replacing the lockers if the sizes are comparable.
- Superintendent of Planning Hinchee clarified that the bulk of the \$36,000 expense is tied directly to the new lockers themselves.
- The existing smaller lockers will be repurposed and relocated to the hallway, replacing outdated metal lockers.
- Commissioner Welker expressed support for adding more lockers near the fitness center, regardless of the final decision on size adjustments.

Next Steps:

- Research and compare locker depth standards at other gyms.
- Revaluation based on findings and user needs.
- Consider cost-benefit analysis of replacing vs. supplementing locker capacity.

Finance and Administration

1. **Estimate of Annual Aggregate Tax Levy for the Wheaton Park District** – Review of 2025 tax levy estimate. Estimate approval scheduled for October 15, 2025

Request from President Vires:

Executive Director Benard was asked to compile a list of area park districts ranked by tax rate. In 2021, the district had the highest tax rate in DuPage County. Since then:

- Home values have increased significantly.
- The district refinanced debt and did not take the full allowable levy in the past three years.
- The 2005 bond issuance was paid off in 2021 creating a 18 percent park district tax levy reduction for residents.
- Since 2022, the District has ranked 4th in tax rate among local park districts.

Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the park district's ADA Compliance Officer, Michael Benard, at the park district's Administrative Office, 102 E. Wesley Street, Wheaton, IL Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Requests for a qualified ASL interpreter require five (5) working days advance notice. Telephone number 630.945-7726; fax number 630.665.5880; email dsiciliano@wheatonparks.org

Discussion:

Benard presented a figure of \$26,320,527 — the cumulative revenue the district will not collect over the next 20 years as a result of not levying for the full CPI available over the past three tax years.

- President Vires noted this figure isn't the only financial impact to consider and that more information is needed to fully understand the revenue picture.
- Vires emphasized that municipal finance is complicated, and while the \$26M figure is striking, it represents only a portion of what could have been affected.
- He confirmed he voted in favor of all three of those reduced levies but wants to ensure the Board understands the long-term effects of those decisions.

Expense Growth & Fiscal Responsibility:

- Vires expressed concern that expenses are rising faster than the CPI.
- He suggested the district analyze how much faster expenses have grown compared to CPI as a way to better illustrate the long-term sustainability challenge.
- He emphasized the need to protect the district's ability to fund capital and avoid deferred maintenance.

Operating & Capital Budget Concerns:

- Page 9 of the budget shows the fund balance reserves at the maximum.
- Not taking full CPI increases and relying on new construction revenue will pressure both operating and capital budgets.
- Vires stressed that it's the board's responsibility to plan for the future financial health of the district.

Levy Recommendation:

- Benard recommends levying for the full 2.9% CPI increase available to the park district plus new construction for a total levy increase of 3.7% over the last tax year.
- Vires is comfortable with a total levy increase range between 2.9% and 3.7%
- He believes the district made the right decision to avoid the higher CPI years during inflation spikes.
- Commissioner Kelly supports taking new construction as part of the levy.
- Benard noted that not levying the full 3.7% available will provide a small immediate park district related tax reduction to resident, he reminded the board that the the long-term effect on park district finances becomes significant over time.
- Commissioner Mee cautioned against compromising the health and well-being of the district for minor tax savings. He emphasized careful planning for long-term sustainability.

Potential Expense Reviews:

- Commissioners discussed reviewing non-essential or flexible expenses, such as:
 - Playground replacement cycles
 - Commissioner's attendance at conferences
 - Benard suggested an updated true cost recovery analysis for District facilities and programs as a strategic planning item. The Board agreed.
 - Commissioner Welker expressed interest in seeing a comprehensive fee and cost analysis for facilities and services.

Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the park district's ADA Compliance Officer, Michael Benard, at the park district's Administrative Office, 102 E. Wesley Street, Wheaton, IL Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Requests for a qualified ASL interpreter require five (5) working days advance notice. Telephone number 630.945-7726; fax number 630.665.5880; email dsiciliano@wheatonparks.org

2. **2026 Budget Proposal for Wheaton Park District** – Budget proposal draft scheduled to be acknowledged by park board and placed on 30-day public inspection on October 15, 2025

Recommended Levy Increase:

Mike recommends a 3.7% levy increase, aligning with financial needs and future sustainability.

Wage Pool Increase:

Proposed at 3.5%

Health Insurance Update:

- Preliminary projections show a 27% increase in health insurance costs.
- This spike is due to market impacts and 8 major insurance claims over the past year.

3. **Professional Auditing Services for Fiscal Years 2025-2027-** Review of Proposals

Staff Recommendation: Return to Lauterbach & Amen as the District's audit firm.

President Vires expressed a preference for rotating audit firms every three years to bring a fresh perspective to the district's financial review.

4. **Arrowhead Golf Club Food Purchases** – Review of bid results and recommendation

Benard said that two bids were rejected as they did not meet the district's bidding requirements. The rejections were reviewed and cleared by legal counsel. No irregularities were found; nothing out of the ordinary in the process.

5. **Arrowhead Golf Course Chemical Purchases** – Review of bid results and recommendation. Benard stated there was Nothing out of the ordinary. Staff are looking at generics but will not compromise quality.

6. **TIF Joint Annual Review Board Meeting- October 22, 2025, 9:00a.m.** – Review of TIF reports. Benard said this meeting is a legal requirement for the city. We will see a refund prior to this TIF rolling off.

OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:00 p.m. Commissioner Mee moved to adjourn to closed session regarding Appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, 5ILCS 120/2 (c) (1) Seconded by Commissioner Barrett.

Motion carried by Roll Call Vote

Ayes: Barrett, Frey, Kelly, Mee, Pecharich, Welker, Vires

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None



Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the park district's ADA Compliance Officer, Michael Benard, at the park district's Administrative Office, 102 E. Wesley Street, Wheaton, IL Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Requests for a qualified ASL interpreter require five (5) working days advance notice. Telephone number 630.945-7726; fax number 630.665.5880; email dsiciliano@wheatonparks.org