



Wheaton Park District

**Wheaton Park District Board of Commissioners
SUBCOMITTEE MEETING
Saturday January 17, 2026,
Community Center
1777 S. Blanchard Street, Wheaton, IL 60189
9:00 a.m.**

CALL TO ORDER –

President Vires called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Barrett, Commissioners Frey, Commissioner Kelly, Commissioner Mee Commission Pecharich, Commissioner Welker arrived 9:04 a.m.

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

Guest: Dan Nicholas from FGMA

COMMUNITY INPUT

None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

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Arrowhead Golf Course Driving Range Improvement Project Proposal – Review of Concept and Cost Estimates

Project Discussion Summary – Arrowhead Golf Club Range & Short Game Facility

Architect Dan Nicholas from FGMA provided an overview of the project concept and construction estimates.

Site Visits & Concept Overview

The Board and staff toured Prairie Bluff and Sanctuary facilities. Dan Nicholas explained that the new covered driving range would sit within the same footprint as the current facility, with tees lowered approximately 2.5 feet. The design improves ADA accessibility and includes a fire truck turnaround. Nicholas noted they are currently working on similar facility in Huntley. Arrowhead orientation is ideal, facing south, and the open-air design is expected to receive more use than comparable enclosed facilities.

Design & Aesthetic Considerations

Significant attention is being paid to aesthetics, particularly views from the clubhouse. The building will be visually open, allowing sightlines from both the upper and lower levels of the clubhouse. One design option includes space for concession trailer and bathroom trailer; another includes a permanent concession and bathroom structures. A small studio bay for private instruction, creating an additional revenue stream is proposed.

Staff recommended replacing the existing gate with a structure more respectful of the building design. Since the facility will operate year-round, pathway lighting is included and will be dark-sky compliant. Garage doors are proposed on the structure to allow visibility from the clubhouse, enhance ventilation, and encourage participation. Nicholas noted the doors would be manually operated.

Access & Circulation

Primary access is designed on the east side of the facility. Discussion included whether routing patrons through the clubhouse would increase food and beverage revenue. Staff noted challenges with golfers carrying bags through the clubhouse and emphasized winter use, where minimizing walking distance is important. Users may bypass the clubhouse and pay directly at the bays. Buckets of balls will be sold rather than time-based usage.

Revenue & Operations

Staff shared that food and beverage revenue typically increases with these facilities. Based on comparable operations, staff estimates the project could generate \$1 million annually in total gross additional revenue. The bucket of balls is expected to be a primary profit driver, with costs averaging \$0.11 per ball and break-even achieved after approximately nine hits.

Toptracer technology is recommended as it aligns better with AGC's operational needs. This program can support youth programming, camps, parties, and mini-outings. Staff acknowledged

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board concerns about children interacting with avid golfers and stated this would be addressed through daily management. Staff will consult Prairie Bluff and Sanctuary on this.

Construction & Cost Summary

- **Estimated Project Cost:**
 - \$2.5 million estimated in construction costs through a general contractor
 - \$137,000 estimated alternate for a concessions and bathroom building addition vs using trailers and \$260,000 in estimated additional potential bid alternate costs
 - \$900,000 estimated in direct owner costs
 - \$281,000 estimated for development of a new adjacent short game practice area as a bid alternate.

The Board agreed that the base bid should include concessions and bathrooms as a structure rather than using trailers eliminating this proposed alternate.

Short Game Area

Kelly requested that drawings for the short game area alternate be presented at a Buildings and Grounds meeting and emphasized the importance of staff input. The Board agreed to proceed and include it as a bid alternate as proposed.

Structure Type Discussion

Comparisons were discussed between stick-built and prefabricated structures for the covered driving range:

- Stick-built facilities take approximately three months to construct and cost about 20% more than the prefabricated solution.
- Prefabricated structures can be installed in approximately one week.

Kelly preferred the Sanctuary style prefabricated structure, noting it performs better in summer heat. Welker reiterated concerns about the view during weddings at Arrowhead, emphasizing the need to maintain positive aesthetics and views from the clubhouse.

The Board agreed that the covered driving range should be bid separately as a prefabricated “Cover the Tees” project versus being designed and bid as a stick built building. This aspect of the project will be bid first and assigned to the general contractor named later due to fabrication lead time.

Funding & Schedule

- Total project cost will be funded from the Arrowhead Golf Club capital reserves as opposed to the general park district capital projects budget.
- Arrowhead Golf Club projects \$6.5 million reserve balance as of 1/1/26.
- Construction will commence at the beginning of October 2026.

Dan Nicholas FGMA left the meeting at approximately 10:00 am

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2026 Capital Projects Funding Overview

Executive Director Benard opened the discussion with a high-level summary of the capital project funding, proposal, review and approval process. Benard reviewed that the Wheaton Park District strives to maintain its parks, facilities, assets and equipment under a “no deferred maintenance” philosophy.

Benard provided a detailed summary concerning the sources of funds that are typically used to pay for Park Board approved capital projects and expenditures. These include:

- Capital Fund Reserves
- General Obligation Annual Bond Proceeds
- Alternate Revenue Bond Proceeds
- State and Federal Grants
- Foundation Support
- Operating Fund Balance Transfers
 - Benard reviewed the District’s Operating Fund Balance Reserve Policy

2026 Capital Project Proposals

Ray Morrill Community Center Interior Renovation Project Phase 3

Bid results were reviewed and discussed on January 7 and board approval is scheduled for January 21. Total project cost for base bid and all three alternates is \$3,263,090.

Baseball/Softball Infield Drainage Improvements

Infield Renovation Program – Board Action Summary

- \$375,000 will be 25% funded from BBSB reserves.
- Proposed work is to renovate eight (8) infields.
- Five (5) infields will be completed by an outside contractor, with District staff overseeing the work and learning best practices from the contractor.
- Following contractor completion, District staff will assume the work on remaining fields, with the infield replacement program continuing through 2027.

Materials & Performance

- Pickett noted the current infield mix is inconsistent and does not perform well in wet conditions.
- Staff recommend QuickPitch Red, which:
 - It’s safe for sliding
 - Perform better in light to moderate rain
 - Will reduce, though not eliminate, weather-related cancellations
- The proposed installation depth is 4 inches.
- Kimbrough and Pickett both have prior experience with this material and reported positive results.

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Field Selection & Scope

- The initial eight fields were selected due to high use and high traffic.
- All eight are lighted fields, which experience the highest usage and greatest wear.
- Additional lighted fields are planned for renovation in 2027.

Additional Work & Capacity

- Grading will be completed in every field as part of the renovation process.
- Kelly asked about in-house capacity after the first year.
 - Brian estimated staff could complete up to 15 fields by the end of 2027.
- Staff will conduct retraining sessions for coaches and field staff on use and maintenance of the renovated infields.

Board Direction

- Staff will release specifications and proceed with the project.
- The Board expressed consensus and agreement to move forward.

Toohey Park

- **Planned Renovations:**
 - \$600,000 in 2026 and \$600,000 in 2027.
 - FY26 \$600,000 OSLAD grant submitted, recently informed application was denied which puts this project on hold.
- **Pond Dredging**
 - Regardless of the grant outcome, pond dredging is necessary.
 - Staff recommend moving forward with design and planning for dredging, both for operational and environmental reasons.
 - The Board approved moving forward with pond dredging.

Capital Projects Non-Specified Area

- District Wide Annual Asphalt Replacement \$250,000 – board consensus to proceed
- Unforeseen Capital Expenses \$100,000 budgeted annually
- District Wide Facility Planning for Permits \$25,000
- District Wide Security Camera Upgrades \$50,000 – board consensus to proceed
- Concept and cost planning
 - Field House Study. Proposal in hand \$22,800 – board consensus to proceed
 - Major Park Restroom Facility Study. Proposal in hand \$29,000 – board consensus to proceed
 - District Wide Master Plan \$125,000. This item will not be completed in 2026

Arrowhead Golf Course Priority Projects

- Parking Lot (phase 2 of 4) \$300,000 – board consensus to proceed
- HVAC Rooftop & Air Make-Up Air Units \$300,000 – board consensus to proceed
- Custom Island (line 3) \$120,000 – proposal detail requested prior to proceeding
- Exterior Doors \$45,000 estimate - board consensus to proceed
- Upgraded AV Equipment \$75,000 – proposal detail requested prior to proceeding

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Atten Park

- Streambank Restoration \$25,000 engineering and 319 Grant application costs – board consensus to proceed with design and grant application process - \$1,000,000 total project cost estimate with \$200,000 local match from both park district and Cantigny
- Irrigation System Replacement 3 lower fields \$210,000 - proposal detail requested prior to proceeding
- Color Coat Tennis & Pickleball Courts \$55,000 – board consensus to proceed

Briar Patch Park

- Batting Cages \$80,000 – Full cost to be reimbursed by Briarcliff Baseball – board consensus to proceed

CAC/Central

- Central Athletic Complex ADA Ramps \$260,000 – board consensus to proceed with the South ramp slope correction concept only
- Pickleball Lights \$150,000 – board consensus to proceed - staff to explore rebate opportunities.

Clocktower Commons:

- Golf Carpet Replacement \$30,000 – board consensus to proceed

Ray Morrill Community Center Priority Projects

- HVAC Improvements \$500,000 – board consensus to proceed (\$141,264 currently under contract for building automation controls)
- Commissioner Kelly said air handlers will be bid next

Rice Pool:

- Renovation concept design and cost estimate - \$200,000 budgeted for engineering (concept and cost design will come in significantly lower) – concept and cost proposals requested for board review
- Sandblast and Paint \$55,000 – board consensus to proceed

Cosley Zoo

- Staff have developed a phased exhibit renovation plan draft with the Aviary identified within our existing conditions audit as the highest priority for update. The Aviary is the anchor project for phase 1.
- Aviary Replacement \$1 million budgeted in both fiscal year 2026 and 2027 to be Grant funded primarily by the Cosley Foundation via a Capital Campaign.
- The Board agreed that Benard will share the phased exhibit renovation plan draft with the Foundation Board, receive their feedback, solicit public input and then bring the final exhibit renovation plan to the park board.
- The Park Board will be informed prior to public feedback solicitation takes place.

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- Duck enclosure fencing, paver pathway repairs and landscaping/ horticultural improvements are also planned upkeep projects for 2026.

Danada South

- Utilities to support the Sensory Garden Playground – Engineering estimates for completion
 - Electric \$75,000
 - Sewer \$130,000
 - Water \$50,000

The board agreed that the utility work proposed could proceed as part of a Play for All Foundation funding and reimbursement initiative similar to how the prior playground elements were funded. Benard will work through the details with the Foundation and bring the subject back to the board for further review.

- Invasive species clearing \$80,000
 - The long-term lease agreement with the DuPage Forest Preserve District calls for the park district to undertake invasive removal at Danada South Park. This project is up for board approval consideration at the February board meeting. Consensus was to move forward.

Graf Park

- Batting cages \$80,000 estimated funded by the \$5 facility improvement fee charged to each athletic program participant
- Visitor Bleachers Replacement \$70,000
- Synthetic Turf Replacement \$550,000 – schedule for after July 3rd fireworks if possible
- Track replacement \$180,000

The board agreed with moving forward on the proposed projects.

Benard shared with the board that the School District has reached out to the park district to discuss their need for an ISHA sized track to serve the middle schools. The Graf Park location behind Monroe Middle School and timing of our track renovation was appropriate for follow up. In concept, the school district would fund the difference between what we were intending to build, which was not an IHSA specified track, and what they were envisioning. Unfortunately, the space constraints at this location make the concept a heavy lift financially and it seems unlikely that the concept will advance. The park district is reviewing other properties for suitability and will follow up with the school district and park board if a viable option is determined to be realistic.

Commissioner Pecharich asked how much the school district is contributing for the synthetic turf. Benard clarified: the school district will not pay for turf; they would cover the difference between what we would pay for the updated track and what they require for competition.

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Hurley Gardens

- Roof Replacement \$27,800
Board consensus to proceed.

Lincoln Marsh

- Office & Garage Roofs \$30,000
Board consensus to proceed.

Northside Park

- Backstop & Fence Replacement \$130,000
- Dredge Settling Basin \$500,000
- Boiler Replacement \$30,000
- Northside Pool Sand Blast & Paint \$25,000
- Northside Pool Wood Deck Replacement \$75,000
- Northside Tennis Lights \$260,000
- Warming Shelter Assessment \$25,000
Board consensus to proceed.

- Girl Scout Cabin Engineering \$50,000
Board consensus to pause for further discussion and review of alternatives. The structure remains unoccupied/unprogrammed due to structural deficiencies. Historical documentation of the structure underway.

Safety Surfacing for Playground/Fitness Equipment

- Prairie Path Park Playground Replacement \$80,000
- Seven Gables Outdoor Fitness Area \$80,000
Board consensus to proceed.

DuPage County Historical Museum

- Museum Exterior Stair Replacement \$25,000 budgeted as a 10% match for DuPage County investment of \$250,000.
Board consensus to proceed.

- Benard has been in discussions with DuPage County regarding a possible \$500,000 allocation towards completing building envelope restoration. The County would again seek a 10% contribution from the park district. Benard will follow up.
- Permanent Exhibit design and specifications are complete and paid for by the Museum Foundation. The cost estimate for the new permanent exhibit is \$750,000 to \$1 million. This project will be on hold until the next Illinois Museum Grant is released for application which is typically tied to a capital bill. In the meantime, the Museum Foundation is in the planning stage for a capital campaign.

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Possible November 2026 General Obligation Bond Referendum Considerations

Timing

Tuesday, November 3, 2026 General Election

- Resolution initiating a public question approved no later than Monday, August 17, 2026
- Target Board Meeting July 15, 2026 for resolution approval
- February through June - Advance research, project consensus, planning and concept design, cost estimations, consultant assisted public polling and referendum communication and planning
- August through election – Public Communication on facts

Legal Debt Margin

Amount Wheaton Park District can issue considering existing debt – Speer WPD Debt overview presentation August 19, 2025

- Non referendum capacity available \$14,440,651
- Statutory debt limit available with over approval (referendum) \$85,592,845
- GO Bond Tax Impact – See page nine of August 19, 2025 Speer Presentation 30, 50 and 70 million impacts provided

Projects Considered

Initial public feedback solicited via Statistically Valid Survey Summer 2025

- Rice Pool - Existing Conditions Audit Presented January 2025
 - Renovation 10-15 million
 - Replacement 25-30 million
 - Need to initiate concept designs and construction estimates
 - Seek Proposals from Williams and FGMA
 - Board consensus to proceed with seeking proposals.
- Athletic Field Irrigation – Study Presented November 2025
 - Cost estimate - 4 million
- Modest Fieldhouse Blanchard Property – Indoor Turf Field and Hardwood Courts
 - Need to initiate concept designs and construction estimates
 - Proposal received from Williams Architects \$22,800
 - Board consensus to proceed with study.

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- Year Round Bathroom Facilities in Community Parks
 - Need to initiate concept designs and construction estimates
 - Seek Proposal from Nevin Hedlund – estimate \$29,000
 Board consensus to proceed with study.

Referendum Consulting

- Identified consultants – Need to seek proposal
 - Will use firm that competed attitude and interest survey for polling survey.
- Board consensus to proceed with seeking proposals.

Board Discussion Concerning Possible Referendum

- Frey: Cautious about referendum concept but understands Rice Pool is close to 40 years old and needs work or replacement.
- Pecharich: Cautious about referendum concept.
- Mee & Frey: Support getting studies done to facilitate decision making.
- Barrett: Supports studies before making a decision; cited Naperville’s \$120M referendum in March as a point of reference.
- Vires: Supports a modest referendum through a targeted, frugal approach. Supports getting studies done to facilitate decision making.
- Kelly: Understands the need for a referendum but emphasized that projects that can be funded without referendum shouldn’t be included. Supports getting studies done to facilitate decision making.
- Welker: Questioned hardwood vs synthetic turf for Fieldhouse concept

Key Takeaways - Board Consensus

- Board favors moving cautiously and deliberately: complete studies first before committing to a referendum.
- Emphasis on targeted, cost-conscious projects.
- Agree to engage referendum consultants and poll voters on identified projects to gauge viability prior to committing to a referendum.
- Concept and cost work for pool, field house, bathrooms will move forward. Concept and cost work for athletic field irrigation is complete.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:40 Commissioner Mee moved to adjourn the meeting. Second, by Commissioner Pecharich, Motion carried by voice vote.



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