MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE SPECIAL LEISURE SERVICES FOUNDATION HYBRID MEETING ON THE 16th OF DECEMBER 2025

Chairman Gattuso called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

Those present: Linda Ballantine, Al Crook, Bret Fahnstrom (arrived 3:36 p.m.), Christina Ferraro, Anthony Gattuso, Terri Oates, Rafal Piontkowski, Erika Strojinc, Nick Troy

Absent: Thomas Campone, Dennis Hanson, Jim Houser Jr., and Jonathan Salk

Also present were Victoria Gonzalez, Superintendent of Recreation; Anne Kiwala, Superintendent of Development; Tom Draper, Superintendent of Marketing and Communications; Megan O'Brien, Events Coordinator; Nick Eckelberry, Finance Manager; Liz Thomas, Foundation Manager; Sara Carey, Manager of Human Resources; Danielle Olson, Administrative Coordinator

Superintendent Kiwala noted that Andrea Griffin, Executive Director could not join for today's meeting due to personal happenings.

Introductions
Superintendent Kiwala introduced Danielle Olson who recently took on a new role as Administrative Coordinator.

Approval of Agenda for December 16, 2025
Chairman Gattuso requested a motion to approve the agenda for December 16, 2025. Trustee Ballantine made the motion, and Trustee Oates seconded the motion to approve the December 16, 2025 agenda. Upon voice vote, the motion carried.

Conflict of Interest
No conflicts of interest stated.

Approval of Consent Agenda
Chairman Gattuso requested a motion to approve the consent agenda including the minutes from the October 21, 2025, meeting and the SLSF Financial Reports. Trustee Oates noted that the October 21, 2025 minutes listed a 36 printer instead of a 3D printer under Marketing and Public Relations. Superintendent Kiwala agreed with the correction and stated that the minutes will be amended and brought to the board for approval. Trustee Oates made the motion to approve the SLSF Financial Reports, and Trustee Ballantine seconded the motion. Upon roll being called, the vote was as follows:

AYA: Linda Ballantine, Al Crook, Christina Ferraro, Anthony Gattuso, Terri Oates, Rafal Piontkowski, Erika Strojinc, Nick Troy

NAY: None

The motion carried.

The amended SLSF board meeting minutes from October 21, 2025 were electronically sent to all trustees for approval on December 30, 2025. October amended minutes were approved by email vote.

Correspondence

Written:
None

Oral:
None

SLSF Reports
Third Quarter Reports
Goals
Superintendent Kiwala reported on the 2025 SLSF goals. Sharing that the future SLSF website will be included in the NWSRA website, allowing both entities to be linked together instead of separated as it currently stands. SLSF promoted to an array of NWSRA families by promoting golf outings and volunteer opportunities through NWSRA's newsletter and updating constant contact lists. SLSF will have new trustees joining the board in 2026. A new donor management system, Bloomerang, was launched with the Celebrate Ability Gala and will be used for the upcoming fashion show.

Grants
Superintendent Kiwala reported over $152,000 in approved grant funding for this year, which is about $18,000 over budget. This is due to having new grantors this year, including Ecolab, the John Marshall Family Foundation, the Rotary Club of Barrington, Edward and Wanda Jordan Foundation, and the Barrington Junior Women's Club. Over 100 grant applications were submitted in 2025. Beginning this Friday, all grant duties will be absorbed into the Superintendent of Development position and 25 to 30 grant applications will be submitted in 2026.

Budget Variance
Manager Eckelberry shared as of September 30th 98.3% of revenue has been collected for the year. Investments came in around $167,000. Education and training are below budget at 24.43% due to not attending the nonprofit storyteller conference which was the largest item that previously made up this budget.

Celebrate Ability Gala
Coordinator O'Brien gave an overview of the Celebrate Ability Gala event, noting that over $110,000 was raised this year, and net was about $60,000. This marked the 45th gala. Sponsorship brought in just over $47,000 with a total of 39 sponsors and 9 new sponsors this year.

Old Business

Conflict of Interest Policy and Annual Statement

Superintendent Kiwala reminded the board that the conflict of interest statements need to be signed and returned.

New Business

Appointment of Legal Counsel

Superintendent Kiwala announced the annual appointment for legal counsel, Robbins Schwartz Nicholas Lifton and Taylor Ltd. Chairman Gattuso asked for a motion to approve the appointment of Robbins Schwartz Nicholas Lifton and Taylor Ltd. as legal counsel. Trustee Strojinc made the motion, and Trustee Fahnstrom seconded the motion. Upon roll being called, the vote was as follows:

AYA: Linda Ballantine, Al Crook, Bret Fahnstrom, Christina Ferraro, Anthony Gattuso, Terri Oates, Rafal Piontkowski, Erika Strojinc, Nick Troy

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Information/Action Items

FY 2025 PYE Budget Variance

Manager Eckelberry reported that PYE is expected for revenue to end around $180,000 over budget, with net around $220,000 for the year. Projecting to come in about $146,000 over budget compared to last year. Last year's budget included only interest with the bank accounts and minimal investing gains. Therefore, mutual funds performing well, pushed SLSF over with investments. A long-term CD reached maturation, which boosted investment gains as well. Superintendent Kiwala provided an update on donations and grants for the year. Manager Eckelberry reported on expenses, highlighting postage coming in around $2,900 under budget, credit card and bank fees coming in around $2,800 under budget, printing coming in around $2,200 under budget. Professional fees coming in around $840 over budget due to an audit fee. Superintendent Kiwala reported on fundraising expenses, supplies, scholarships, and capital for the Wheeling greenhouse.

FY 2026 Line-Item Descriptions/Justifications

Manager Eckelberry explained that lower interest rates are expected, reflecting lower budgeting for investments. Superintendent Kiwala reported donations are being budgeted lower due to anticipating a decrease in memorial donations. Grant revenue will stay in line with 2025 with the hope of submitting applications to township Mental Health Boards. Fundraising revenue increased due to processing fees with the new Bloomerang system. Manager Eckelberry explained an increase for the marketing line in administrative expenses due to the redesign of the SLSF website and funds for the bus logos. Office contractors will be renamed and reflected in the income statements for March, becoming the part-time staff reimbursement line next year due to no longer having a grant contractor. Superintendent Kiwala reported on fundraising expenses,

including gifts and prizes, and reviewed grants. No large capital projects or expenditures are planned for 2026.

Proposed Budget FY 2026

Chairman Gattuso asked for a motion to approve the FY 2026 proposed budget. Trustee Oates made the motion, and Trustee Ballantine seconded the motion. Upon roll being called, the vote was as follows:

AYA: Linda Ballantine, Al Crook, Bret Fahnstrom, Christina Ferraro, Anthony Gattuso, Terri Oates, Rafal Piontkowski, Erika Strojinc, Nick Troy

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Board Admin Manual Updates

Superintendent Kiwala highlighted some of the updates that were made to the SLSF board and admin manual, including the whistleblower policy, document retention policy, gift acceptance policy, and donor privacy policy. All updates are recommended by the Association of Fundraising Professionals and are asked when completing grant applications. The trustee process has been updated to include that NWSRA directors will not occupy more than three seats, including the organizational secretary and treasurer. Instead of a rotation, every year at the November NWSRA board meeting, they will decide who is interested in serving on the SLSF board. If there are more interested parties than seats available, those nominees will attend the December SLSF board meeting and trustees will vote from those candidates who have nominated themselves for a 2-year term. The executive committee and investment committee were removed due to the same information being reiterated to the board during regular board meetings. The annual commitment form has been updated to include a monetary amount. After the investment policy is updated, the manual will be sent to legal counsel for review and will be included at the March board meeting to vote on the approval of the new manual. Trustee Troy commented on the inclusion of the DEI statement. Superintendent Kiwala stated that the statement was recently added as a lot of grants were requiring a DEI statement to be included.

SLSF/NWSRA Member Park District 2026 Sponsorship

Superintendent Gonzalez reviewed the 2025 sponsorship, which included Prospect Heights for National Night Out, Rolling Meadows for Back to School Bash, Inverness for Family Fall Fest, Hanover Park for Trunk or Treat, Hoffman Estates for Winter Fest, and South Barrington for Santa's Workshop. The partners for 2026 includes Arlington Heights, Bartlett, Mount Prospect, Palatine, River Trails, and Wheeling.

2026 SLSF Event Schedule

Coordinator O'Brien reviewed the 2026 SLSF event schedule highlighting the name change for golf outings to golf classics, along with the date and location changes to a couple of events. Coordinator O'Brien reminded the board that the fashion show is the next upcoming event for SLSF.

Golf Agreements

Superintendent Kiwala shared the informational memo regarding all updates that were made to the golf agreements. Committees have been made aware and have received a first draft of the updated agreements, before it is finalized.

NWSRA December 2025 Grant Funds

Superintendent Gonzalez reviewed the grant memo outlining the final three transfers of funds, totaling $95,653.40. The following breakdown was shared: Athletics was around $4,000, Transportation $4,200, Scholarships $34,763, Inclusion $32,000, and General Programs $20,000.

SLSF Service for NWSRA Directors

Superintendent Kiwala shared the updates for the NWSRA Board of Directors serving on the SLSF Board. Two seats can be occupied, plus one seat for the organizational treasurer and secretary. The nomination process was outlined along with the appointment timeline. Trustee Strojinc, Ferraro, and Fahnstrom have completed their term and Ben Rea, Palatine Park District and Diane Hilgers, Salt Creek Park District will serve on the board beginning in 2026.

Comments

Trustee Fahnstrom thanked the board and staff for everything they do for SLSF and shared his appreciation for his time on the board. Chairman Gattuso thanked the outgoing trustees and congratulated the SLSF team on a successful 2025.

Adjournment

Being no further business to come before the board, Chairman Gattuso called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:20 p.m. Trustee Oates made the motion and Trustee Strojinc seconded the motion to adjourn. Upon voice vote, the motion carried.



_____

Secretary