MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF NORTHWEST SPECIAL RECREATION ASSOCIATION HELD AT PARK CENTRAL; 3000 CENTRAL ROAD, ROLLING MEADOWS, IL ON THE 20th OF MAY, 2026, AT 10:30 AM

Chairperson Janda called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

Superintendent Gonzalez took roll call. The following members of the Board were present: Carrie Fullerton, Arlington Heights Park District; Kevin Romejko, Bartlett Park District; Erika Strojinc, Buffalo Grove Park District (left at 11:46AM); Ben Curcio, Elk Grove Park District; Steve Bessette, Hanover Park Park District (virtual, left at 11:46AM); Craig Talsma, Hoffman Estates Park District; Jim Jarog, Mt. Prospect Park District; Ben Rea, Palatine Park District; Christina Ferraro, Prospect Heights Park District; Bret Fahnstrom, River Trails Park District; Diane Hilgers, Salt Creek Park District; Tony LaFrenere, Schaumburg Park District; Jay Morgan, South Barrington Park District; Jeff Janda, Streamwood Park District; Jan Buchs, Wheeling Park District

Absent: Robert Dowling, Nick Troy

Also present: Andrea Griffin, Executive Director; Rachel Hubsch, Victoria Gonzalez, Superintendents of Recreation; Tom Draper, Superintendent of Communications and Technology; Anne Kiwala, Superintendent of Development; Sara Carey, Manager of Human Resources; Nick Eckelberry, Manager of Finance; Steve Hogan and Jaclyn Cornell, Stumm Insurance; Martha Trotter, Sikich; Ashley Houser, Intern; Kayle Burns, Intern; Ashley Richardson, Recreation Specialist; Josh Ruston, Operations Coordinator; Cassie Lexa, Collaborative Coordinator

Introduction of Guests

Manager Carey introduced Steve Hogan and Jaclyn Cornell from Stumm Insurance. Manager Eckelberry introduced Martha Trotter from Sikich. Superintendent Kiwala introduced Ashley Houser as the marketing and SLSF intern. Superintendent Hubsch introduced Kayle Burns as the therapeutic recreation intern, and Ashley Richardson as a Recreation Specialist. Chairperson Janda read five-year recognition letters for Cassie Lexa and Josh Ruston.

Approval of Agenda

Chairperson Janda asked for a motion to approve the agenda dated May 20, 2026 with an amendment to the agenda. Information/Action Items D. Audit Presentation and E. Health Insurance were moved before Staff Reports. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Fullerton seconded the motion to approve the amended agenda. Upon voice vote, the motion was carried.

Public Comment

None

Approval of Consent Agenda

Chairperson Janda called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda of May 20, 2026. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Romejko seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Upon roll being called the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Kevin Romejko, Erika Strojinc, Ben Curcio, Steve Bessette, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Ben Rea, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrenere, Jay Morgan, Jeff Janda, and Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Correspondence

Director Griffin shared that Maggie Trevor sent a letter along with 52 Brookfield Zoo tickets for summer day camp to enjoy. Palatine Community Baseball and Softball Commission also reached out to highlight the Inclusion Team and the support NWSRA can provide to the affiliate program.

Audit Presentation

Martha Trotter, Lead Principal at Sikich, presented the FY2025 audit results. Reporting that NWSRA received a clean, unmodified audit opinion, the highest level of assurance. She highlighted corrections made to the prior year entity wide financial statements related to capital assets and implementation of accounting standards, noting that these adjustments did not impact the fund level financial statements used for monthly financial reporting. Although there was a decrease in fund balance, the result was favorable compared to the budgeted deficit due to revenues exceeding projections and expenditures coming in below budget. Director Talsma thanked Sikich and staff for their work and discussed a housekeeping item regarding committed capital funds to ensure financial reporting accurately reflects prior board actions. After no further questions or discussion, Chairperson Janda called for a motion to approve the FY2025 audit as presented by Sikich. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Talsma seconded the motion to approve the FY2025 audit. Upon roll being called the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Kevin Romejko, Erika Strojinc, Ben Curcio, Steve Bessette, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Ben Rea, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrenere, Jay Morgan, Jeff Janda, and Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Health Insurance

Steve Hogan and Jaclyn Cornell from Stumm Insurance introduced themselves and provided an overview of their agency. Including the firm's experience and service model, emphasizing their commitment to the parks and recreation industry and employee benefits. They acknowledged the comprehensive selection process and stated their goal is to maintain quality employee benefits while managing costs and providing effective plan administration. Implementation of the new benefits program would begin in September. Director LaFrenere asked for clarification regarding the broker agreement, noting that it did not include compensation or fee details and raised questions about liability provisions. Steve stated that the agreement is an at will service agreement and that the revisions that legal counsel has requested would be incorporated. Director Griffin suggested that the board defer approval of the broker agreement until the September board meeting. Compensation information, the broker of record documentation, and

an updated agreement incorporating the requested liability and cybersecurity language will be provided to the board prior to consideration. Director Talsma asked when quotes will be available for January 1, 2027. Steve explained that preliminary renewal rates are expected in early September and that signing the service agreement would allow implementation work to begin before final rates are available. He also noted that rate changes will primarily depend on medical inflation and the group's claims experience. Director Talsma asked how the quotes premiums compared to NWSRA's recent claims experience and prior surcharge under its current plan. Steve explained that the proposed rates reflect underwriting by the carrier based on the organization's claims history within the broader insurance pool and that the carrier had already accounted for the group's recent claims experience when developing the quote. He also shared the differences between the current cooperative model and the fully insured market. Director Fullerton asked if multiple insurance carriers were evaluated as part of the benefits review process. Steve confirmed and reported that a full market comparison was conducted and that the recommended option best met the organization's objectives for cost, employee benefits, and long-term stability. He also advised that remaining in a fully insured plan is the most appropriate option for NWSRA given its size and risk profile. Following discussion, the board reached consensus to defer action on the broker agreement until the July board meeting. Steve indicated that implementation planning could continue in the interim but requested formal board approval before beginning work on the employee enrollment platform. The board agreed to revisit the agreement after receiving the requested revisions and additional information. Chairperson Janda asked for a motion to defer the issue to July. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Strojinc seconded the motion to defer to July. Upon voice vote, the motion was carried.

Staff Reports

The board reached consensus to forgo oral staff reports and proceed with the remaining agenda items.

Old Business

Capital Asset Policy

Director Griffin asked for a motion to approve the updated capital asset policy. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Fullerton seconded the motion to approve the updated capital asset policy. Upon roll being called the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Kevin Romejko, Ben Curcio, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Ben Rea, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrenere, Jay Morgan, Jeff Janda, and Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Capital Budget Funding Updates

Director Griffin reported that leasing options have been identified for the planned purchase of a 20-passenger vehicle next year. The vehicle will be leased for one year to evaluate the financial benefits of leasing before considering expansion of the approach to future vehicle purchases. Director Griffin and Superintendent Draper also reported that after reviewing the capital budget, certain technology purchases were reclassified as operating expenses. Director Talsma noted that certain software expenses may meet capitalization criteria and need to be recorded as a

capital asset rather than an operating expense. Director Griffin noted that a capital budget summary will continue to be given to the board to provide ongoing updates on capital expenditures and funding.

Ratification of signed Park District Consent & Waivers

Director Griffin asked for a motion to ratify signed park district and consent waivers. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Rea seconded the motion to ratify the signed park district and consent waivers. Upon roll being called the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Kevin Romejko, Ben Curcio, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Ben Rea, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrenere, Jay Morgan, Jeff Janda, and Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

New Business

First Quarter Reports

Director Griffin skipped review of the first quarter goals due to timing, noting that updates were provided in the board packet. Manager Eckelberry reported on FY2026 budget variances. Financial statements are now presented in a condensed format using BS&A reporting capabilities, highlighting only accounts exceeding established variance thresholds, with a benchmark of 25% in the first quarter, 50% in the second quarter, and 75% in the third quarter, with a 10% variance range applied. Revenues and expenses were generally in line with budget expectations for the period, with transportation revenue exceeding budget due to day camp transportation, while part-time salary expenses were below prior year levels. Overall, there was a favorable variance of about 8.4%. Director Talsma requested that liability insurance costs be reclassified out of employee benefits for clearer financial presentation. Manager Eckelberry confirmed he would review and adjust the classification accordingly. Director Griffin reported that program statistics generated through the new RecTrac system will now be provided on a quarterly basis instead of annually. The reporting format has been streamlined to a condensed version highlighting key participation data. Superintendent Draper encouraged feedback on the new format and willingness to modify future reports to include any additional information as needed.

Member District Annual Assessment

Director Griffin asked for a motion to approve an increase to the MDAA rate from 2% to 3% for FY2027. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Rea seconded the motion to approve an increase to the MDAA rate from 2% to 3% for FY2027. Chairperson Janda opened the floor for discussion. Director Fullerton asked if the board previously approved a one time increase last year of 2.5%, Director Griffin confirmed. Upon roll being called the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Kevin Romejko, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Ben Rea, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrenere, Jay Morgan, Jeff Janda, and Jan Buchs

NAY: Ben Curcio

The motion carried.

Recognition of Jan Buchs

Chairperson Janda read a proclamation honoring Jan Buchs in recognition of her retirement as Executive Director of the Wheeling Park District and her service as a NWSRA Board member.

Information/Action Items

2027 Pay Grade Assignments

Director Griffin asked for a motion to approve the 2027 full-time salary ranges as presented by HR Source beginning January 1, 2027. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Romejko seconded the motion to approve the 2027 full-time salary ranges. Upon roll being called the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Kevin Romejko, Ben Curcio, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Ben Rea, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrenere, Jay Morgan, Jeff Janda, and Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

HR Source Salary Survey

Director Griffin asked for a motion to approve salary increases not to exceed $50,000 effective January 1, 2027. The adjustments are intended to place employees within the appropriate pay range based on the new salary structure. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Rea seconded the motion to approve salary increases not to exceed $50,000 effective January 1, 2027. Upon roll being called the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Kevin Romejko, Ben Curcio, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Ben Rea, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrenere, Jay Morgan, Jeff Janda, and Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Marketing Specialist

Superintendent Draper provided an overview of the proposed change of the Marketing Specialist position from part-time to full-time. Explaining that the change would better support the agency's current and future marketing needs by increasing capacity for strategic marketing initiatives while maintaining day-to-day operational responsibilities. Director Talsma asked if the previously approved part-time 3 employees could be added to the updated organizational chart. Director Griffin stated that an updated organizational chart with those changes will be provided at the July board meeting. Superintendent Draper asked for a motion to approve the Marketing Specialist full-time position. Director LaFrenere made the motion and Director Romejko seconded the motion to approve the Marketing Specialist full-time position. Upon roll being called the vote was as follows:

AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Kevin Romejko, Ben Curcio, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Ben Rea, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrenere, Jay Morgan, Jeff Janda, and Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

RingCentral

Superintendent Draper summarized the agency's experience with RingCentral phone system, noting its reliability and successful integration into daily operations over the past three years. Superintendent Draper asked for a motion to approve the RingCentral contract for a monthly payment of $1,168.75 beginning July 20, 2026 to July 20, 2028. He also noted that the agency is locked into the current rate, and therefore there will be no increase. Director Rea made the motion and Director Fahnstrom seconded the motion to approve the RingCentral contract for a monthly payment of $1,168.75 beginning July 20, 2026 to July 20, 2028. Upon roll being called the vote was as follows:

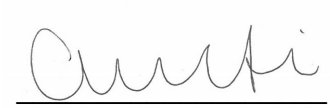
AYE: Carrie Fullerton, Kevin Romejko, Ben Curcio, Craig Talsma, Jim Jarog, Ben Rea, Christina Ferraro, Bret Fahnstrom, Diane Hilgers, Tony LaFrenere, Jay Morgan, Jeff Janda, and Jan Buchs

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Adjournment

After no further business, Chairperson Janda called for a motion to adjourn. Director Fullerton made the motion and Director Buchs seconded the motion to adjourn the May 20, 2026 NWSRA Board of Directors meeting at 12:15 p.m. Upon voice vote the meeting was adjourned.

Secretary: 

Date: 7/22/2026