

Niles Park District  
Minutes of Budget Workshop Meeting  
Howard Leisure Center  
October 19, 2023  
10:00 a.m.

Board Members present: Julie Genualdi, President  
Dennis O'Donovan, Vice President  
Jim Hynes, Treasurer  
Scott O'Brien, Commissioner  
Ronnie Strzelecki, Commissioner

Staff Members present: Tom Elenz, Executive Director / Board Secretary  
Scot Neukirch, Finance Director  
Heather Petrie, Executive Administrative Coordinator  
Jim Majewski, Superintendent of Facilities  
Robin Brey, Office Manager/Recreation Program Supervisor  
Laura Newton, Tam Tennis Manager  
Kenny Krueger, Athletics  
Peter Dubs, Golf Course Manger  
Chris Urgo, Golf Pro/Instructor  
Jim Stoneberg, Golf Course Maintenance  
Marty Stankowicz, Iceland Manager

1. Call to Order

President Genualdi called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

President Genualdi led the pledge of allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Recording Secretary Petrie called the roll. All Commissioners were present.

4. Opening Comments

Executive Director Elenz opened the workshop by noting that the budget for fiscal year 2024 reflects the district's continued financial plan to provide parks, facilities and programs to residents and participants during the upcoming fiscal year. The revenues are exceeding budget due to an increase in program participation and offerings. The increase in participation is due to staff. Executive Director Elenz thanked staff for their hard work this year in keeping the park district programming successful and making it safe for our customers and maintaining our parks for our community.

The park district is having a much better year in terms of revenue. Staff has seen a dramatic increase in revenues which are projected to be 1.1 million more than the 2022 actual. In 2024 staff is requesting a 5% increase in the majority of our program fees and a 4.9% increase in the operational tax levy due to the mandatory increases in the State's minimum wage requirement by January 1<sup>st</sup> and a dramatic increase in prices of supplies due to the high inflation rate.

Some of the major capitals completed in 2023 were the Greenwood Park and Chesterfield Park basketball court renovations, Howard Street Inn bathroom remodel, the beginning of the Pioneer Park renovation project, surveillance camera replacements, and the Jonquil/Washington Park shelter refurbishments.

Some of the major concerns we face for 2024 are how to keep increasing our current revenue sources to keep up with the increasing cost of utilities, maintenance, benefits, and salaries. The total 2024 budget revenue for all funds is \$14,867,099 which is an increase of 4% compared to the 2023 projected revenues.

The total budget expenditures are \$17,670,241 which is an increase of 3.8million or 22% compared to the 2023 projected expenses. This increase is primarily attributed to the Pioneer Park and Golf Mill Park projects.

Being fiscally responsible in prior years, the district has created ways to operate more efficiently, which when combined with revenue enhancements and expenditure reductions, the park district has positioned itself to be financially strong and build healthy reserves. Our current reserves are 120% of actual expenses based on the 2022 audit.

The 2024 budget represents the district's commitment to fiscal responsibility to the Niles Park District residents. We will continue the district's philosophy of planning for capital replacements while maintaining and operating the district's existing facilities and programs in a first-class manner the residents of Niles deserve and expect.

#### Finance Director Budget Overview

Finance Director Neukirch began with an outline of how the park district plans on approaching the 2024 fiscal year.

Staff was asked to make their budget requests by late August. In mid-September, staff met with Tom and Scot to go over their preliminary requests. A series of meetings were held with department heads to review their budget requests. Today the draft requests are being reviewed with the Board. By the end of the month staff hopes to have the proposed budget available for residents to review before the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting for a formal approval of the appropriation and the related tax levy ordinance during that meeting.

Some non-routine items are influencing our 2024 requests. Two significant projects are the Pioneer Park and Golf Mill Park renovations. The State minimum wage increase has been affecting our operations since 2019 when each year the minimum wage goes up approximately \$1.00. Our market wage adjustment is our normal increase for other employees who are not impacted by the State's minimum wage increase. We also have a property tax increase request this year.

Work has begun on the Pioneer Park renovation project. This is financed by OSLAD grants and contributions from the recreation fund.

In 2019 the State minimum wage was at \$8.25/hr. By 2025 it will be up to \$15.00/hr. The park district has approximately 2 million each year in annual wages for part time employees. As of January 2024, the minimum wage will go up to \$14/hr. Approximately 60% of the part time positions right now are less than \$14/hr. 40% of staff are currently at \$14/hr. or higher. Subsequently, the rates of pay of supervisors are in some cases being adjusted as well.

Staff is also proposing a 4.9% property tax increase. Total revenue generated will be \$184, 000. The reason for this is the State's minimum wage increase and to assist the recreation fund which will be supporting the Pioneer Park Project and Golf Mill Park project. The park district is subject to tax caps and PTEL which are rate ceiling and tax increase respectively. There is another portion of the levy which is for the annual rollover bonds which is separate from the corporate levy.

Staff is also requesting a wage adjustment of 3% for full time staff and part time staff who will not be getting the minimum wage increase. This is due to the State's minimum wage increase requirement.

Additionally, the park district is having difficulty filling positions and need to increase wages to be competitive with other employers. Each 1% increase for full time employees' costs about \$24,000, so a 3% increase would be about a \$72,000 impact on the budget for 2024. Each 1% increase for part time employees' costs approximately \$18,500 making a 3% increase a \$55,500 cost.

2023 Capital Requests that didn't get done in 2023 or are not yet finished:

The State did not have any mini dumps available for purchase.

Waiting on Com Ed to finalize the lease for Courtland playground.

Oak Park tennis courts were rebudgeted with the addition of pickleball courts.

Oak Park dugouts rebudgeted due to Grennan coming in over budget.

Golfview gym floor was rebudgeted due to contractor availability.

Pioneer project started this fall.

2024 Capital Requests

Golf Mill and Pioneer Park renovations

### Department /Fund Budget Request Review

#### Administration/Finance/IT

Administration: A Human Resources position was added to the department.

IT: The reason for the budget increase this year is due to the new surveillance cameras. A human resources software system is also being added.

#### Park Services

Jim Majewski and Chris Czajka

Grounds has been focusing on planting native grasses and has been getting positive feedback from residents about the butterfly garden. The weather has been good this year and staff has been focusing on maintaining the parks. Among the current projects happening are working on the dugouts at Grennan Heights, HVAC has been ordered.

### Recreation Programs – Tam Tennis, Programs, Pioneer Park, Athletics

#### Tam Tennis

Laura Newton

Tam Tennis increased its fees by 5%. Tam's season runs from September to May. Court revenue comes from court rentals and hosting weekend matches. Staff anticipates being able to reach its court revenue by the end of their season. Programming runs all year long. Fall tends to be a slower time of year due to all the other sports running at the same time. The junior program is at 84% capacity currently and the adult program is a 72% capacity. Expenses this year are in line with the budget. This year's biggest purchase was six divider nets.

#### Programming

Robin Brey

The Recreation department has earned over a million dollars in revenue at this point. It has been a good year for both camps and preschool. Preschool currently has 112 students compared to 115 students last year. The park district is competing with several free daycare and preschool programs. In an effort to increase enrollment staff has implemented early drop off and late pick up. They will be doing a school's out camp

during winter break and spring break. For early childhood they are going to focus on two year olds who can grow with the program. Some program ideas are toddler time, beginner readers, and a cooking class.

It was an excellent year for summer camps. The program brought in \$394,000 and were at capacity with the camps this summer. Early childhood had extended day care which filled this year. In 2024 early drop off will be offered.

Special events are always successful and attendance is always high. In 2024 the Daddy/Daughter dance will be offered over 2 evenings.

The dance program is very popular and a variety of classes will be offered. Music classes are very popular and there is a waitlist for those classes. Piano and drum lessons are offered 5 days a week. Both group and private guitar lessons will be added. Birthday parties at LoVerde continue to book quickly during the year. The majority of these program fees will also be increasing by 5%.

Staff is proposing raising the mini golf fees at Pioneer Park from \$7 to \$8. They also recommend reducing the pitches on the batting cages from 15 to 10 to try to start rotating more people in. They also plan on increasing the hourly batting cage rental.

Long term, the mini golf course at Pioneer will be upgraded. Pool concessions did very well this year.

### Athletics

Kenny Krueger and Jamie Teichmann

Basketball and soccer enrollments have both increased. There have also been increases in the summer sports camps, girls softball and men's basketball. This year some new classes were offered. There was a 3 v. 3 soccer class offered which was successful and staff plans on expanding in 2024. The first pickleball tournament was held recently and staff plans on offering a couple more, as well as offering pickleball classes. Staff will also have a holiday sports camp to be held while schools are on break over the holidays. Staff plans on adding adult co-ed softball tournaments with travel and house leagues in the area. Staff is looking at running a fall volleyball league if they can find gym time. LoVerde has been challenging to fill during the summer, so staff is looking at hosting more birthday parties where someone can book the field, a gym, etc.

Some changes with sports camp this year were that there was a more structured schedule put in place. Swimming time was decreased with allowed more time for sports instruction. Staff plans on making some changes based on parent feedback. The camps also allowed time for free play, open play, arts and crafts and some STEAM activities.

### Golf Course

Peter Dubs and Chris Uργο

Demand has remained high since reopening after the pandemic and the weather has cooperated. Leage and permanent tee times remain steady or are increasing. Fees were raised \$1.00 last year, this year the only thing to go up will be the non resident fee. The golf course is ordering a new fleet of golf carts. The starter shed will need some repair work. There are also some drainage issues on the greens that will need to be addressed. The numbers for golf instruction are high and classes always fill.

## Ice Rink

Marty Stankowicz

The Learn to Skate program remains the same year to year as only so many people can fit on the ice at a time. The hockey program remains strong. No major capital projects are planned, however, in the future staff is considering closing in the outdoor rink.

## Swimming Pool

Costs for 2024 are a shade structure, slide painting and rehabbing the pump. The pool pass fees will be raised by 5%.

## Highlights of Remaining Funds

Scot Neukirch

Finance Director Neukirch summarized the highlights of the remaining funds: IMRF, FICA, General Liability, Audit, Paving and Lighting, Police Protection, Handicapped and Capital Projects. For the most part, these funds are supported by property tax collections.

IMRF fund: the 2024 IMRF employer contribution rate dropped to 6.45%.

FICA fund: this fund pays for social security which is 6.2% of salaries and Medicare which is 1.45%

General Liability fund: this fund pays for workers' compensation and liability insurance for the park district.

Audit fund: pays for the park district's annual audit.

Debt Service fund: pays the associated debt service payments each year for the park's outstanding debt.

Paving and Lighting fund: pays for the seal coating and paving for our facilities.

Police Protection fund: this fund is for Park Patrol and payment of Park Patrol staff.

Handicapped fund: this fund is for MNASR and costs associated with provided our services to residents with special needs.

Capital Projects fund: expenses and revenues associated with the Pioneer improvements.

## Next Steps in the Budget Process

Staff will prepare the proposed budget document which will be presented to the Board at the November meeting.

### 5. Citizens Wishing to Address the Board

There were no citizens who wanted to address the board.

### 6. Convene into Executive Session under section 2 ( C)(1) to discuss personnel issues, section 2 ( C)(5) to discuss real estate and section ( C)(11) to discuss litigation of the open meetings act (if necessary)

### 7. Adjournment

A motion was made by President Genualdi and seconded by Commissioner O'Brien to adjourn the budget workshop and convene into executive sessions. Recording Secretary Petrie called the roll:

President Genualdi	Yes
Vice President O'Donovan	Yes
Treasurer Hynes	Yes
Commissioner O'Brien	Yes
Commissioner Strzelecki	Yes

The motion passed 5-0

**APPROVED:**

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**President**  
**Board of Commissioners**  
**Date: October 19, 2023**

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**Board Secretary**