



**FOX VALLEY PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD MINUTES
August 10, 2016
Prisco Community Center
150 W. Illinois Avenue, Aurora
6:30 p.m.**

1.0 CALL MEETING TO ORDER

President Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

2.0 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

3.0 ROLL CALL

The following members of the Board of Trustees were present: Alex Alexandrou, Chuck Anderson, Theodia Gillespie, Rachel Ossyra, Cynthia Penne, Bob Vaughan and Denny Wiggins. A quorum was present. Also present: Executive Director Jim Pilmer, Attorney Gerald Hodge and administrative staff.

4.0 PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Presentation by the Fox Valley Park Foundation and Jeff Andreasen of aQity Research of recent survey findings completed by the Fox Valley Park Foundation. The purpose is to consider Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) and to consider a referendum to either (1) increase its extension limitation under PTELL, or (2) increase its limiting rate.

Executive Director Jim Pilmer reminded the board of the 5-year plan that staff presented in March 2016 about where the district will be. He stressed that the discussion for this board meeting is not a problem from any person working for the district, current or past, or from any previous boards. This is a discussion on the complete facts of where the agency will be in 1, 2 or 3 years. He told the board he wants them to be fully informed in order to make decisions. He stressed to the board that they do not have to make a decision at this meeting for item 4.2. He wants them to have much debate. He said that he and Diana Erickson, as park foundation staff members, along with Gloria Bunce, will answer any questions the board may have. He stressed that Jeff Andreasen of aQity Research will not, in any way, render an opinion or recommendation. He then introduced Fox Valley Park Foundation Chairman Gloria Bunce to present the findings of a community survey. Gloria told the board that the park foundation, along with aQity Research, conducted research on what district voters thought the district could be providing given additional resources. She then introduced Jeff Andreasen of aQity Research to present the results of the survey.

Jeff said the survey was conducted to understand resident's overall opinions of the district; whether or not they use park district facilities, programs and parks; and test their willingness to pay in order to make sure the district is able to meet its operations and maintenance requirements. He said they collected feedback from just over 470 residents of the district. The survey was conducted among likely voters in the community who had voted in at least two of the last three elections. They had the choice of responding via paper survey mailed through the USPS, electronically online, or during a phone interview. Responses and identities were anonymous. They also made sure that the respondent sample was reflective of the population in terms of where they live, age and gender.

In regards to the question asking residents' overall opinion of the park district on a 0-10 scale, Jeff said the scores were "almost off the chart." Eighty-five percent gave favorable ratings. Half of those were extremely high.

Eighty-five percent of respondents said they had visited a park district facility or park in the past 12 months. In rating their overall satisfaction, there were almost universal favorable approval ratings.

In the willingness to pay question, residents were given three options: option 1 - \$24 tax increase per year; option 2 - \$30 tax increase per year; and option 3 - \$42 tax increase per year. The \$30 option received the highest level of support. Rachel Ossyra asked if everybody answered this question; Jeff said virtually everybody did; some skipped this question but answered a follow-up question. When asked about reasons to oppose a tax increase, 47 percent of respondents said an excellent reason would be that property taxes are high enough, and 36 percent said the park district needs to live within its means. When asked the one best reason to oppose a tax increase, the same reasons were chosen.

When asked about reasons to support a referendum for a tax increase, 40 percent said an excellent reason would be the park district plays an important role in giving young people activities and places to go, followed by 37 percent saying the variety of facilities and quality programs makes the community a more attractive place to live and helps improve property values. When asked the one best reason to support a referendum, the same reasons were chosen. After hearing both sides of the argument, when asked again if they supported a referendum for an increase, more people moved over to the support side. Rachel Ossyra pointed out that additionally, those who oppose it did so stronger. The rest of the questions were demographic in nature: age, gender, and region.

The board debated the many different merits of placing a referendum on the November general election ballot, including what other options may be available other than raising taxes. They discussed the facts presented and the impact on residents and the park district of raising taxes, as well as the impact of not raising taxes.

4.2 Approve resolution authorizing placing referendum on November general election to seek voter approval of increase in extension limitation or limiting rate.

After much discussion, the board decided to table agenda item 4.2 and adjourn the meeting to reconvene Monday, August 15, 2016, at 6:00 p.m.

5.0 ADJOURNMENT

Alex Alexandrou motioned, Rachel Ossyra seconded and the board voted unanimously to table agenda item 4.2 and adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. to reconvene Monday, August 15, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. Roll call – voting Aye: Alex Alexandrou, Chuck Anderson, Theodia Gillespie, Rachel Ossyra, Cynthia Penne, Bob Vaughan and Denny Wiggins; voting Nay: none. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Arlene Kallien

Assistant Board Secretary/Clerk of the Board