

AGENDA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024
7:30 P.M.

1. ROLL CALL
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Motion to approve the agenda as presented.
3. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES
 - January 16, 2024
Motion to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2024 meeting as presented.
4. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE
5. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY / M24-027
No motion at this time.

A. Efficiency Report Draft
6. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS
7. ADJOURNMENT
Motion to adjourn the meeting.

MINUTES
LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 16, 2024

1. Roll Call:

A regular meeting of the Hoffman Estates Park District Recreation & Facilities Committee was held on January 16, 2024 at 7:45 p.m. at the Triphahn Center in Hoffman Estates, IL.

Present: President Chhatwani, Commissioners Kaplan, McGinn, Dressler, Friedman, Evans and MacGregor, Community Reps Beranek, Bettencourt, Henderson and Pilafas, Executive Director Talsma

Absent:

Also Present: Director of Finance & Administration Hopkins, Superintendent of Business Peddinghaus, Director of Parks, Planning & Maintenance Hugen, Deputy Director Bechtold, Executive Assistant Flynn, IT Specialist Hassler

Audience:

2. Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Friedman made a motion, seconded by Comm Rep Henderson to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried by voice vote.

3. Comments from the Audience:

None

4. Committee on Local Government Efficiency / M24-002:

A. Efficiency Report Framework

Executive Director Talsma read an introduction to explain the reason for the committee, which is to show efficiencies between different governmental units, and how we operate with other governmental agencies. The state is trying to find duplications in services and whether all are needed. Some smaller units have been eliminated. This is our way of showing we are valuable and integral to the community. It also shows how well we work with other agencies and how we already share our resources and create efficiencies. It aims to create increased transparency, cost savings and efficiencies.

Commissioner McGinn asked if IAPD provided a template. Executive Director Talsma said yes, they did, and Superintendent Peddinghaus has done a wonderful job putting it all together.

Superintendent Peddinghaus said this has been a wonderful learning experience so far; he had no idea how many intergovernmental agreements there are. Executive Director Talsma added that there are links to many of the documents, and most of this was pre-existing; this exercise pulled them all together.

Executive Director Talsma noted that at the end of the report, you will see where it says, "Recommendations for Increasing Accountability and Efficiencies." We will have some recommendations, and then file the report with Cook County. This is a state law, but the report gets filed with the county.

Comm Rep Beranek asked if the state expects this every year. Executive Director Talsma said we are asked to do this once now, and then every ten years, to justify the multiple taxing districts.

Comm Rep Henderson asked what happens after we turn this in to Cook County. Executive Director Talsma said we will most likely wait several years to see if anything will change.

Commissioner Evans asked if we are supposed to submit suggestions. Executive Director Talsma said that we could suggest to other entities that we combine our efforts on certain things.

Director Hopkins said to look for the links in the report framework and review those documents.

Executive Director Talsma added that at the next meeting in March, we will discuss open items. Staff will return with answers to some of these questions, and maybe have some ideas for recommendations. He thanked Director Hopkins and Superintendent Peddinghaus for their work thus far.

B. Intergovernmental Payments Report

The committee should review this report and return in March with any questions.

5. **Committee Member Comments:**

None

6. **Adjournment:**

Commissioner Friedman made a motion, seconded by Comm Rep Henderson to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. The motion carried by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Talsma
Secretary

Cindy Flynn
Executive Assistant

MEMORANDUM NO. M24-027

TO: Board of Commissioners
FROM: Craig Talsma, Executive Director
Nicole Hopkins, Director of Finance & Administration
Wolf Peddinghaus, Superintendent of Business
RE: Findings and Recommendations of the Committee on Local Government
Efficiency
DATE: March 19, 2024

Motion

This meeting's purpose is to discuss the committee members' findings and recommendations for developing a final report. The final report will be adopted at the May 28, 2024 board meeting.

Background

The first Local Government Efficiency Committee Meeting was held on January 16. The purpose of this meeting was to set expectations and distribute supporting materials to the committee members to review.

The purpose of the second committee meeting is to receive recommendations and conclusions from the committee members to complete the attached draft document. Utilizing the feedback, the draft document will be updated to reflect the committee's views and opinions to prepare a final draft to be presented to the committee and then to the full board for approval in May.

Rationale

The formation of this committee and tasks to be performed are a legal requirement.

DRAFT EFFICIENCY REPORT FOR THE HOFFMAN ESTATES PARK DISTRICT

APPROVED BY THE PARK DISTRICT'S
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY
ON MAY 21, 2024



I. Purpose

The Hoffman Estates Park District (“Park District”) formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on June 7th, 2023, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, *et seq.* (the “Committee”).

II. Committee Membership

The Committee consisted of the following individuals:

Rajkumari Chhatwani

Pat McGinn

Linda Dressler

Robert Kaplan

Keith Evans

Marc A. Friedman

Chris MacGregor

Lizzie Beranek

Pearl Henderson

Chad Bettencourt

Jonathan Pilafas

Craig Talsma

III. Committee Meetings

The Committee met as follows:

Meeting Date	Meeting Time and Place
<u>January 16, 2024</u>	<u></u>
<u>March 19, 2024</u>	<u></u>
<u>May 21, 2024</u>	<u></u>

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Park District's website or upon request at the Park District's administrative office.

IV. General Overview of Governing Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction

The Park District was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of the Park District in 1964. All Illinois park districts, including the Park District, are governed by [the Park District Code, 70 ILCS 1205/1 et seq.](#)

Having a separate and distinct taxing body for parks, recreation, and conservation within the local community, which operates apart from general-purpose governments, is extremely beneficial to the community for many reasons, as detailed further in this report.

- **Elected, non-partisan, non-compensated board.** The Park District is governed by a board of seven commissioners. Commissioners must reside within the boundaries of the park district and are elected at the Consolidated Election in odd-numbered years. Pursuant to state law, commissioners are non-partisan and serve without compensation.
- **Accessible and focused representation.** Having a dedicated board to oversee these essential facilities, programs, and services provides the community with increased access to their elected representatives. It allows those elected representatives to focus solely on those facilities, programs, and services. This is contrasted with general-purpose governments, where elected representatives are responsible for broad oversight on a wide range of issues. This special-purpose benefit is particularly advantageous when it comes to budget and finance oversight.
- **Increased transparency.** Having a dedicated unit of local government to provide park and recreation services also improves the relationship between the park district and its residents because of the transparency and openness related to the board and park district operations. Having detailed agenda and action items allows taxpayers to be better informed about the inner workings of their local government. When individual units of government are responsible for providing specified services like park districts, transparency is increased because action items and budget procedures are more detailed. Additionally, these items and budgetary decisions are subject to more scrutiny by locally elected officials than is the case with larger, multi-purpose governments with a multitude of departments.
- **Protection of revenues.** Because the Park District is a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for park district purposes. This assurance contrasts with general-purpose governments like cities, villages, and counties that provide a multitude of services such as fire, police, public works, economic development, etc., where revenues generated specifically for parks and recreation can be expended on these other services with limited if any, input from voters.

- **Protection of assets.** Public parks and other real property owned by the park district are held in trust for the residents of the park district and, subject to very limited exceptions, can only be sold or transferred if residents approve of the sale or transfer by a referendum. This is contrasted with general-purpose units of government, which have the authority to sell or dispose of property by a vote of the governing board.
- **Providing the Community More with Less.** The Park District does more with much fewer funding options. Unlike other units of local government that receive direct state funding and income, sales, use, hotel/motel, motor fuel, and other numerous taxes, the Park District's only tax revenues come from a modest portion of a resident's overall property tax bill. In fact, despite its limited funding options, the Park District's share is only approximately 7% of the local tax bill.
- **The Park District utilizes the Balanced Scorecard (BSC).** The BSC is a strategy tool—a semi-standard structured document supported by design methods and automation tools—that managers can use to monitor the execution of activities by the staff within their control and the consequences arising from these actions. Please see the [BSC memo from the 11/28/2023 Administration and Finance Committee Meeting](#) for additional information.

As part of good governance and implementing best practices in managing day-to-day operations, the Park District has also adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures. These are all located on the [HEPARKS.org FOIA and Transparency website](#).

- [Freedom of Information Act information including contact information.](#)
- [Lobbying](#)
- [Program Guide & Fees Charged](#)
- [Bid Information](#)
- [Organization Chart](#)
- [Policy Manual](#)
- [Personnel Policy Manual](#)
- [Park District Safety Manual](#)
- [Chain of Command \(2024 Update Pending\)](#)
- [Crisis Communication Plan](#)

- [Emergency Operations Manual](#)
- [Procedures Manual](#)

V. List of Shared Services and Partnerships

The Park District works diligently to provide the best possible programs, services, and facilities to our community at the least possible cost. One of the many ways the Park District achieves this goal is by partnering with neighboring park districts, school districts, other units of local government within or near the community, the State, non-profit organizations, and for-profit corporations. Below is a comprehensive list of the current partnerships, agreements, and other relationships that assist the Park District's mission of delivering the best possible services at the least possible cost to our community.

1. Membership in SRA

The [Park District](#) is part of the [Northwest Suburban Special Recreation Association \("NWSRA"\)](#). Special recreation associations are a form of intergovernmental cooperation among units of local government that are authorized under the Illinois Constitution, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, the Park District Code, and the Municipal Code. Their formation is rooted in a fundamental belief and recognition that "Recreation is for Everyone." They are shining examples of local government efficiency.

By partnering together, local communities are able to effectively and efficiently deliver more successful program opportunities to community members who have special needs. Furthermore, by participating in the NWSRA, the Park District networks with 16 other local governments to provide many more program opportunities for our community members with special needs and offers a choice between participating in the NWSRA's programs or in programs that the Park District provides.

The Park District and the NWSRA also achieve efficiency by utilizing existing facilities that are owned and operated by the NWSRA's members, including the Park District. Utilizing these existing facilities allows the NWSRA to deliver services to its member communities at a lower cost. Currently the Park District provides the NWSRA access to the following facilities for their program offerings:

- ***Vogelei House and Barn***
- ***Triphahn Center***
- ***Any additional HEParks facility as needed***

The NWSRA also provides the support needed for participants with special needs who choose to register for the Park District programs or inclusive programming. The NWSRA collects information on the registered participant and determines what support is needed for that participant to be successful in this inclusive setting or the Park District program. This could include additional training of the supervisory staff, additional support staff, the use of adaptive equipment, behavior management, and/or other measures that will assist in the successful participation of this individual in the Park District program. Although success may not look the same for everyone, the NWSRA works with the Park District's staff to ensure the best possible results for all the participants in the program. The Park District's cost of providing these services would be much greater without its participation and partnership with the NWSRA.

The Park District is very proud of its ongoing collaboration with the NWSRA. By working cooperatively with other local governments, we are not only better able to collectively serve all citizens within our communities, including persons with disabilities, but we are also able to do so in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

2. Other intergovernmental agreements with other park districts, forest preserve districts, conservation districts, or municipal recreation agencies

- Northwest Special Recreation Association (NWSRA)
 - [Pursuit Program in Hoffman Estates' Vogeley House.](#)
- [City of Elgin and the Streamwood Park District– Freedom Run Dog Park Development](#)
- Forest Preserve District of Cook County
 - [Poplar Creek Trail/Shoe Factory Road Bike Path – 2020 IAPD Intergovernmental Award Recipient](#)

3. Intergovernmental agreements with other units of local government

- Village of Hoffman Estates
 - 5104 Chambers Drive, Hoffman Estates, IL 60010. \$10.00
 - [Services Exchange Agreement](#) – the Park District provides mowing and mulch services as well as sidewalk clearing at school locations near parks. In exchange the Village provides water for the initial filling of the outdoor pool at a pass through rate, waive sewer fees for irrigation and splash pads, waive all permit and building fees, and waiver of first 12 false alarm fees.
 - [Poplar Creek Trail/Shoe Factory Road Bike Path – 2020 IAPD Intergovernmental Award Recipient](#)

- Barrington Area Library Book Pick-up and Drop-off at Willow Recreation Center.
- Palatine Public Library District (700 N. North Ct., Palatine, IL 60067). Annual lease agreement for lease of activity room at HEPD's Willow Recreation Center located at 3600 Lexington Drive, Hoffman Estates, IL 60192. (S:\CONTRACTS)
- Schaumburg Community Consolidated School District 54.
 - STAR Before and After School Program
 - School gymnasiums are used for extra-curricular activities.
 - Park District provides and maintains playgrounds and athletic fields for school usage during their operation and available for public use when not in use by the school.
- School District 15
 - STAR Before and After School Program
 - School gymnasiums are used for extra-curricular activities.
 - Park District provides and maintains playgrounds and athletic fields for school usage during their operation and available for public use when not in use by the school.

4. Intergovernmental agreements with the State of Illinois

- Joint Purchasing Programs

5. Partnerships or agreements with athletic or similar affiliate organizations that operate sports or other leagues

- HEParks is proud to work with S.D.Y. TaeKwon-Do, as well as the Illinois Shotokan Karate Club, to offer our community the best in martial arts training for all ages.
- Travel Baseball – Rage Rampage Softball and Baseball
- Hoffman United Soccer Club has had a long standing relationship with the District. The affiliated organization of Illinois Premier Alliance has been contracted to run the District's internal leagues and instructional programs.

6. Partnerships or other interrelationships with non-profits

- Increased relationship with Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts

7. Partnerships with for-profit organizations

- Chicago Wolves
- Windy City Bulls
- T-Mobile/MetroPCS
- Athletico Physical Therapy at the Club at Prairie Stone

8. Informal cooperation with other units of local government, which save taxpayer dollars by eliminating redundancy

- Inter-village leagues

VI. Other Examples of Efficient Operations

Use of volunteers. One way in which the Park District reduces the burden on taxpayers is through the use of volunteers. Last year, dozens of volunteers (including the Board of Commissioners and the Friends of HEParks Foundation) volunteered hundreds of hours of service to the Park District.

Youth employment. The Park District is a major employer of youth in the community. Last year, the Park District employed over 100 youth. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment serves as a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

Joint purchasing (if not listed above). The Park District participates in joint purchasing cooperatives pursuant to the Governmental Joint Purchasing Act (30 ILCS 525/0.01 *et seq.*) thereby saving taxpayer dollars through economies of scale. These include equipment and vehicles such as mowers, pickups, and playground equipment.

Friends of HEParks Foundation. Last year, the Foundation raised approximately \$10,000 private donations, which help alleviate the burden on taxpayers. The Foundation also supported the Park District through staff time and facility usage for special events.

Collaboration with other park districts on best practices. Because park districts are not in competition with one another, they are more willing than the private sector to share best practices. These best practices help to avoid unnecessary costs and deliver services more effectively, efficiently, and conveniently.

Reliance on Non-Tax Revenue. Unlike most local governments that rely on a wide range of sales, use, and income taxes, the Park District is not permitted to assess these types of taxes. Additionally, although the Park District is an economic engine for the community and generates much revenue for the state and our community in the form of hotel/motel, sales, and motor fuel taxes, our Park District does not receive any of these revenues. Also, unlike Illinois cities, villages, counties, and school districts that received billions of dollars in direct financial assistance from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), our Park District did not receive any such direct federal aid. Our Park District also does not receive state funding under the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) or General State Aid (GSA) that these same cities, villages, counties, and school districts receive through the State budget.

Instead, the Park District provides all the programs, facilities, and services to the community with a very modest amount of property taxes and from **non-tax sources** such as memberships, program registrations, and other user fees as well as private donations and grants.

VII. Transparency to the Community

The following information about the Park District may be obtained by citizens in the location listed. Specifically, the Park District has a FOIA & Transparency Center Website page that houses a very extensive list of information and data for everyone.

Document

- [Tax Levy Ordinances & Extension](#)
- [Budget & Appropriation Ordinances 2009-2023](#)
- [Board & Committee Agendas & Packets 2009-2023](#)
- [Annual audits](#)
- [Annual Treasurers Reports 2009-2023](#)
- [Popular Financial Report](#)
- [TIFs](#)
- [Economic Development Area](#)
- [Check Registers](#)
- [Expenditures](#)
- [Anti Bullying Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Prevailing Wage](#)
- [Disclosure 5 ILCS 120/7.23](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Comprehensive Master Plan 2020-2024](#)

The Park District offers residents many opportunities to provide feedback. These include:

- The board of commissioners meets once a month. Residents may provide public comment at every meeting.
- The Park District's annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance is available in tentative form at least 30 days prior to its adoption at an open meeting of the Park District board. Additionally, at least one public hearing is held prior to final action, and notice of the hearing is published in the newspaper at least one week prior to the hearing.
- The Park District's annual property tax levy is approved at an open meeting of the Park District board in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The Park District follows all public notice and hearing requirements under the Truth in Taxation Law prior to the adoption of this annual tax levy. For additional information about property taxes, please contact the Finance Department.
- Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at 847-885-7500 or email at <https://www.heparks.org/contact-us/>. The website also has a Staff Directory page ([click here](#)) with additional contact information.
- The Park District utilizes "standing committees" and promotes community representation.
 - Currently, the Park District has the following standing committees; (1) Executive Director Review Committee; (2) Buildings and Grounds Committee; (3) Administration and Finance Committee; (4) Recreation and Facilities Committee.
 - Standing Committees are comprised of up to five residents (community representatives) and two Park Commissioners appointed by the Board annually. District staff submit monthly reports and recommendations for purchases to the Standing Committees on a monthly basis. Once each report is received, reviewed, and subsequently approved by the Committee, the Committee then makes its recommendation to the full Board during the monthly Board meeting. Community Representatives do not vote as members of the full park board. [Community Representative Questionnaire](#)
- For every park renovation, the surrounding homes are requested to provide feedback regarding the features and changes they would most like to see.
- Comprehensive Park District Plans included a statistically accurate community-wide survey conducted by a third party. Additionally, a special committee is formed to solicit the views and opinions of interested community members.

VIII. District Awards and Recognition

The District's achievements have been recognized in numerous ways.

- **National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park & Recreation Management – 2009, 2023**
National Gold Medal Finalist – 1989, 1990, 1991, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2022, 2023
 - The Gold Medal Award is the highest national award that a parks and recreation agency can receive, given by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA), in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). With this honor, the Hoffman Estates Park District has demonstrated itself as the best parks and recreation agency in the country for a community with a population between 35,001 and 75,000.
 - The most prestigious award of its kind, the Gold Medal Award honors communities throughout the United States that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition.
- **NPR's Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies 2013-2017, 2018-2022, 2023-2027**
 - CAPRA accreditation is the only national accreditation for park and recreation agencies and is a measure of an agency's overall quality of operation, management and service to the community. This mark of distinction indicates that an agency has met rigorous standards related to the management and administration of lands, facilities, resources, programs, safety and services. What's more, HEParks is one of few park districts to achieve a score of 100% in all of the category standards and the first to submit all required documents completely electronically.
 - As part of the accreditation process, HEParks had to demonstrate compliance with 155 recognized standards and document all policies and procedures. Often, the process helps identify efficiencies and heighten areas of accountability, all of which translate into higher quality service and operation to benefit the community.
- **Illinois Distinguished Park & Recreation Agency Award 2000-2005, 2006-2011, 2011-2016, 2017-2022, and 2022-2028**
 - This accreditation is awarded to Park Districts by the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Parks & Recreation Association. It is granted to those that work toward improving the quality of life for Illinois residents and to recognize

those agencies that provide exceptional Park and Recreation services to their community through a voluntary, comprehensive, professional accreditation process.

- **GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022**
 - The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the U.S. and Canada has awarded the Hoffman Estates Park District (HE Parks) with a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The certificate is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting and represents a significant achievement by the HEParks and its management. In addition, an Award of Financial Reporting Achievement was granted to Craig Talsma, deputy director/director of finance, as the person primarily responsible for preparing the award-winning Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report recipients are determined by an impartial panel of GFOA representatives that selects organizations that meet the high standards of the program and demonstrate a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate their financial stories. GFOA is a nonprofit professional association located in Chicago and Washington D.C. that serves 17,500 government finance professionals.
- **Park District Risk Management Agency – Loss Control Program, Excellence Level A 2010-2021**
 - To achieve the PDRMA Accreditation, HEParks had a thorough review by PDRMA's Risk Management Consultants to evaluate, develop, maintain, and enhance risk-management best practices. The review includes a minimum of three visits to the member location over the course of the year.
- **IAPD Best of the Best Award 2023: Intergovernmental Cooperation- HEParks with NWSRA, SLSF, and Friends of HEParks Foundation**
 - HEParks is proud to announce that our collaboration with the Northwest Special Recreation Association (NWSRA), Special Leisure Services Foundation (SLSF), and Friends of HEParks Foundation has earned us the prestigious IAPD Best of the Best Award 2023. This recognition highlights our outstanding partnership's success in transforming the historic Vogeley House into an inclusive haven for adults with disabilities in Hoffman Estates and neighboring communities. Through meticulous renovations and innovative programs like the PURSUIT Program, we've maximized taxpayer dollars while delivering profound community benefits. This achievement exemplifies the power of collaboration, dedication, and

accessibility, demonstrating the positive impact when government agencies and community organizations unite for a common goal.

- **IAPD Best of the Best Award 2023: Outstanding Citizen Volunteer of the Year**
 - Bill and Linda Graba, champions of pickleball in Hoffman Estates, are the proud recipients of the 2023 Outstanding Citizen Volunteer of the Year Award by the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), nominated by HEParks for their exceptional contributions. Since 2012, the Grabas have been pivotal in the transformation of pickleball in the community, starting with their visionary proposal for permanent courts at Fabbrini Park. Their efforts led to the development of twelve state-of-the-art pickleball courts, now a hub for both professional and recreational players. Beyond infrastructure, the Grabas fostered a vibrant pickleball community, organizing morning groups for senior players, coordinating social events, and initiating community-centric activities like blood drives. Their dedication extended to ensuring year-round play and contributing significantly to the Six County Senior Games Pickleball Events, further solidifying their impact. Bill and Linda's tireless dedication to the sport and the community, marked by significant contributions like the donation for a storage bin at Fabbrini Park, exemplifies the true spirit of community service, making them the quintessential choice for this prestigious award.
- **IAPD Partnership Award 2021 – HEParks & Cabela's, Hoffman Estates**
 - Cabela's, Hoffman Estates helped HEParks "hook our residents" on fishing by donating more than 120 gently used rods and reels. These donations enabled HEParks to remove most expenses associated with our fishing programs, as we loaned poles to every enrolled student in our fishing classes and derbies. Cabela's, and its parent company Bass Pro Shops, supports a nationwide movement dedicated to encouraging families to put down digital devices and head outside.
- **IAPD Intergovernmental Cooperation Award 2020 – HEParks, Village of Hoffman Estates, and Forest Preserves of Cook County**
 - Paving the way for residents to maintain their health and safety through intergovernmental cooperation. HEParks is proud to be recognized along with the Village of Hoffman Estates, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County for their work in creating a connection path linking east and west Hoffman Estates. This path is part of a Regional Priority Corridor running from Elgin to Evanston providing safe transportation trails for walkers and bikers to traverse Chicagoland for recreation, school, and work.

- ***IAPD Best Friends of Illinois Parks 2018***
 - HEParks is proud to congratulate its partner AMITA Health in winning the “Best Friend of Illinois Parks” award in the Large Business category from the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD). The honor is awarded to a business or corporation that has demonstrated exemplary support to a local park district, forest preserve, conservation, recreation or special recreation agency. Awards are given for three subcategories, small (fewer than 100 employees), mid-sized (100 to 500 employees) and large business (more than 500 employees).
 - The park district nominated AMITA Health as the organization has been a generous contributor to HEParks for the past nine years.
- **Arts in the Park 2017**
 - The Helen Doria Arts in the Park Award is granted by the Illinois Art Alliance to park districts in Illinois that promote the arts in their communities. HE Parks won the award in part due to its joint partnership with the Hoffman Estates Arts Commission and the Village of Hoffman Estates, in which we offer the Summer Sounds on the Green and Friday Fun in the Park entertainment series.
- **Best Green Practices 2017**
 - Awarded by the IAPD to park districts that have taken the initiative to incorporate and encourage environmentally friendly business practices and policies.
- **Commissioner and Staff Awards**
 - IAPD Master Level Board Member: Robert Kaplan, Pat McGinn, Keith Evans, Pat Kinnane, Raj Chhatwani; IAPD Distinctive Level Board Member: Linda Dressler, Marc A. Friedman
- **Illinois Sports Turf Association – Field of the Year – Third Place 2020**
 - HEParks was awarded third place in this state-wide award given to a sports turf facility that is managed with a high degree of excellence. The Park Grounds department did an outstanding job keeping the baseball and softball fields in excellent condition on a low-maintenance program while the fields were not in use early in the year, preparing them for full use once sports began again.
- **Hoffman Estates Chamber of Commerce Public Sector of the Year, 2013, 2015 & 2018**
 - The park district won the distinction of Public Sector of the year in 2013 and 2015 from the [HE Chamber of Commerce](#). The award is determined by a vote of chamber members.

- **Starguard Aquatics Institute 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022**
 - Seascape received the 4-Star Quality Award from Starguard Aquatics Institute. This Recognition is given to facilities exhibiting excellence in safety and lifeguard professionalism.
- **Best of The Knot 2012-2019**
- **The Knot Best of Weddings Hall of Fame**
- **Village of Hoffman Estates Proclamation – July Parks & Recreation Month – 2015, 2017, 2019**
- **Village of Hoffman Estates Proclamation – National Kids to Parks Day – May 2019, 2020, 2021**
- **Village of Hoffman Estates Proclamation – Craig Talsma Day – June 28, 2022**

IX. Benefits and Services

The Park District serves the entire community from the youngest child to the oldest adult and all ages in between. It does so in a variety of ways. The Hoffman Estates Park District was created by a voter-approved referendum in 1964 and celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2013. The referendum established the District for the sole purpose of providing park and recreation services for the community residents. A seven-member board of commissioners governs the District that the District's residents publicly elect on staggered four-year terms. The Board of Commissioners then elects the officers for President, Vice President, and Treasurer among themselves. The District operates to fulfill its mission of providing first-class parks, programs, facilities, and services for our residents and guests in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner.

Primarily contiguous with the Village of Hoffman Estates, a home rule municipality incorporated in 1959, the District includes three main areas due to the division by major highways. These areas are the north, south, and west regions of Hoffman Estates located within Cook County. The District serves a population of 52,530 and currently has 80 parks totaling over 930 acres. The District had 23,553 participants in our recreational programs in 2022. Major programming areas include early childhood, youth and adult athletics, dance, gymnastics, karate, and many other programs based heavily upon our operational pillars of fitness, environmental stewardship, and social equity. In addition to the parks and programs, the District has the following major facilities:

1. Facilities

In addition to the parks and programs, the District has the following major facilities:

- **Triphahn Center (TC)** is the home of the District's administrative offices and is the central recreation point for District activities. Located on the south side of Hoffman Estates, it houses a full-size gymnasium, fitness center, and locker rooms with 469 members at the end of 2022. Preschool and early learning center activity rooms, a dance room, multi-purpose areas, and the District's "50+ Club". This facility is also the practice facility for the Chicago Wolves. Because of this partnership, the current facility was expanded, and two professional-sized ice rinks were added. In 2020, the facility became the home rink for the Chicago Wolves' home games. This facility recorded an annual attendance of 124,411 patrons.
- **Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club (BPC)** is a 150-acre 18-hole par 70 golf course. The clubhouse also serves as a full restaurant and meeting facility, including banquet accommodations for 250+ guests. A recent award-winning renovation to the course not only remodeled and revamped the exciting layout of the golf course but also added a beautiful outside gazebo and event area. This space is a perfect wedding spot for our award-winning wedding operation (winner of the "Best of the Knot" for the last nine years). In 2018, the large banquet room was remodeled, providing a fresh contemporary look. In 2022, the course recorded 29,154 rounds. In 2020, the course enhanced a portion of the outdoor range by adding a driving range enclosure powered by Top Tracer technology. This addition allows extended seasonal play and attracts all skill sets.
- **Seascape Family Aquatic Center** is located adjacent to the Bridges of Poplar Creek. It includes a large outdoor zero-depth pool with body and raft water slides, a bathhouse with locker rooms, an event area, volleyball courts, and a concession stand. Seascape is open from late May to mid-August. In 2018, the Sand Filters at Seascape were wholly replaced, improving water clarity and circulation. Annual passes for individuals or families are sold here as well as a daily admission option. The 2022 season had 1,645 annual pass members and 20,521 daily admissions.
- **The Club at Prairie Stone** (formerly known as Prairie Stone Sports & Wellness Center), located on the west side of Hoffman Estates, is a 100,000 square foot sports and health facility. It includes three gymnasiums, a High Intensity Interval Training space, an indoor zero-depth pool and lap pool, public and member locker rooms, a running track, and aerobic and group fitness rooms. Spa services, massages, and childcare are also available. Monthly membership dues generate the most revenue for the facility, with 2,418 members at the end of 2022. There were 165,121 visits in 2022. As a part of our commitment to maintaining state-of-the-art facilities, the Club underwent renovation in 2020 to include a new functional fitness and strength area.
- **Willow Recreation Center** is a smaller recreational facility than Triphahn Center located on the north side of Hoffman Estates. It houses a gymnasium, a small fitness center with 166 members at the end of 2022, locker rooms, racquetball

courts, preschool, and programming rooms. It is also the location of our outdoor skate park and Bo's Run, one of the District's two dog parks (the other dog park, Freedom Run, is located on the west side of Hoffman Estates). The District had 590 annual dog park members at the end of 2022. The Palatine Public Library leases approximately 1,200 sq. ft. within this facility to provide a branch library to our mutual residents. This facility recorded an annual attendance of 42,243 patrons.

- **Vogelei Park, House & Barn** is a 10-acre park located at the southeastern entry point to Hoffman Estates. A historic house and barn are found here, both of which are used for rentals. The barn and large park area are also excellent spots for many of our summer camps and special events. This historic site housed the District's first administrative offices after it was purchased in 1969. The park area was completely revamped, and the historic house was refurbished as part of a significant renovation in 2010. Construction began in 2021 to make the house completely accessible. Northwest Special Recreation Association (NWSRA) began using the facility for the Pursuit program for individuals with disabilities 21 years and older in 2022. The barn is the primary site for gymnastics and is also used for various summer camps, rentals, and the teen center. In early 2021, a new eSports Zone opened at this location.

2. Programs

The Park District offered the following programs last year. Registration numbers are also provided.

- [Please see Balanced Scorecard for 2023](#) on page 42.

3. Additional Services

The Park District provided the following additional services to the community.

- Community-wide free and low-cost events, including children's activities and concerts.
- Provide staff and monetary support for the Village's 4th Fest.
- Two dog parks
- Mobile Outreach Recreation and Education (MORE) brings fun to the neighborhood. This program travels to areas of disenfranchised citizens using the MORE van to bring recreation directly to the citizens.

4. Other Benefits

While the Park District is a special purpose district, its impact on the community is multi-faceted and far-reaching. For example, the Park District's parks, recreational programming, and other opportunities improve the community's overall physical and mental health and wellness, thereby reducing healthcare costs. Before and after school

and summer programs offer safe, convenient, and affordable childcare options for working families during critical times when school is not in session. These opportunities also help reduce juvenile crime. The Park District's open space and trees help improve air and water quality and mitigate flooding.

X. Recommendations for Increased Accountability and Efficiency

1. Intergovernmental Fees and Charges

One opportunity for efficiency would be the elimination of fees and charges assessed by other units of government. By way of example, below are amounts that other units of local government charge the Park District even though the Park District's taxpayers are also taxpayers of these other units of local government. Such fees and charges, and the bureaucracy accompanying them, inhibit the park district's ability to deliver programs, facilities, and services at the least possible cost.

Other units of local government should recognize that intergovernmental fees often lead to inefficiency in the expenditure of taxpayer dollars through extra bureaucracy and administrative costs. In many cases, the unit of government assessing the fee ultimately benefits from the project or event, meaning it can recoup its costs through the extra sales tax or other revenue that will be generated. Where such fees are absolutely necessary, general-purpose units of government should offset the fee by crediting the park district for all benefits they will receive from a project, event, or property. For example, open space that is protected and maintained by the Park District helps mitigate stormwater management costs, so assessing stormwater management fees on the Park District not only leads to inefficiency but is also shortsighted.

Governmental units should be discouraged or prohibited from charging more than their out-of-pocket costs associated with the activities covered by a fee assessed to another local government unit with the same taxpayers. Put another way, one unit of local government should not profit by taxing another. Eliminating local permit fees is a way to reduce administrative costs without impacting overall public revenue. Local government best serves the people when it cooperates and works together. Some communities recognize this and do not charge fees to other units. All communities should be encouraged to follow that model to receive the best results for local taxpayers and to promote governmental efficiency.

2. Inefficiency of Other Governments

The Park District is also negatively impacted by the inefficiency of the state and other units of local government.

- In FY2023, the Park District experienced delays in Cook County property tax distributions. Specifically, per Cook County, property tax bills are expected to be available online by November 1, 2023, with a due date of December 1, 2023.

This delay will be the third in a row, continuing a trend that began with delayed second installment tax year 2021 bills and delayed first installment tax year 2022 bills.

- Although the Park District is financially well prepared to overcome the current delays in property tax distributions, the potential for further and more substantial delays in property tax distributions by the county could eventually have a negative impact.

3. Unfunded Mandates

Unfunded state mandates are another cost driver. While the Park District recognizes that there are benefits to some of these mandates, modifications could help alleviate some of the burden to the park district.

- a) Non-resident FOIA Requests.** Last year, the park district spent hundreds of hours and tens of thousands of dollars in staff time and legal fees to fulfill FOIA requests. Often, the individuals/businesses submitting the FOIA requests are from outside the park district boundaries, and they appear to be serving a specific agenda rather than assuring better local government.

Under current law, resident taxpayers end up footing the bill for these non-resident or commercial requests. In order to help alleviate the burden for these non-resident requests, the law could be amended to: (1) add a requirement that non-residents identify/explain the purpose of the request for information; (2) add a time limit on how far back a non-resident can request information; (3) staff time and costs could be included in the amount that is reimbursable for non-resident and commercial requests; (4) move back the deadline for non-resident requests 10 business days so that the park district does not have to delay services to its residents in order to comply with a non-resident request.

Sunshine laws are supposed to protect taxpayers by allowing them to shed light on any issue that is not exempt from FOIA. However, local government can be burdened by having to drop everything to rearrange priorities to meet FOIA deadlines, particularly if it has limited resources. Since residents ultimately bear the expense of complying with FOIA, treating resident and non-resident requests differently would be justified.

- b) Criminal Background Checks.** All park districts are statutorily required to conduct criminal background checks on all employees pursuant to Section 8-23 of the Park District Code. The background checks must be done through the Illinois State Police (ISP). Annually, the Park District spends thousands for criminal background checks. The Park District does not recommend eliminating this mandate because it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of children and other park district patrons. However, the State should explore ways in which it could improve the current system and make it less costly for park districts to comply with the law.

The mandate also raises the fundamental question of why one layer of government is forced to charge its taxpayers to comply with a State mandate when the State determined to impose it. Put another way, if the State has determined that criminal background checks are necessary for public safety, the State should assist with compliance.

The Park District recommends studying whether a more efficient background check process can be implemented through the ISP to reduce the time and expense it takes for background checks. Another suggestion is that ISP waive the fee for checks on minors or all fees for name checks. If a “hit” comes from a name check, the fee could be charged for the more costly fingerprint check. Since it is a state mandate, perhaps the fee structure for park districts should also be reviewed to determine whether the fee being charged exceeds the actual cost of doing the check and, if so, perhaps the ISP could consider reducing its cost to local governments.

c) Prevailing Wage. One way to reduce the burden on local government staff is to limit the prevailing wage requirement to larger capital contracts. This would free up tracking of the paperwork on small repairs and projects. One reason for creating a threshold requirement is the administrative burden's cost relative to the actual project's cost. For example, eliminating the prevailing wage on smaller projects, e.g., those less than \$50,000, will result in more local bids and decrease the overall cost for these smaller public works projects.

d) Newspaper Publication. The newspaper is no longer the most effective way to provide notice. Websites are cheaper and reach more people. Permitting the park district to post the information on its website in lieu of newspaper publications would reduce costs.

4. Opportunities for Increased Transparency

As illustrated above, the Park District is very transparent in its operations. The following are opportunities for increased transparency:

- Identify items that are not posted to the Park District website and implement staff guidelines to post.

5. Opportunities for Other Intergovernmental Agreements

- The Park District is always open to additional intergovernmental agreements with all local, county, state, and federal agencies.

6. Opportunities for Savings such as Energy Efficiency Projects, Joint Purchasing, Grants

- As technologies change creating opportunities for resource allocation efficiencies and cost savings (eg. ComEd LED, etc.) the Park District will work with all stakeholders to research and analyze the potential for savings.

- Grants are always an efficient funding option to explore for smaller and larger capital projects alike. Although grants are not a dependable funding source for projects, they help to relieve financial burdens that would otherwise be transferred to our taxpayers. The Park District will continue to explore grant opportunities.
 - A great example of the capital savings that grants offer, in [February of 2024](#) the Park District was awarded the State of Illinois Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant in the amount of \$600,000. This grant is to be used towards the needed enhancement of Vogelei Park.

XI.OTHER

Dated: _____ [INSERT DATE FINAL REPORT APPROVED BY EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE]

Signed: _____ [CHAIR'S SIGNATURE]