

**BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

Matthew Mitchell
Mick Morel
Diana Anton
Amanda DePalma-Gable
Shawn Jones



Ridgeville
PARK DISTRICT

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Marlon Rodas

PROGRAM DIRECTOR
Natalie Sallee

**OFFICE MANAGER &
CORPORATE SECRETARY**
Nicole Aleman

TREASURER
Gerry Gibbs

Board of Park Commissioners

Decennial Committee Meeting Agenda

Ridgeville Park District
Thursday, March 14, 2024
6:30 PM

- I. Call to Order & Roll Call
- II. Approval of June 8, November 9, 2023 Minutes
- III. Public Comment
- IV. New Business
 - a. Review, Discussion, and Approval of Draft Report for the County Boards of Cook County
- V. Survey of Residents in Attendance
- VI. Adjournment

DRAFT

Meeting of the Decennial Efficiency Committee of the Ridgeville Park District

June 8, 2023, 6:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Amanda DePalma, Shawn Jones, Matthew Mitchell (President),
Michael (Mick) Morel (Vice President)

Commissioners Absent: Diana Anton

Also Present: Gerald Gibbs (Treasurer), Julie Larson (Minute Taker), Marlon Rodas (Director
of Parks and Recreation)

Citizens: none

President Matthew Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.

Roll Call

Diana Anton: absent

Amanda DePalma: present

Shawn Jones: present

Matthew Mitchell: present

Mick Morel: present

Approval of Minutes: None

Citizen Comments

No comments at this time.

Old Business: None

New Business: Introduction and Purpose

Marlon Roads offered a brief history of the need for an efficiency meeting. The Illinois Governor instituted the requirement and RPD is required by law to comply and meet once every 10 years to discuss efficiency and potential partnerships with other municipalities, government agencies, and etc. The Efficiency Committee will need to meet 3x within 18 months and will then offer a written report with recommendations.

Identification and/or Appointment of Committee Members

Gerry Gibbs and Michael Miro volunteered to be citizen committee members.

Identification of Existing Efficiencies

- **Existing Intergovernmental Agreements**

We currently do not have any contractual arrangements with any organizations at this time. The afterschool program was a contractual agreement with the City of Evanston in recent years, but that is no longer in operation.

Identification of Efficiency Opportunities

- **Opportunities for Intergovernmental Agreements**

Marlon Rodas will research possible IGAs. Connections with Evanston municipalities, school districts, and the Evanston Public Library were all offered as ideas.

Review of RPD Ordinances, Rules, (Policies), Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction, Shared Services

Rodas is currently reviewing all of RPD's rules, policies, and procedures in his new role as Executive Director. Ordinances are also being looked at by the REDI committee. Passing an updated general ordinance in the next year is one of Matthew Mitchell's goals. Gerry Gibbs noted that merging park districts or organizations does not necessarily lessen the amount of staff needed or the amount of money spent. "Efficiency" of equipment could be something that is looked at with the City of Evanston. Shawn Jones offered the idea of buying road salt from the City as a less expensive option since the City buys in bulk.

Determination of Future Meeting Dates

There was a request to meet after summer programming is over. October 12 could be the next meeting and then February 8 could be the final meeting, both at 6:30 pm prior to the monthly board meetings. These dates are tentative at this time.

Adjournment:

Motion #1: Shawn Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Matthew Mitchell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Larson, Minute Taker

DRAFT

Meeting of the Decennial Efficiency Committee of the Ridgeville Park District

November 9, 2023, 6:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Diana Anton, Amanda DePalma, Matthew Mitchell (President)

Commissioners Absent: Shawn Jones, Michael (Mick) Morel (Vice President)

Also Present: Gerald Gibbs (Treasurer), Julie Larson (Minute Taker), Marlon Rodas (Director of Parks and Recreation)

Citizens: Michael Miro

President Matthew Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:55 pm.

Roll Call

Commissioners:

Diana Anton: present

Amanda DePalma: present

Shawn Jones: absent

Matthew Mitchell: present

Mick Morel: absent

Citizen Participants:

Gerry Gibbs: present

Michael Miro: present

Approval of June 8, 2023 Minutes

There was no approval at this time.

Public Comment

There were no comments at this time.

New Business

- **Review and Discussion of Draft Report for the County Boards of Cook County**

Marlon Rodas highlighted a packet which will be completed by staff and commissioners to include information on partnerships; when completed, it will be mailed to the indicated address for review. The state of Illinois mandates all government entities with tax dollars involved to complete this paperwork to increase efficiency..

- **Appointment of New Member**

Michael Miro was previously appointed and was in attendance at tonight's meeting.

Schedule of Next Meeting Dates

The next decennial meetings were scheduled to occur 30 minutes prior to the February and March board meetings of the Ridgeville Board of Commissioners on Thursday, February 8 and Thursday, March 14, both at 6:30 pm.

Adjournment:

Motion #1: Matthew Mitchell moved to adjourn the meeting. Amanda DePalma seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Larson, Minute Taker

EFFICIENCY REPORT FOR
RIDGEVILLE PARK DISTRICT



I. PURPOSE

The Ridgeville Park District ("Park District") formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on the 8th of June 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:

Matthew Mitchell, Board President/Commissioner

Mick Morel, Board Vice President/Commissioner

Diana Anton, Commissioner

Amanda DePalma, Commissioner

Shawn Jones, Commissioner

Gerald Gibbs, Resident Member

Michael Miro, Resident Member

Marlon Rodas, Executive Director

III. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee met as follows:

| 2023 Meeting Date | Meeting Time and Place |
|-------------------|---|
| June 8, 2023 | 6:30 pm at the Ridgeville Community House |
| November 9, 2023 | 6:30 pm at the Ridgeville Community House |
| March 14, 2024 | 6:30 pm at the Ridgeville Community House |

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, AND JURISDICTION

The Park District was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of the Park District in 1939. 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 five 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 and allows those elected representatives to remain focused solely on those facilities, policies, and services. This is contrasted with general purpose governments where elected representatives are responsible for broad oversight on a wide range of issues. The 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:** With the Park District being a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for park district purposes. This assurance is contrasted 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 that are 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 is 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 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 the resident's overall property tax bill. In fact, despite its limited funding options, the Park District share is less than 2% of the local tax bill.

As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the management of day-to-day operations, the Park District has also adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures:

- Board Policies and Procedures Manual
- Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual
- General Conduct Ordinances
- Personnel Policies/Employee Handbook
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Training
- Social Media Policy
- State of Illinois Background Checks
- Scholarship Policy
- Racial Equity Policy and Charter
- Investment Policy
- Recreation Policy
- Gift Policy
- Debt Disclosure Ordinance
- Rental/BBQ Policy
- Efficiency Committee

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 neighborhood 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. Other intergovernmental agreements with other park districts, park district agencies, or municipal recreation agencies:**
 - Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund
 - Illinois Parks and Recreation Association
 - Illinois Association of Park Districts
 - Illinois Parks Association and Risk Services
- 2. Intergovernmental agreements with other units of local government:**
 - Shared Police Protection with the City of Evanston
 - Shared Fire Fighting Service with the City of Evanston
- 3. Partnerships or agreements with athletic or similar affiliate organizations that operate sports or other leagues:**
 - American Youth Soccer Organization
 - SWHET Sports
 - Evanston Baseball and Softball Association
- 4. Partnerships or other interrelationships with non-profits**
 - The Ridgeville Foundation
 - Avalon Theater Club
 - Laughingstock Theater
- 5. Partnerships with for profit organizations:**
 - Evanston Public Library
 - Language in Action
 - Rhythm Evolution NFP
 - Kazahaya Dojo Modern Self Defense
 - The Imaginary Game
 - Young Rembrants
 - IncrediFlix
 - Play-Well TEKnologies
 - Mudlark Theater Company
 - School of Rock

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 about 100 individuals 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 10 youth. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment serves as a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

The Ridgeville Park Foundation: Last year, the Foundation raised \$2000.00 in private donations, which helped alleviate the burden on taxpayers. The Foundation also supported the Park District by:

- Assisted with monetary assistance to host Concerts on the Ridge.

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

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 CARES Act, ARPA, LGDF, or even GSA, we did not receive federal or state aid. Instead, the Park District provides the of the programs, facilities, and services to the community with a very modest amount of property taxes and from non-tax sources such as programs registrations, rentals, event 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:

| Document | Location Available |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • Annual Tax Levy | Ridgeville Park District Website |
| • Annual budget and appropriation ordinance | Ridgeville Park District Website |
| • Board Meeting agenda and minutes | Ridgeville Park District Website |
| • Comptroller's annual finance report (AFR) | Ridgeville Park District Website |
| • Salary Amounts | Ridgeville Park District Website |

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 the Taxation Law prior to the adoption of this annual tax levy.
- The Park District's decennial committee is currently the only committee that has community representation.
- The Park District took part in an Equity Survey for the community that is currently available by request by emailing or calling Ridgeville Park District.
- Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at 847-869-5640 or email at office@ridgeville.org.

VIII. 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:

1. Facilities

The Park District offered the following facilities to the community last year:

- Ridgeville Park District Community House
- Kamen Park East
- Kamen Park West
- David Wood Field House
- Play Lot
- Reba Park
- Elks Park & Lot
- Kay Lee Tot Lot
- Brummel Park
- Leider Park

2. Programs

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

- Youth Classes
- Youth Sports
- Youth Camps
- Youth After School Programs
- Adult Classes
- Adult Events (21+)
- Garden Classes
- Garden Plot Rentals
- Youth & Family Garden Programs
- Public Concerts
- Public Theater Performances
- Public Dance Performances
- Seasonal/Holiday Events
- Partnership Programs
- Additional Services

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

- Urban Garden

IX. 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 that accompanies them, inhibit the park district's ability to deliver programs, facilities, and services at the least possible cost.

- ISP Background Checks: \$10.00 each.

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 it 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 that is assessed to another unit of local government 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. 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 a park district.

- a. **Non-resident FOIA requests:** Last year, the park district spent an hour in staff time and no legal fees to fulfill FOIA requests. Often the individuals/businesses submitting the FOIA requests are from outside the park district's boundaries, and they appear to be serving a specific agenda, rather than assuring better local government.

- i. **Example**

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 the non-resident and commercial requests. (4) Finally, move back the deadline for non-residents 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 local 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). Last year, the park district spent \$280.00 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 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 as to why one layer of government is forced to charge its taxpayers to comply with a state mandate when the State made the determination to impose the mandate. 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 there can be a more efficient background check process implemented through the ISP to reduce the time and expense it takes for background checks. Another suggestion is for the ISP to waive the fee for checks on minors or waive all fees for name checks. If there is a "hit" 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 the 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 cost of the administrative burden relative to the cost of the actual project. For example, eliminating 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 or efficient way to provide notice. Websites are cheaper and reach a wider audience. Permitting the park district to post the information on its website and social media, in lieu of newspaper publications would reduce costs.

3. Opportunities for Increased Transparency:

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

- Adding an email for comments and concerns and a way to submit them directly from our website.



Marlon Rodas
Executive Director

