Call to Order:
President Tiesenga called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Commissioners Present: Cathy Cagle, Jason Heisler, Richard Hickey, Michael Jacobson, Karen Johnson, Keith Nisenson, Frederick Tiesenga

Legal Counsel: Eric Anderson, Staub Anderson LLC

Staff: Jason Herbster, Executive Director, Erik Jakubowski, Superintendent of Park Services, Amy Olson Manager of Park Planning and Development/ADA Coordinator, Tina Becke, Superintendent of Business Services, Kurt Reckamp, Superintendent of Recreation Programs and Facility Services, Jenny Leech, Superintendent of Marketing and Communication Services, Anne Sandor, Recording Secretary

Citizens: John Martin, Lynn Doeherty, Brad Fennessy, Bruce Mazurkiewicz, Ann Viger, Shawn Zimmerman, Jate Walsh, Jamie Petersen, Michelle Thmios, Carolyn Schofield, Tom Burney, David Bradburn, Mandy Montford, Kim Hankins, Pat Dieckhoff, Sara Mylander, Debbie Gallagher,

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of the Agenda:
Commissioner Cagle moved to approve the agenda, as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Jacobson. All were in favor.

Matters from the Public:
Commissioner Tiesenga reminded speakers that the Board is respectfully listening to all comments, and each speaker is limited to three minutes. He noted that when time expires, he will ask speakers to conclude their remarks and requested that no offense be taken at this time limit. Commissioner Tiesenga also reminded speakers of the Board's policy regarding personal attacks.

John Martin commented on what he perceived as inconsistent application of Robert's Rules of Order. He cited a statement by Fred Tiesenga that his habit of not voting per Roberts Rules of Order is okay and he only votes to break a tie. But when voting on meeting security, the vote was 4-2 when he voted no. Mr. Martin stated that his inconsistency could negatively affect public trust.) John Martin was declared out of order by President Tiesenga and directed to stop talking and sit down

Lynn Doherty expressed concern over the Park District's legal counsel, noting the attorney's hourly rate and the lack of a formal RFP when the previous counsel was replaced in May 2025. She requested the Board consider issuing an RFP for transparency and cost efficiency and thanked the Board for not using metal detectors at the meeting.

Brad Fennessy welcomed the meeting proceeded without extra security, viewing it as a step toward rebuilding community trust. He expressed concerns about President Tiesenga's

interactions with commissioners, particularly Commissioner Cagle, and the dismissal of resident input. He emphasized that speaking up is a citizen's right and responsibility, urged the Board to act with transparency and accountability, and stated that residents will continue attending meetings until meaningful change occurs.

Bruce Mazurkiewicz expressed concern regarding a board member's conduct during meetings, alleging repeated disrespectful and disruptive behavior, including comments directed toward women on the board and in the audience. He stated that such conduct undermines effective leadership and public trust, noted that meeting behavior is documented on video, and urged improved professionalism and accountability for the remainder of the term. Bruce Mazurkiewicz was declared out of order by President Tiesenga and directed to sit down and his mike was cut.

Shawn Zimmerman raised concerns about transparency and consistency in Board operations, specifically regarding the Board President's role in voting. He noted that past practice involved the President voting on agenda items, which he believed improved accountability, and expressed concern that the current tie-breaking-only voting practice, while permitted under Robert's Rules of Order, reduces transparency. He requested that the President resume voting on agenda items or that the Board consider a change in the presidency.

Ms. Michelle Thimios expressed that while she believes elected office should be respected, respect must be earned rather than demanded. She referenced passages from a book published by Fred Tiesenga. Mr. Tiesenga interrupted, stating the book had already been discussed and that her comments were not pertinent to the meeting, noting she was out of order. She did not finish her comments and sat down. Michelle Thimios was declared out of order by President Tiesenga and directed to sit down.

Caroline Schofield expressed concern about the vetting process for the district's attorney appointment. She noted that the candidate, Eric Anderson, appeared to lack experience representing park districts, citing FOIA responses from Pleasant Dale Park District and the Chicago Park District indicating no records of his prior work. She also noted that an interview process was not conducted and that other qualified firms and attorneys were not invited to submit qualifications. Ms. Schofield encouraged the Park Board to implement a transparent and open RFQ process for this position, while acknowledging recent efforts to increase transparency and community engagement, and thanked the board for their service.

Tom Burney objected to being limited to three minutes of speaking time and disputed the Board's handling of his request for an extension. He criticized the Board's decision-making process regarding the Request for Qualifications and the prior appointment of Anderson, alleging the decision was predetermined, lacked transparency, and harmed the Board's credibility. He further argued that the $425 hourly rate was excessive compared to other municipal attorneys and urged the Board to issue a formal Request for Proposals to evaluate multiple qualified firms and restore public trust.

David Bradburn, a Crystal Lake resident, spoke about the role of citizens in holding the Board accountable, emphasizing oversight through attending meetings, observing, documenting, and publicly responding. He criticized the Board for failing to uphold its principles of customer experience, integrity, public engagement, stewardship, and teamwork, citing poor customer service, misuse of public funds, incomplete FOIA responses, conflicts of interest, lack of recusal, and reliance on a high-priced attorney.

Mandy Montford urged the Board to reconsider the removal of $5,000 from the 2026 budget for 30 dry storage slips at West Beach, noting they sell out every year, reduce congestion at boat launches, and allow quiet early-morning recreation. Ms. Montford also criticized the removal of the Park District's D.E.I. policy calling it a symbolic affirmation of inclusion that supports individuals with disabilities and special needs, provides community assurance that all are welcome, and allows staff training on inclusive programming, and asked the Board to revisit both the dry storage decision and the DEI policy.

Unfinished Business: None
Consent Agenda:
Commissioner Nisenson moved to approve the following consent agenda item, as presented.

A. Approval: The Voucher Expenses for the month ending, December 31, 2025, in the amount of $2,987,247.35.
B. Approval: The Interim Voucher Expenses for the month ending, January 31, 2026, in the amount of $577,059.88.
C. Accept: The Treasurer's Report for the month ending, December 31, 2025, in the amount of $15,222,122.43.
D. Approval: Regular Meeting Minutes 12.15.25
E. Accept: The 2025 Annual Audit

Seconded by Commissioner Hickey .
Roll Call: Ayes: 7 (Cagle, Heisler, Hickey, Jacobson, Johnson, Nisenson, Tiesenga) Nays: 0

Items Removed from Consent Agenda: None.
Agenda Items:

A. Ordinance 25.26.10 Tax Abatement Series 2022B, Ordinance 25.26.11Tax Abatement Series2024A, and Ordinance 25.26.12 Tax Abatement Series 2024B

Commissioner Hickey moved to approve Ordinance 25.26.10 Tax Abatement Series 2022B, Ordinance 25.26.11 Tax Abatement Series2024A, and Ordinance 25.26.12 Tax Abatement Series 2024B: Ordinances abating taxes for the Crystal Lake Park District, McHenry County, Illinois for the 2025 levy year for Alternate Revenue Source Bonds.
Seconded by Commissioner Nisenson.

Executive Director Herbster noted that the tax abatement is an annual housekeeping measure, with all taxes paid and bond issuances collected, supported by other departmental revenue streams. Attorney Anderson added that these abatements do not reduce levied taxes but help ensure a stable tax base and a better return on investment.

Roll Call:
Ayes: 6 (Heisler, Hickey, Jacobson, Johnson, Nisenson, Cagle) Present: 1 (Tiesenga)

B. Resolution 25.26.02, Fund Balance Transfer

Commissioner Johnson moved to approve Resolution 25.26.02, a Resolution transferring $800,000 from the Corporate Fund, $100,000 from the Lippold Family Golf Fund,
$60,000 from the Racket Club to the Capital Projects Fund.
Seconded by Commission Heisler.

Executive Director Herbster explained that this is an annual process completed after the audit. Funding for capital improvements comes from two sources: the Park District surplus fund balance (amounts above the required minimum per the fund balance policy) and debt issuance. This

process transfers funds from the Corporate Fund, Lippold Family Golf Fund, and Racket Club Fund into the Capital Projects Fund to continue capital projects across the District.

Roll Call:
Ayes: 6 (Hickey, Jacobson, Johnson, Nisenson, Cagle, Heisler) Present: 1 (Tiesenga)

C. Quarterly Goal Update

Executive Director Herbster noted that the annual goals update provided to the Board was for informational purpose.

D. Maintenance Facility Adaptive Re-Use Remodel Phase I

Commissioner Jacobson moved to approve engaging Williams Architects for basic architect services in an amount not to exceed $421,800, and to approve Phase I at an estimated cost of $4,300,000, with a not-to-exceed Phase 1 project budget of $5,000,000.
Seconded by Commissioner Nisenson.

Executive Director Herbster noted that staff is requesting board approval to engage Williams Architects for Phase I of the maintenance garage improvements, with fees not to exceed $421,800. Commissioner Hickey and Commissioner Nisenson questioned the project timeline and FF&E, and Executive Director Herbster explained bidding would begin in late March or early April, with construction expected in six to eight months. The architect's fee of 9.8% is standard, and construction management is included in the budget, requiring no additional board approval.

Roll Call: Ayes: 6 (Jacobson, Johnson, Nisenson, Cagle, Heisler, Hickey,) Present: 1 (Tiesenga)

Request for Qualifications - Legal Services

Commissioner Cagle moved for the Board to consider the request for qualification process for legal counsel.
Seconded by Commissioner Jacobson.

Commissioner Cagle requested the board issue an RFQ to ensure that the board identifies the best qualified legal representation through the process of due diligence which was not done when hiring legal representation in May 2025. Cagle stated that this wasn't a commentary on Staub Anderson's performance or pricing but a responsibility that the board needed to do to be fair and transparent. Commissioners Hickey and Nisenson had no issues with Attorney Eric Anderson. Commissioner Heisler suggested pushing out the discussion for 6 more months, while Commissioners Johnson and Jacobson agreed to proceed with the RFQ process. Attorney Anderson addressed the public comments regarding his experience, prior representation, and costs, highlighting his firm's efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Commissioner Tiesenga stated that despite public criticism, the Staub Anderson Law Firm has been approximately $2,500 less expensive than prior counsel over the past six months. He noted that hourly rates do not necessarily reflect total legal costs and that no RFP for legal service has been issued in more than 20 years. He emphasized that the firm has successfully guided the District through a period of significant public scrutiny and legal challenges with no findings of wrongdoing, added that an RFP is not required, and urged the Board to oppose issuing one.

Attorney Anderson stated that he welcomed questions about his experience and clarified that he represented the Pleasant Dale Park District for approximately 15 years, noting that the same individuals may no longer be working at Pleasant Dale and that records may not reflect

work performed that far back. He noted that he has not represented the Chicago Park District as general counsel, explaining that it is represented by its own Corporation Counsel, though he represents the Chicago Planetarium. Anderson stated that his duty of loyalty is to the Board as a whole, that he strives to provide thorough and effective representation, and that he is open to addressing any concerns regarding his work.

Roll Call: Ayes: 3 (Johnson, Cagle, Jacobson) Nays: 4 (Nisenson, Heisler, Hickey, Tiesenga)

Reports to the Board:
Executive Director Herbster

- The Legislative Breakfast will be held on February 27 at 8:00am. Invite emails were sent to the Commissioners.
- Executive Director Herbster explained that the budget binder includes detailed line-item information, staff requests, prior-year accomplishments, and rollover items. He encouraged Board members to review it in advance and offered to meet with Commissioners for clarification. At the meeting, staff will highlight key items, answer questions, and allow the Board to suggest changes. The budget will then be placed on display for 30 days before final approval. Delaying approval could affect the start of spring projects.

Matters from the Board:
Commissioner Cagle stated that she is profoundly disappointed in the results of the board vote on her RFQ motion, and she thought the board had more integrity.

Executive Session:
Commissioner Nisenson moved to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel 2 (c)1at 7:30pm. Seconded by Commissioner Hickey.

Reconvened from Executive Session at 7:44 pm.

No Action Taken.

Adjourn: Commissioner Tiesenga adjourned the meeting at 7:45 pm.

Approve: _____ Attest:_____
President Secretary