

**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
COUNTY OF DUPAGE  
DARIEN PARK DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**March 9, 2026**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Acting President Luanne Spiros called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Darien Park District Community Center, 7301 Fairview, Darien, Illinois.

**ROLL CALL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Upon roll call the following Commissioners were present:

**PRESENT:** Luanne Spiros, Frank Noverini, Cathy Marchese, Steve Shanks

**ABSENT:** Ray Jablonski

**Staff:** Stephanie Gurgone; Executive Director, Matt Henderson: Director of Parks and Facilities, Jordan Rossi; Sportsplex General Manager, Gina Madden; Attorney

**PUBLIC COMMENTS & GUESTS**

There was no one in the audience wishing to present public comment.

**COMMITTEE TOPICS – These topics will all be discussed and presented in a presentation at the meeting – 6:02 p.m.**

- A. Review of 2025-26**
- B. Budget Draft 2026-27-26**
- C. Capital Projects**
- D. Announce Budget Ordinance was put on display on March 5<sup>th</sup>, for public hearing on April 13<sup>th</sup>. Budget will be on agenda for approval on April 13<sup>th</sup>.**

Executive Director Stephanie Gurgone provided a comprehensive overview of the Park District's budget, highlighting debt repayment, capital projects such as Holly Park and Westwood Park, and the challenges posed by rising costs and staffing difficulties.

She reported that the Park District has paid off over \$1 million in debt and is on track to pay off debt by 2028, with annual debt payments around \$1.8 million.

Executive Director Gurgone reported on the Capital Projects and that the budget includes a significant capital project allocation for the Westwood Park project, with \$2.3 million in capital projects planned and \$600,000 of that funded by the State of Illinois. She further reported that operating budgets for both the Park District and Sportsplex have seen slight increases, with revenue and expenses rising by about 2-3% and program revenues remaining steady.

Executive Director Gurgone discussed staffing and wage challenges and the impact of the minimum wage increase to \$15.00 in January 2025, which compressed staff wages and made it difficult to find qualified full-time and seasonal staff. She reported on the fixed expense increases, particularly in utilities such as electric, gas, and garbage, which have nearly doubled over the past 20 years.

Executive Director Gurgone reported on the property tax rates and revenue comparisons showing historical and comparative data on property tax rates and revenues, explaining how Darien's rates and tax cap implementation affect funding, and contrasted the Park District's situation with neighboring districts. She reported on the tax cap and that the 1991 tax cap froze rates, limiting annual increases to the lesser of CPI or 5%, which has kept Darien's rates lower than surrounding areas.

Executive Director Gurgone reported that unlike other districts, Darien does not have separate levy funds for IMRF or Social Security, instead funding these from regular operating budgets, which affects available resources. She highlighted that Sportsplex generates all its revenue from non-property tax sources, resulting in a lower percentage of total revenues coming from property taxes for the Park District.

Executive Director Gurgone and General Manager Jordan Rossi discussed Sportsplex's financial performance, debt service, staffing efficiency, and the facility's unique role in covering its own expenses, with additional insights into program revenues and community uses. Executive Director Gurgone reported that Sportsplex pays the Park District \$60,000 annually for staffing costs, and its debt payments are just over \$1 million, with no property tax dollars used for its operations and that the majority of Sportsplex's program revenue comes from ice contracts, totaling \$1.7 million out of \$2.9 million, while utility costs have nearly doubled over the past two decades.

Executive Director Gurgone reported on the facility usage and community programs stating that Sportsplex is used by non-residents and hosts various community programs, including SEASPAR Eagles, senior walking, Lions Club events, summer camp field trips, and public open times. She reported that Sportsplex operates with only four full-time employees managing a \$3 million facility, demonstrating high efficiency.

Executive Director Gurgone reported that the IMRF rate increased to 13.25%, its calculation, and how employee contributions and investment earnings affect the Park District's funding obligations.

Executive Director Gurgone outlined the special events budget for the coming year, including the grand opening at Westwood Park in spring 2027, revised winter holiday events, and summer concerts, with timing dependent on weather and facility completion.

Executive Director Gurgone reviewed the timeline for budget approval, noting that the draft and appropriations ordinance are included in the packet, with public display on March 5th and final approval scheduled for April 13th.

PUBLIC COMMENT – 6:26 p.m.

There was no one in the audience wishing to present public comment.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Shanks moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Marchese that the meeting be adjourned.

Upon roll call vote the Motion was thereby carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.



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Ray Jablonski, President  
Darien Park District



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Frank Noverini, Secretary  
Darien Park District