I. Call to Order

Finance Committee Chair Cullick called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm in the Kendall County Board Room.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Davidson, Gryder, Koukol, Wherli, and Cullick all were present.

III. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Cullick informed the committee that item VIII – Competitive Analysis of Wedding and Special Event Venues, would be considered first following review of the claims list. Commissioner Gryder made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Koukol. Aye, all. Opposed, none.

IV. Citizens to be Heard

No public comments were offered.

V. Approval of a Motion to Forward Claims for Approval in an Amount Not-to-Exceed $13,817.18.

Commissioner Gryder made a motion to forward claims for approval in the amount of $13,817.18 for Commission approval. Seconded by Commissioner Koukol.

Commissioner Gryder inquired into claim #148 in the amount of $22.75 for the Illinois Tollway Authority. Review of the claim determined it was an account maintenance fee for removal of transponders as part of the account clean-up.

Commissioner Koukol inquired into claim #182 for Clean Tech of Illinois for cleaning services in the amount of $945.00. The claim included several cleaning events, with the District paying more for the service when more time passes between cleaning events. Events include a 2-month cleaning in April for $170, three cleanings in May on May 1, and 5 for $105, and May 29 for $145, and four events in June for $105 each.

Commissioner Koukol inquired into claim #152 for VFIS for an insurance reimbursement totaling $1,009. Director Guritz stated that this charge was the insurance premium for the new equestrian program gap insurance coverage.
The Finance Committee discussed other claim listings.

Commissioner Cullick called the question. All, aye. Opposed, none. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Competitive Analysis of Wedding and Special Event Venues

Events Coordinator Tina Villarreal presented a spreadsheet showing local wedding venues in comparison to fees, charges and amenities at Ellis House and Equestrian Center.

Tina summarized the comparable facilities, and stated that in general, Ellis’s pricing is competitive within the wedding venue marketplace.

Tina stated that in order for Ellis to accommodate more guests, additional parking is needed, and the size of the tent and tent pad would need to be expanded.

Director Guritz inquired into Northforks Farms. Currently, Ellis pricing is significantly less, with Northfork charging guests for tent rental on top of a $2,800 facility fee.

Danada House charges comparable fees, but includes use of an indoor climate-controlled atrium.

Tina stated that many of these venues charge additional fees to the catering firm in the amount of $1 per guest for dinner, $2 per guest if there is bar service.

Commissioner Koukol inquired into what is needed to increase Ellis bookings. Tina stated that offering set up and clean-up is important. Having this option available now may help secure future bookings. Increased marketing and advertising also is needed.

Latreese Caldwell stated she had contacted Google, and it appears they have added Ellis to search engines for local wedding venues following her request.

Commission discussed cleaning service options. This has been explored.

Commissioner Gryder inquired into how many individuals request photos with the horses. Tina advised the committee that she typically doesn’t push this because she doesn’t handle horses, but 25% request this, and these requests are accommodated as part of bookings.

Commissioner Gryder asked whether this could be promoted for an additional charge.

Director Guritz asked what a typical wedding takes as far as requests for Tina’s time and assistance. Tina stated that she is hands-on within the events. Tina stated that it depends on the party. Tina offers referrals, coordinates with vendors selected by the individuals planning the wedding, stays on top of coordinating vendors coming to the site to offer
directions, and helps facilitate other planning efforts. Wedding coordination services could be offered as a separate charge.

Director Guritz asked if Tina keeps track of the different vendors coming into the site. Tina stated that she is aware of participating area businesses, and those are invited to assist with the bridal expo.

Commissioner Cullick asked what the capacity is for weddings at Meadowhawk. Tina stated that 100 is the maximum for wedding events.

Commissioner Cullick asked whether Ellis has a Facebook page for weddings. Tina stated that the Facebook page was recently deactivated, but would be exploring this in the future.

The Finance Committee thanked Tina for the analysis.

VII. Review of Equestrian Program Participation History and FY 15-16 Revenue Calculations

Director Guritz stated that efforts are continuing to review the raw data compiled by the equestrian center’s summer intern. The data provides the number of individuals taking lessons, birthday parties and camps, participation by zip code and date, and overall program participation to compare with the report presented earlier this year to the committee.

The data was used to run a scatterplot for participation, and showed that center programming is light November through March, picking up in April, with some concentration of programs taking place mornings between 8 and 10 am and evenings between 5 and 8 pm.

VIII. Ellis Equestrian Center Lesson Horses – Herd Management Updates

Director Guritz reported that equestrian center staff members have been working to find a second-career home for Jazz, one of the lesson horses. Jazz is a good horse, but not a good fit for beginning riders. Tammy Heere has offered to purchase Jazz for $2,000. Arrangements for transport next Monday have been made, pending completion of Coggins testing. Director Guritz stated he did not want to delay the transfer of ownership, and requested that the Finance Committee provide direction to move forward with the sale.

Director Guritz stated that there are two other horses that should be considered for sale, and will present a report at the next meeting.

Director Guritz stated that the District should look for opportunities for boarding horses at Ellis to generate revenue.
Director Guritz stated that management of the horses at Ellis is likely to generate some conflict, but it is the right thing to do in order to properly support programming.

**IX. Millbrook Bridge Updates**

Director Guritz presented an exhibit showing the location of property ownership within the Dobson Road right-of-way. That portion of the right-of-way south of the centerline is now owned and under the jurisdiction of the Village of Millbrook. The District has easement access rights within the entire right-of-way from the bridge to the barricade, which includes a portion of property owned by Randy and Gayle Roberts. Millbrook North Forest Preserve boundaries extend to the centerline of Dobson Lane from the north adjacent to the property owned by Randy and Gayle Roberts.

The exhibit was submitted to the Village of Millbrook with a request for an easement to construct a trail to Millbrook North Forest Preserve within the property and right-of-way under the jurisdiction of the Village of Millbrook. This request was denied, and Commissioner Gryder inquired into whether the intergovernmental agreement with Fox Township could be rescinded. Director Guritz stated he believed that the District held a warranty deed for the bridge, but would review the file and send out the documents for review.

President Wehrli is following up with the President of the Village of Millbrook.

The Finance Committee discussed the issue, reaching consensus that without support of the Village of Millbrook, the District is unable to secure the funding needed to restore the bridge.

**X. CPR/First Aid Training and AED Purchases**

Director Guritz provided a copy of the Physical Fitness Facility Medical Emergency Preparedness Act which requires public agencies with indoor physical fitness facilities to install AED’s. Based on review of the act, it does not appear the District is required to install AED’s within its facilities, but this is under review by Dr. Tokars of the KC Health Department for confirmation.

Director Guritz stated that CPR/First Aid training is being scheduled through Bristol-Kendall Fire Department at a cost of $40 per participant for a 4-hour class that will include training in use of an AED.

Director Guritz estimated that approximately 10 staff members will be certified.
XI. **Neshnabe’k Restoration Project Supplies**

Director Guritz presented an overview of materials available for restoration of the Neshanbe’k village site. In order to prepare for fall programming, and reduce project costs, reed mats resembling cattails will be used in place of artificial tree bark, or commercially available bark products. This will be a supply cost rather than a capital project cost, and estimates will be provided at the next Finance Committee meeting.

XII. **Review of District Utility Costs**

Director Guritz reported that Administrative Assistant Becky Antrim has completed a report showing the last twelve-months of utility payments for Amereen, Champion Energy, ComEd, and Nicor based on the meters owned by the District at various locations.

The Finance Committee discussed the report, and requested that staff prepare an audit of facilities powered by each meter.

The Finance Committee discussed the natural gas bills for the grain driers. Director Guritz stated that we are currently not receiving revenues for use of the driers, but Brad Mathre does reimburse the District for lease costs. The Finance Committee instructed Director Guritz to place review of the license agreement on an upcoming agenda for consideration for review, with consideration of charging a one-cent per bushel fee for use of the driers.

XIII. **FY 15-16 Budget Progress Report**

Latreese Caldwell presented a report on current year revenues and expenditures compared with the budget reallocations, excepting Environmental Education programs.

Within the report, costs are allocated in accordance with the new cost centers that will come into use for accounting within the upcoming fiscal year.

The Finance Committee reviewed the budget for Hoover Forest Preserve. The report for Hoover Forest Preserve includes the working budget, and year-to-date amounts collected and expended, and budget balance. Latreese highlighted the following from the Hoover Forest Preserve summary:

- Utility costs have not been allocated out to areas of operation. This information was not available at this time.
- Hoover Forest Preserve revenue $3,200; expenses $3,500; deficit $300
- Bunkhouses revenue $18,000; expenditures $22,000; deficit $4,000
- Campsites revenue $2,500; expenditures $8,900 deficit $6,400
- Meadowhawk revenues $6,300; expenditures $8,000; deficit $1,800

Commissioner Gryder inquired into revenues for each of the rental areas. Director Guritz stated that Becky Antrim ran the revenue figures for the past year, with year-to-date figures for bunkhouse rentals at $22,250, Campsites at $2,685, Meadowhawk Lodge at $7,042 and shelters at $3,520.

Latreese stated that total revenues collected for the year for Hoover rentals totaled $28,750, representing 47% of the estimated total.

Director Guritz stated that in looking at year-to-date actual features, we are likely overstated for campsite rentals, bunkhouses rentals should exceed projections, and projections for Meadowhawk lodge may be achieved.

Latreese stated that a good portion of the revenues should be recognized within the last quarter of the fiscal year based on use and program concentrations.

Latreese stated that even though revenues for Hoover Forest Preserve are lagging behind, expenditures are lagging behind as well.

Reallocations of staff salaries is underway to account for the transfer of Ron Smrz from Ellis to Grounds and Resources, and for Marty Vick’s transfer from Hoover Forest Preserve to Ellis. Latreese is working with the Treasurer’s Office to complete these reallocations.

The Finance Committee discussed the $65,000 allocation for Hoover utilities, shop supplies, and maintenance, with work underway to break out the specific costs associated with this line item in the budget.

Year-to-date overall deficit for Hoover Forest Preserve is $43,965.

The Finance Committee reviewed the year-to-date budget for Grounds and Resources (cost center 500). Shelter rentals are at $3,400, approximately 50% of the total anticipated revenues allocated. Currently, Mike Prinos is allocated to Grounds and Resources, and the expenditures are on track.

Director Guritz pointed out that a portion of the salary costs for Grounds and Resources is also allocated to the capital budget.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Administrative cost center. Latreese pointed at an error on the spreadsheet for tax allocations, but the year-to-date totals presented were correct.
Director Guritz stated he would be reviewing the farm license agreements to make sure we have received all of the base rent payments.

Commissioner Koukol stated that our promotion and publicity budget should be examined in order to better promote District offerings.

Commissioner Davidson suggested concentrating limited funding on targeting different communities on a rotating basis.

The Finance Committee discussed the marketing plan developed by Benedictine University, and the need to target residents using social media sites.

Director Guritz stated that the direct mailing idea is good, and we should move forward with this to promote District facilities. Latreese offered to work with Tina Villarreal to move this forward.

In looking at the Ellis budget for part-time staff, total allocations for personnel is at 71%, while revenues are at 63%, indicating there is room for improvement in management of costs for this facility. The Finance Committee deferred review of the Ellis and Environmental Education budgets to the next Finance Committee meeting.

The Finance Committee thanked Latreese for her efforts to help pull these figures together.

Director Guritz provided an overview of the FY 15-16 budget. The spreadsheet includes all costs for operations, pulling figures currently allocated to capital back into the operating budget. Based on the initial figures, the operating deficit for covering all District operations in the upcoming year is $60,000 to $65,000, with additional transfer of capital fund interest earnings needed to balance the past and current fiscal years’ operating deficits to achieve a positive fund balance. The District started the fiscal year with an operating deficit of $34,812.

Director Guritz stated that while Commission can make the determination to code a portion of the operating budget to the capital fund, in three years, these funds will not be available, and the full cost for operations will need to be covered within the operating fund.

Highlighted areas within the spreadsheet will require further analysis. The preliminary budget spreadsheet does not include figures for salary increases.

There are still questions pending for health insurance, IMRF, and liability insurance cost increases for the upcoming fiscal year.

Director Guritz stated that the District will not be able to carry all costs in the operations budget in the coming fiscal year without making difficult decisions. The biggest concern is
retaining a surplus to address future emergency expenditures given the District’s high insurance deductibles.

XIV. Executive Session

Commissioner Koukol made a motion to enter into executive session under 2(c)1 of the Open Meetings Act to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. Seconded by Commissioner Davidson. Koukol, Davidson, Gryder, Cullick, and Wehrli, aye. Opposed, none. Executive session called to order at 9:07 pm.

Commissioner Davidson made a motion to adjourn from Executive Session. Seconded by Commissioner Gryder. All, aye. Opposed, none. Regular meeting reconvened at 9:52 pm.

XV. Other Items of Business

None.

XVI. Citizens to be Heard

None.

XVII. Adjournment

Commissioner Wehrli made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Gryder. All, aye. Meeting adjourned at 9:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District