I. Call to Order

Commissioner and Vice-chair Cullick called the meeting to order at 6:42 pm in the Kendall County Board Room.

II. Roll Call

Commissioner Cullick appointed President Wehrli to serve in the place of Commissioner Gryder. Commissioners Koukol, Wehrli, and Cullick all were present.

III. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Wehrli made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Cullick. Aye, all. Opposed, none.

IV. Citizens to be Heard

No public comments offered.

V. Review of Claims in an Amount Not-to-Exceed $9,091.58.

Commissioner Koukol made a motion to forward claims for Commission approval in the amount of $9,091.58. Seconded by Commissioner Wehrli.

Commissioner Davidson entered the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

Commissioner Wehrli inquired into the claim for the fuel reimbursement for Jody Strohm. Director Guritz reported that the reimbursement was approved for Jody Strohm’s herbicide applicator license renewal training in Crystal Lake, Illinois. With the District now down a vehicle, the vehicle assigned to Jody is now in use to support other areas of operation.

Commissioner Koukol inquired into claim numbers 331, 332 and 333 for Wire Wizard for alarm monitoring fees. Director Guritz stated that these claims were for monthly monitoring fee, and for a repair of the fire alarm control unit. In order to bring the system back on line, Wire Wizard tapped into a phone line that was also damaged in the lightning strike, but with some line pairs still operable. Since this time, however, these pairs also lost connection. Two options were discussed. The first option is to connect wirelessly, with an additional $50.00 monthly monitoring charge. The second option is to trench and replace the underground phone line and conduit to restore the connection. The Finance
Committee instructed Director Guritz to secure proposals for installation of a new underground service line, and to examine the monthly monitoring contract.

Commissioner Koukol inquired into claim number 324 in the amount of $294.05 for the Starved Rock program. Director Guritz stated that this was for lunch for this public field trip program offset by program registration fees.

Commissioner Wehrli inquired into the deposit returns for claim numbers 347, 348, and 349. Director Guritz stated that these were for deposit returns for completed rentals. Staff did examine a situation where rental fees were deposited with Kendall County for use of the Historic Courthouse, with payment for the return of the deposit scheduled for payment by the District. This was addressed with the Treasurer’s office.

Commissioner Cullick called the question on the motion. Roll call: Commissioner Davidson, Wehrli, Koukol, and Cullick, aye. Opposed, none. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Other Items of Business

The Finance Committee discussed the recent auditors report from WIPFLi, and reports presented by Director Guritz at the last Commission meeting. The first report presented a forecast for reduced farm license revenue significantly decreased from budget projections based in part on the reduction of overall cropland acreage that will be owned by the District in 2015, and within production footprints, acreage and cost estimates for converting cropland to natural vegetation cover in accordance with the District’s state and federal grant agreements. These reports were also shared with staff to help build understanding of the urgency for improving financial accountability and program cost management.

Commissioner Davidson expressed appreciation, support, and need for this effort, but also expressed concern about the recent audit and program budget coding reports, including the underestimation of the interest earning transfer prior to audit accruals resulting in a $34,000 operating fund deficit balance for the beginning of the year, and program budget deficits for Hoover, Ellis, and Environmental Education program areas. Commissioner Davidson also drew attention to the capital budget concept plan presented, and limited interest earnings available to address the operation fund deficit and current year budget shortfalls for revenue earnings.

The Finance Committee discussed the implications of the limits of available resources within the current fiscal year, and how the operational budget deficit needs to be addressed both within the current fiscal year, with the goal of entering into the next fiscal year with a balanced budget.
The Finance Committee also discussed how remaining capital funds need to be scheduled in order to restore natural areas, and provide basic public access within newly acquired preserve areas.

Director Guritz stated that the District is entering a time of transition based on the financial realities. Daily presence and upkeep is vitally important to keeping preserves safe for the visiting public. Beyond this basic service, the District will need to rethink what we can do within the constraints of the available resources, and creative program shifts to sustain some measure of program services extended to the general public. Essentially, the District needs to develop towards this new equilibrium, but everyone is on the same page with understanding the need for these changes. District staff is committed to helping with this transition, and all are putting in the extra time and effort to examine adaptations within their operational areas.

The Finance Committee instructed Director Guritz to begin to bring forward program budget breakdowns for all operational program areas, and work towards bringing forward a balanced budget for FY16.

VII. Executive Session

None.

VIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Davidson made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Koukol. All, aye. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District