I. Call to Order

Finance Committee Chair Cullick called the meeting to order at 6:52 pm in the Kendall County Board Room.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Gryder, Koukol, Wehrli, and Cullick all were present.

III. Approval of Agenda

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

IV. Citizens to be Heard

No public comments offered.


Commissioner Cullick made a motion to forward claims in the amount of $29,117.13 for Commission approval. Seconded by Commissioner Wehrli.

The Finance Committee reviewed claim 230 for advertisement in The Record. Director Guritz stated this was for promoting rentals at Ellis, and he would work to present a copy of the ad to the Committee.

Commissioner Gryder inquired into claim number 208 for Albertson’s. Director Guritz stated that this was for snacks for the Natural Beginnings program.

The Finance Committee discussed the current budget and year-to-date actuals for utilities, noting that this line item is currently over budget for the year. Claim numbers 192 and 211 for Champion Energy and ComEd total $622.75 and $691.75, respectively, with $3,358.00 budgeted overall within line items 6351 and 6858. Director Guritz suggested this may be a coding issue, which will need to be examined. It would also be a useful exercise to pull together a list of charges to this line item, a listing of meter locations, and a 12-month history of utility bills.

Director Guritz stated that Kim Olson completed an audit of the IPASS account, with two transponders removed from the account.
Commissioner Cullick called the question on the motion. Aye, all. Opposed, none. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Review of Millbrook Bridge Engineer’s Estimates and Grant Program Opportunities Discussion

Director Guritz reported that Attorney Kramer was unable to attend the meeting, but he had met with him to review the recorded intergovernmental agreement with Fox Township, and the Certification of Election for the incorporation of the Village of Millbrook. Millbrook’s incorporated on July 29, 2002, and the District’s intergovernmental agreement with Fox Township was recorded on May 10, 2004. Kendall County GIS reviewed the legal descriptions for both, with exhibits created for the intergovernmental agreement showing conveyed parcels and rights-of-way to the eastern approach to Millbrook Bridge. Millbrook’s corporate boundaries included up to the centerline of Dobson Lane at the time of incorporation, which means that at the time Fox Township conveyed access rights to the District, Dobson Lane was in the jurisdiction of the Village of Millbrook. Attorney Kramer provided an excerpt from the Illinois Compiled Statutes for Municipalities (65 ILCS 5/2-3-19) which discusses municipal boundaries and jurisdiction over adjacent highways included in the Finance Committee meeting packets.

The Finance Committee discussed whether this issue invalidates the agreement with Fox Township. Director Guritz stated that Fran Klaas has suggested consulting an attorney from Chicago he has worked with in the past who has expertise within this area of law.

Director Guritz expressed uncertainty whether this issue would invalidate the entire agreement with Fox Township. The Village of Millbrook’s corporate limits extend only to the shoreline of the Fox River. Conveyance of ownership of Millbrook Bridge, and the Shuh Shuh Gah parcels to the District by Fox Township may still be valid depending on the interpretation of State law.

The Finance Committee discussed the legal descriptions exhibit for Dobson Lane showing the extent of the conveyance of right-of-way to the District. Tract 1 is described and included on the title held by the current owner. Tract 2 is not carried on the title for the adjacent land owner, which would place ownership of Tract 2 with the Village of Millbrook.

President Wehrli reported on the discussion and meeting with the Village of Millbrook’s board of trustees. Prior to the board meeting, this information was reviewed with Doug Maple, Fox Township Highway Commissioner, Jackie Kowalski, President of the Village of Millbrook, and Jim Friedrich, Fox Township Supervisor. As part of the meeting, the District
requested consideration for granting access to the Dobson Lane right-of-way for the purpose of installing a multi-purpose trail into Millbrook North Forest Preserve.

Commissioner Gryder stated that jurisdiction over Millbrook Bridge may be affected by those same laws governing jurisdiction over the Whitfield Road vehicular bridge. When Millbrook incorporated the approach to this vehicular bridge within village boundaries, the village assumed jurisdiction over the entire bridge under State law. This may hold true for Millbrook Bridge as well.

The Finance Committee provided direction to consult with legal experts on this issue and report back on findings.

VII. Ellis House and Equestrian Center – Alarm System Storm Damage

Director Guritz reported that the alarm system at Ellis was damaged by lighting. The system has been repaired, with costs incurred up to $865.65. Ellis staff is in contact with ADS to request a deduction for a portion of the billing, so the total submitted for payment may be less.

VIII. Ellis House and Equestrian Center Program Budget Overview

Director Guritz presented a draft spreadsheet for the equestrian program budget, including a baseline salary analysis presented for discussion purposes, a budget model for equestrian center program revenues based on FY 13-14 participation, including FY 14-15 revenue projections based on year-to-date registrations, and a month-to-month program participation comparison to help inform current fiscal year revenue and expense projections.

The Finance Committee discussed the baseline salary analysis. Within the baseline analysis, the report assumes that care of the horses is covered by 2 Program Instructor - Barn Hand positions, with each extending support to a three-hour shifts, one in the morning, and one in the late afternoon/early evening, seven days a week. A Program Manager and Lead Instructor provides an additional 10 hours per week for supporting program, lessons instructor recruitment, instructional support, and instructor training and supervision. A third intermittent Program Instructor and Barn Hand assists with program and shift support, filling in where needed, with no more than one staff member supporting a single shift.

Director Guritz reported that the Ellis Office Assistant position is a current position working 4-hours per day, five days per week.
The Finance Committee discussed the Ellis Site Administrator – Buildings and Grounds position. Director Guritz stated that this position would replace the current Grounds Maintenance position, and cover the administrative functions for the equestrian program, and grounds and building improvement projects. This position also would support communications and continuity between shifts.

The Finance Committee discussed whether the Events Coordinator position could be structured to extend administrative support to the equestrian program. Director Guritz stated that this question will need to be examined going into budget discussions for the upcoming fiscal year, and ties into the issues of sustainability of District operations.

The Programming and Events Committee will need to explore Ellis House rentals and events, with three new wedding event venues now operating within 5 miles of Ellis House.

Commissioner Gryder inquired into whether Director Guritz still felt that the Barn Manager position would be able to provide the coverage needed in the evenings. Director Guritz stated that one of the challenges confronting Ellis is the limitations of time for this role, consistency and communications between shifts, and handling of scheduling, revenue collection, and other administrative needs. With this in mind, having a Barn Manager living within close proximity of the facility, and able to extend expertise and support to the program is important to have in place.

Commissioner Koukol reported that Ellis has experienced management challenges, expressing concerns over the reduced roles, limitations of hours, and resulting impacts to the management of the equestrian program.

Director Guritz stated that these issues and challenges stem from limitations of financial resources to support the program. Finding well-suited equestrian professionals that are committed to the program, have the schedule flexibility needed, and do not rely exclusively on the salary from their position(s) at Ellis is a difficult prospect.

Director Guritz stated that a recent dialog with Ellis equestrian staff helps to understand the challenges. On one hand, concentrating programs to occur during base shifts would be ideal for generating efficiencies within the program, but qualified staffing may not be available to extend consistent support to a set shift schedule, and public demand for programs may fall outside of base shifts. For this reason, a program support contingency is added to the baseline staffing spreadsheet, but further analysis is needed to examine when programs are conducted over the course of the year to see how best to structure shifts based on public program demand.
Director Guritz added that conducting more programs improves our bottom line, and the District has an unmet capacity for programs at Ellis, and other program areas which may be improved through strategic marketing efforts, so long as sufficient instructional staffing is available to support demand.

Commissioner Wehrli stated that it is clear that more information is being gathered and sorted than has been presented in the past, and efforts are underway to determine how the to operate the site moving forward. This direction is needed within the next few months to avoid the same issues that presented last year in preparation of the fiscal year budget.

Latreese Caldwell reported that allocations for Ellis salaries and benefits totals $103,160. Of this amount, $58,000 is allocated for part-time salaries. The spreadsheet calculations include an additional $27,000 in part-time salaries.

The Finance Committee discussed whether a full three hours is needed for morning horse care, and how best to approach generating efficiencies in the program.

The Finance Committee reviewed program participation and projections. Assumptions within the analysis included 50% participation by residents, 50% by non-residents in lessons and birthday party programs; and delivery of all lessons as part of a 5-lessons package, and revenue comparisons based on current fiscal year pricing. 14-15 revenue projections were presented based on calculating the percentage difference (deficit) from the prior year’s program volume to year-to-date figures for the current fiscal year by examining monthly participation (last fiscal year to the current), with the exception of summer camp revenues presented based on total current registrations.

The Finance Committee discussed the projections, calculating that revenues are overstated for the fiscal year by approximately $19,000, with over half of this amount attributed to an overstatement of summer camp revenue projections within the budget. Director Guritz provided Latreese Caldwell with a report of year-to-date part time salaries for Ellis. Ellis part time salaries currently expended year-to-date is at 60% of the total allocated for the year. Based on review of current part time salary expenditures for Ellis, part time salaries for the year appear to be understated by approximately $19,000 based on year-to-date expenditures within the current fiscal year.

Collectively, this indicates that Ellis could end the current fiscal year with an operational deficit of ($88,000) compared to the ($48,938) projection.

Latreese Caldwell reported that the new budget reports should be available for review by the end of June or early July. Actual revenues for the year will be examined to determine if the budget model presented aligns with actual revenues for the year.
Director Guritz reported that Becca Brigel is resigning from her position at the end of July to return to college. Debbie Granat resigned from her position Friday, May 22, 2015. Director Guritz requested Finance Committee consent to post and hire two part-time Instructor and Barn Hand positions to support horse care and equestrian center programming. The Finance Committee discussed the situation, providing direction to hire a single seasonal Instructor and Barn Hand for up to 37.5 hours per week extending through the end of November.

The Finance Committee discussed the amount of time needed for morning and afternoon barn chores, estimating that the work could be completed under three hours per shift. Director Guritz stated that the spreadsheet did not include support from the Ellis Caretaker, which assists with horse care. The Finance Committee discussed volunteer support and assistance on shifts.

Commissioner Wehrli stated that a meeting should be held with Ellis staff and volunteers to discuss the projections, and engage them with helping to figure out how to make it work.

IX. Revised Differentiated Fee Schedule for Facility Rentals

Director Guritz presented a revised differentiated fee schedule showing reduced rates only for weekday use of Ellis and Meadowhawk. Director Guritz stated that the weekend rates for Meadowhawk should be lowered to spur demand and use of this facility, which currently sits unused on most days of the year. Commissioner Cullick commented that she is hosting an event at Meadowhawk in the near future, and felt the cost is too high, and does not include set-up and clean-up, stating further she is in favor of adding this as an optional cost for facility use.

Commissioner Gryder inquired into the actual volume of use of Meadowhawk in the year. Director Guritz responded that the answer is few rentals far between, but that actual reservations will be examined. Based on the discussion, rates will be forwarded to Commission as presented for weekday rentals, with use of Meadowhawk on weekends reduced in accordance with the first schedule presented.

Commissioner Cullick made a motion to forward the revised fee schedule to Commission for approval. Seconded by Commissioner Wehrli. Aye, all. Opposed, none.

X. 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 Gryder.

Roll call: Commissioners Koukol, Wehrli, Gryder, and Cullick, aye. Opposed, none. Executive session called to order at 8:40 pm.

Commissioner Cullick adjourned from Executive Session at 9:05 pm.

Commissioner Koukol made a motion to reconvene the regular meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Gryder. The regular meeting was reconvened at 9:07 pm.

XI. Other Items of Business

None.

XII. Adjournment

Commissioner Gryder made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Koukol. All, aye. Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District