I. Call to Order

President Wehrli called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Kendall County Board Room.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Cullick, Davidson, Gilmour, Gryder, Koukol, Prochaska, Purcell, and Wehri all were present.

III. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Cullick made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Prochaska. All, aye. Opposed, none. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Citizens to be Heard

No public comments were offered.

V. Director’s Report

Director Guritz reported that the summer camp season has come to a close. District staff are gearing up for fall programs including the start of the 2015-2016 school year for Natural Beginnings, with updated enrollment figures presented in the packet.

Director Guritz thanked Megan Gessler, Manager of Natural Beginnings for pulling together a detailed budget report for the upcoming year.

Director Guritz stated that Grounds and Resources is currently short-staffed, with Superintendent Olson assisting where needed to help open and close the preserves.

Trail monitor reports continue to stream in, with efforts being taken to keep up with reports of vandalism and trail impacts.

Director Guritz is working to get out a fall newsletter, and working to reschedule a meeting to discuss plans for Stephanie’s Garden.

Work continues on the intergovernmental agreement with Yorkville for the IDOT rail safety crossing grant.
VI. Position Description Reviews

Director Guritz stated that the two position descriptions presented will need to be reviewed by the State’s Attorney’s Office before finalizing for Commission approval. The Grounds Supervisor and Resident for Hoover Forest Preserve was developed in consultation with Mike Pierson to identify the full scope of duties and responsibilities this position performs, which includes supervision of other grounds and maintenance workers, and support of the Kendall County Outdoor Education Center and Natural Beginnings programs.

Director Guritz stated that in meeting with the State’s Attorney’s Office, this would be an FLSA exempt position, with efforts needed to place a value on the benefit of having a year round residence on the site where the District covers all utility costs for the residence as part of this position’s overall compensation package.

President Wherli stated that the two items will need to be approved together at an upcoming meeting once the review is completed.

Director Guritz also stated that he is considering transferring supervisory responsibilities for Megan Gessler over to the Grounds Supervisor and Resident position because this position more regularly interacts with and supports Natural Beginnings operations.

Commissioner Purcell inquired the years of experience required, noting a typo in the description. Director Guritz stated that the requirement should be for four years of prior experience in the field. Under language skills, third and fourth bullet points should be reviewed for redundancy or combining into a single statement.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into the cost and process for IL EPA wastewater operator certification for employees in this position to conduct water quality testing of the Hoover treatment ponds, suggesting that the District should be able to recover costs for the training should the employee leave before a certain amount of time has passed.

Commission instructed Director Guritz to determine the cost and process for certification.

The second position description is for the Office Assistant position. The District currently employs one part time office assistant at Ellis House and Equestrian Center. Commission noted a change needed to number of years of prior experience, with Director Guritz stating that the position should carry a qualification for two years of prior experience.

VII. Hoover Resident Lease Agreement

Commission discussed a draft lease agreement, which was developed from a template provided by the State’s Attorney’s Office.
Director Guritz stated that the agreement will not carry charges for rent or utilities, and has a provision for allowing pets. Direction was requested for the lease agreement termination clauses for when an employee resigns, or is terminated from District employment.

Commission discussed the termination clauses for the lease agreement.

President Wehrli stated that the State of Illinois has very strict laws in place for evictions, and these should be followed within the agreement, and may include a 90-day period.

Commissioner Gryder stated that the security deposit should be more than $500.

Commissioner Cullick stated that she had concerns about pets, including dogs in the residence, citing concerns over insurance should there be an incident with the dogs causing injury to preserve visitors.

President Wehrli stated that the dogs provide some measure of security for the resident, and would not want to restrict the resident from having dogs.

Commissioner Gilmour asked what would happen if the staff member employed chose to move out of the residence. Director Guritz stated that living at the residence is part of the position’s requirements. Should the individual chose to leave, they would need to resign from their position.

Commissioner Gryder suggested that pet rent could be an option to collect funding over time to offset any damage or cleaning costs between residents.

Commissioner Prochaska suggested that the agreement include provisions for addressing any and all legal disputes in Kendall County.

Commission discussed setting the damage deposit amount at the value of one-month’s rent. Director Guritz stated that time could be extended to build up the damage deposit within the first year of employment.

**VIII. 2015 Fall Public Program Fees and Charges**

Director Guritz presented a report detailing the proposed program budgets. All programs are budgeted to break even with costs when minimum enrollment is achieved, generating revenue over expenses when participation exceeds minimum thresholds.

Commission discussed how quickly the District could move to online registration and payments. Director Guritz stated that integration into RecPro is coming along, but does not include the module for online registration and payments, which would carry an additional software license fee and annual support cost. This could be an option for consideration
within the FY 15-16 budget. Director Guritz stated that he would explore setting up a PayPal account with the Treasurer’s Office.

Commissioner Cullick made a motion to forward the proposed public program fees and charges to Commission for approval. Seconded by Commissioner Purcell. All, aye. Opposed, none.

IX. Hoover Forest Preserve Equestrian Trails – Overview and Volunteer Mowing Request

Director Guritz presented a map showing the location of equestrian trails maintained by the District, and by volunteers at Hoover Forest Preserve. The map showed the location of a proposed prairie trail loop, as well as the location for expanded horse trailer parking. The map also showed areas of equestrian trail encroachment into sensitive core habitat areas of the preserve. As part of the review, District staff will be able to extend efforts to mow a larger footprint for trailer parking.

Director Guritz stated that the proposed trail has benefits and drawbacks. The benefit would be the creation of a mowed fire break to assist the District’s controlled burn program. The drawback would be the increased soil erosion that will result from increased equestrian traffic in the area, which is already evident.

Commission discussed the proposed trail, and determined that due to the slopes of the woodland trail and the proposed creek crossing, increasing equestrian traffic would cause significant trail erosion in this area. Therefore, the proposed equestrian trail through volunteer mowing activities.

X. Lyon Forest Preserve Well Capping Proposal – K&K Well Drilling

Director Guritz stated that the K&K Well Drilling proposal includes a $600 charge for breaking up concrete, bringing total charges to $1,350. Attempts to clear the well of bacteria have proven unsuccessful.

Commissioner Purcell made a motion to forward the proposal from K&K Well Drilling for capping of the Lyon Forest Preserve well for Commission approval. Seconded by Commissioner Gryder. All, aye. Opposed, none.
XI. **Intergovernmental Agreement – Hoover Road Dedication and ICC Petition**

Director Guritz presented a draft intergovernmental agreement and ICC petition for Commission review. The draft documents have been forwarded to the State’s Attorney’s Office for review and guidance. At this point, Yorkville has agreed to assist with the project so long as the District completes the required documents, agrees to maintain Hoover Road in perpetuity, and indemnifies the city for all liability.

Commissioner Gilmour pointed out a need for correction in the signature line.

President Wehrli stated that there are additional items that need to be worked through including determining whether the District can continue to use the existing gate to close the preserve at night.

President Wehrli stated that it needs to be a city road by IDOT definition in order to secure the grant and complete the project.

Director Guritz stated that as part of this agreement, Yorkville will need to file a petition to the ICC to establish a public crossing inventory number, and dedicate the road as a public crossing.

XII. **Whitetail Ridge Homeowners’ Association Meeting Updates**

Director Guritz reported that Whitetail Ridge Homeowners’ Association rejected the District’s request for access to Henneberry Forest Preserve using the connecting parcel off of Whitetail Ridge Drive owned by the Association for the purpose of constructing a north-south trail and restoring preserve lands. In presenting the request, the District extended an offer to maintain the trail on the Association’s parcel, but the Association members expressed concerns over having the public park within the subdivision to access the preserve.

Commissioner Koukol inquired into whether the Association was governed by the developer, or if governance was now controlled by the residents. Director Guritz stated that the Association’s membership consisted of approximately 15 homeowners within the subdivision.
XIII. Natural Beginnings Fall 2015 Enrollment Figures

Natural Beginnings Manager Megan Gessler provided an overview of preschool enrollment figures for the 2015-2016 school year including a breakdown of month-to-month costs for staff salaries and benefits and supplies for the year.

For the fiscal year, the staff salary costs total presented in the report is $41,450, with material costs of $1,000 per class for three classes bringing total program expenditures to $44,450. Total revenue presented in the report is $53,275 based on exact tuition and enrollment for each class and anticipated registration fees resulting in a projected net profit of $8,825.

Director Guritz stated that the spreadsheet would be presented to Latreese Caldwell for review.

Megan reported that the contribution from Chairman Shaw was not included in the calculations, as his donation applies to operations in the current fiscal year.

Director Guritz reported that additional charitable contributions have been received by the Forest Foundation to assist with offsetting student tuition fees for low-income families.

Commissioner Davidson inquired into maximum enrollment figures for the program. Megan reported that each class carries a maximum registration of 12 students, leaving 5 openings in the current year.

Megan reported that she would like to raise the registration fees from $50 to $150. The current fee does not provide enough incentive to insure that families keep their commitment to register by the program deadlines. Megan reported she would also like to increase tuition costs for next year by $100, raising total fees and tuition charges by a total of $200 per registrant over the current year’s fees.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into whether a $150 registration fee is consistent with other providers in the area. Megan stated that she would research this, but the program’s tuition fees are right in the middle of what area providers are currently charging for similar services.

Megan reported that she also plans to move back the date for the first quarterly tuition payment to June 30. This first payment is currently due by July 31 of the year. Fee increases will need to be approved for inclusion in the FY 15-16 budget by the end of November.
Commission instructed Director Guritz to bring the question on the FY 15-16 tuition fees to an upcoming Finance Committee for review.

**XIV. Horse Boarding Request for Ellis Equestrian Center**

Director Guritz stated that Aliboo Farms has approached the District to inquire into dry-boarding horses at Ellis for a cost of $200 per month for each horse for up to 3-4 horses.

Commission discussed the capacity for boarding horses at Ellis in terms of stall space.

President Wherli stated that based on current discussions regarding Ellis operations for the coming year, we would want to be upfront in our discussions in terms of the District’s capacity for boarding additional horses at the site.

Commissioner Purcell stated that a trial period through November of this year could be negotiated.

President Wherli stated that there would be no cost to the District for boarding. The boarder would be responsible for all aspects of care and feeding.

Commissioner Purcell asked about whether the boarding rate was consistent for similar arrangements in the county.

Commissioner Gryder stated that he also wanted to hold off on any long-term boarding agreement until the Ellis operational budget is completed and approved for the coming year. Commissioner Gryder also stated that an overall policy for boarding of horses should be explored.

Commissioner Davidson stated that he would support a trial period as well before signing off on a longer term arrangement.

Director Guritz stated he would open discussion with Aliboo Farms, and look into market rates for boarding.

**XV. Executive Session**

Commissioners Gryder and Purcell adjourned from the meeting at 6:54 pm.

Commissioner Prochaska 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 Cullick.

Commissioner Cullick adjourned from the meeting and Executive Session at 6:56 pm.

Commissioners Gryder and Purcell returned to the meeting and Executive Session at 6:56 pm.

Roll call: Commissioners Gryder, Davidson, Gilmour, Koukol, Purcell, Prochaska, and Wherli, aye. Opposed, none. Executive Session called to order at 6:57 pm.

Commissioner Davidson made a motion to adjourn from executive session and reconvene the regular meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Prochaska. All, aye. Regular meeting reconvened at 7:05 pm

**XVI. Other Items of Business**

Commissioner Koukol thanked President Wherli for his leadership in working to address the District’s budget situation and exploring avenues for revenue generation.

Commissioner Prochaska requested an update if a formal diagnosis is determined as the cause of death for the Ellis lesson horse Faline.

Commissioner Purcell asked if there were plans to replace horses at Ellis. Director Guritz stated that the board would be consulted prior to approve any new herd additions into the lesson program.

Director Guritz reported that a potential lease agreement is under discussion with Applied Ecological Services to establish farm operations for the planting and harvesting of native prairie plant seed for sale to the open market. As part of the agreement, the firm would assist the District with cropland conversion plans for Fox River Bluffs and Henneberry Forest Preserves, reducing costs for restoration considerably, while reducing initial budget impacts from taking preserve lands out of agricultural production. A follow-up conference call is scheduled in the coming week.

Commissioner Gryder also thanked President Wehrli for his leadership and support during the transition of the District’s executive leadership in this past year.

**XVII. Citizens to be Heard**

None.

**XVIII. Adjournment**
Commissioner Koukol made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Gilmour. Aye, all. Opposed, none. Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District