I. Call to Order

President Wehrli called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. in the Kendall County Board Room.

II. Roll Call

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

III. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Gryder 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 by those present at the meeting.

V. Director’s Report

Director Guritz thanked Commission for the recent Kubota purchase. The new ATV has been picked up and is in use at Hoover Forest Preserve, with the other unit returned to Ellis.

The Environmental Education fall program schedule is wrapping up, with efforts underway to plan winter public programs, and begin marketing efforts to area scout organizations.

Negotiations have been concluded for the intergovernmental agreement with the United City of Yorkville, where the District will be dedicating a right-of-way for highway purposes in order to secure IDOT funding and assistance with construction of the warning devices and railway crossing gates.

Negotiations on the Schessler’s Fen amended conservation easement, access easement, and natural areas management plan are underway. Once completed, a final ordinance and agreement will be presented to Commission for approval.

Efforts are underway to complete the final FY 15-16 budgets for Commission approval, with the ordinances drafted for review and discussion.

Improvements to the screened cabins have been completed at Hoover Forest Preserve to address a safety issue with the cabin support beams.
Director Guritz reported that Baker Forest Preserve tenant farmer Gene Homerding recently passed away. The District plans to send flowers to Jean Homerding.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the 61 acre parcel(s), and provided direction to secure bids for a three year lease agreement starting in 2016 after first checking with Jean Homerding on whether there are any plans to continue participation in the farm lease program.

VI. IPMG Insurance Coverage Proposal Review

The Committee of the Whole discussed proposed insurance coverage for the District. Rich Ryan with Wine-Sergi presented the terms for coverage including the insurance premium costs and deductibles.

Rich Ryan stated that the two options for a standalone policy for the District have varying deductibles, with each option resulting in increased premiums based on the deductibles scheduled. A third option has been requested from Traveler’s Insurance, but this proposal needs to be finalized based on the additional information recently provided.

Rich Ryan stated that the driver for the increased premium costs proposed is for the buildings and properties owned by the District. Equestrian center operations are not seen as carrying a significant risk effecting coverage premiums.

President Wehrli thanked Mr. Ryan for developing the options, but stated that the District does not have the financial resources available to afford the alternate coverage options.

Commissioner Purcell stated that Kendall County is currently examining increasing the deductible for workers’ compensation.

Mr. Ryan reported that he is not finding alternate insurance products available on the market that would extend first dollar workers’ compensation coverage up to a certain dollar amount.

Director Guritz reported that the District has one open workers’ compensation claim that may incur additional costs within the District’s deductible limit for up to $60,000. Separately, the District has an outstanding balance owed to Kendall County for past claim payments totaling approximately $40,000.

VII. Natural Beginnings FY 15-16 Program Budget Amendment

Director Guritz reported that the Programming and Events Committee reviewed the proposal for expanding Natural Beginnings programming into an additional one or two day afternoon session. Review of the proposal revealed that the District’s breakeven point for extending programming into one additional afternoon session is $575 per student with a
minimum enrollment of 5 students in the session. Based on this review, the District will not be pursuing expansion of the program to provide an additional afternoon session in the 16-17 school year.

Megan Gessler stated that the current afternoon session will allow for a mixed age group in the 16-17 school year. Within the current school year, the afternoon session is limited to 3-5 year old children. In the upcoming year, this will be expanded to include students up to 8 years old.

Director Guritz asked Mrs. Gessler whether the parents of younger age students would be opposed to having older students participate in the class. Mrs. Gessler stated that she had, and the parents did not express any concerns with the mixed-age group.

Director Guritz stated that the Natural Beginnings budget had been amended to include potential salary increases for lead instructors, with additional funds added to the professional development budget for Commission consideration.

The Committee of the Whole reviewed and discussed the Natural Beginnings program, including maximum enrollment and cancellation policies.

Mrs. Gessler stated that the District should have enrollment figures for the 16-17 school year by the end of January 2016.

VIII. FY 15-16 Operating Fund – Preliminary Budget Updates

Director Guritz presented changes made to the preliminary budget. Changes included an increase in contingency funding based on potential savings that could result from changes in staff enrollments within the health plans offered in 2016.

Additional changes have been made to the Environmental Education program cost center under Other Programs to provide sufficient appropriations for delivery of programs offered in partnership with other agencies, and new scout and birthday party program offerings.

Director Guritz reported that the tax allocation funding to Grounds and Resources will be reduced to present a flat budget for this cost center.

The operating budget projected surplus is $6,694. The budget includes increased contingency funds based on projected savings in health care coverage premiums, payment of insurance premiums, and a $5,000 payment to Kendall County for anticipated insurance claim deductible payments.
Commissioner Purcell inquired into whether the $44,000 in revenues for school programs is attainable. Director Guritz stated that this figure is based on the District’s past program year’s reservations under the updated and approved pricing structure.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into whether the $33,000 in revenues for camp programs is attainable. Director Guritz stated that this figure will require restructuring camp fees and charges and offerings for the upcoming year. The revenues presented in the budget are based on the restructure of the District’s summer camp offerings, based on this past summer’s enrollment figures. Director Guritz stated that this figure is attainable, but will require more aggressive marketing in order meet or exceed enrollment projections within the budget.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the budget for marketing and promotions. Director Guritz stated that the District’s budget is $3,500, and the Ellis budget is $4,500 for the year. The District did not expend this amount in the current fiscal year, but has significant needs to improve marketing in order to achieve our budget targets for program participation.

The Committee of the Whole discussed online registrations using RecPro. Director Guritz stated that the budget anticipates purchase of the module to allow for online registrations.

IX. FY 15-16 2007 Series Capital Fund – Preliminary Budget Updates

Director Guritz presented changes to the preliminary budget for the FY 15-16 2007 series capital fund. The $250,000 scheduled under Cropland Conversion has been removed, with the associated costs rescheduled to Henneberry Woods. Director Guritz stated that a model for cropland conversion has been developed, with this project bid in summer 2016.

Director Guritz reported that a $25,000 revenue and offsetting $25,000 expenditure has been scheduled for first phase development of the Nature Play Space at Hoover Forest Preserve, which will only be funded from outside contributions.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into the $62,000 listed under natural areas management. Director Guritz stated that this includes a $50,000 equipment purchase contingency, a $10,000 expenditure as required match to the District’s ComEd Green Region grant, and $2,000 for Fox River Bluffs restoration costs which will draw down the remaining reimbursement of funds available through the District’s Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation grant.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the $750,000 OSLAD grant reimbursement. Director Guritz stated that reimbursement had been delayed due to IDNR requested changes to the
appraisal document. These changes have been delivered, and work is underway to develop a final billing statement for the project.

Funds are budgeted for public access capital improvements for Fox River Bluffs, but these funds will not be expended in the upcoming year. The funds are appropriated in order to have the appropriations necessary to apply for grants in the coming year to offset development costs.

X. FY 15-16 Tentative Budget and Review of Appropriation Ordinances

The Committee of the Whole discussed the draft appropriation ordinances.

Director Guritz stated that he has been working with Latreese Caldwell to amend the ordinance structure. The new structure will summarize revenue and expenditure sources within the combined budget, and include copies of the actual fund budgets attached to the appropriation ordinances.

Director Guritz reported that the 2009 Debt Series Fund is scheduled for a $1,552 expenditure and/or transfer in order to close the fund and take it off the books.

Director Guritz stated that he would be working with the Kendall County Clerk’s and Treasurer’s Offices to confirm the levy amounts scheduled by ordinance for the District’s remaining debt service funds, and amending the budget accordingly if needed.

XI. FY 15-16 Health Insurance Plan Offerings and Schedule for Pro-Rated Distributions of Deductible Contributions to District Employees for the PPO High Deductible Plan

Director Guritz presented a report showing staff enrollments in the various health plans offered, corresponding costs, and potential budget savings. Within the preliminary budget, the potential budget savings has been transferred to contingency in order to have the funds available for either additional health plan insurance premiums for District staff insurance coverage, or available for considering salary increases for the upcoming year.

Director Guritz recommended that the District follow suit with Kendall County with offering two health plans for District full time staff in the upcoming year to include the BCBS HMO health plan and the BCBS PPO-HSA health plan.

Director Guritz stated he had met with staff that will need to transition to one of the two plans offered to review the coverages and deductible payments required under each plan.
Commissioner Gryder stated that this is a win-win situation where the District’s costs will be possibly reduced within the two health plan enrollment options, with this savings potentially passed on to support staff salary increases.

XII. **Review of the Draft Resolution and Intergovernmental Agreement #15-07 with the United City of Yorkville Dedicating a Right-of-Way for Highway Purposes over Hoover Road to Support the Construction of Warning Devices and Railroad Crossing Safety Gates**

President Wehrli stated that the final terms of the intergovernmental agreement has been worked out thanks in part to the efforts of David Berrault of the State’s Attorney’s Office.

The intergovernmental agreement is needed in order to establish Hoover Drive as a public road in order for IDOT to move forward with completing the project.

The resolution and intergovernmental agreement is scheduled for approval at the upcoming Commission meeting, and will be presented to Yorkville’s City Council shortly thereafter.

Within the agreement, the District retains the property, extends liability coverage to the City of Yorkville, and commits to maintaining Hoover Road in perpetuity.

XIII. **Review of the Draft Ordinance #15-08 and Agreement Amending the Conservation Easement, Extending an Access Easement, and Establishing a Management Plan for Schessler’s Fen**

President Wehrli stated that under this agreement, the conservation easement boundaries will be adjusted to fit the lot lines, and the District is extended access to its property from the adjoining parcel’s driveway.

Director Guritz stated that final terms are under negotiation between The Conservation Foundation and Attorney Lisa Coffey.

XIV. **Review and Discussion of a Second Draft of an Operating Fund Balance Policy for the Kendall County Forest Preserve District**

Director Guritz reported that the second draft presented had one recommended amendment from the Finance Committee removing the provision that would allow for revenue transfers into operations from other funds in order to balance future fiscal year budgets.
The Committee of the Whole discussed the proposed policy, and amount of initial interest earnings transfer needed in order to establish a positive fund balance.

Director Guritz stated that effecting a transfer to establish a positive fund balance involves a number of considerations including repayment of all or a portion of the amount owed to Kendall County for past insurance claim deductibles paid, with an estimated balance of around $30,000, elimination of the District’s $34,000 audited fund deficit for the beginning of the current fiscal year, elimination of the District’s current operating fund deficit projected at $40,000, and the starting fund balance amount recommended by Commission.

Commissioner Davidson inquired into whether this needs to be included in the budget. Director Guritz stated that the transfer of interest earnings is not scheduled in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The capital fund includes sufficient appropriations within the current fiscal year budget to approve the transfer of interest earnings within the current fiscal year.

Commissioner Purcell noted that a two to three month fund balance is not sufficient to cover the District’s cash flow needs within the first six months of its fiscal year because tax proceeds are not typically received until June.

President Wehrli stated that transfer of six months of interest earnings would impact the amount of remaining funding available and needed to complete District projects, and not leave resources available in the capital fund to address any unforeseen issues like a high deductible payment.

Commissioner Purcell recommended calculating the amount of interest earnings to be transferred by adding the combined deficits for the current and past fiscal year, adding to this amount the repayment of the insurance claim deductible payments owed to Kendall County, and adding to this amount $168,000 representing two months of operational costs. This will force the District to watch the budget closely, and hopefully come up with a surplus in the upcoming year. If not, we’ll have to make decisions to cut expenses, but this gets the District off to a good start and sets a goal to work towards.

Commissioner Davidson suggested that this could be put into the reserve fund in two installments, one at the beginning of the year, one at the end of the fiscal year.

Director Guritz stated that the only issue with this is that we do not have the appropriations currently scheduled in the upcoming fiscal year budget.
Commissioner Gryder suggested that the District has the resources now to transfer a six month reserve balance, and should consider transferring the full amount to cover cash flow needs and work to conserve the balance.

Commissioner Gilmour inquired into what would need to occur if the fund balance fell below the two month expenditure level.

President Wehrli stated that the Commission would need to examine and determine where cuts would be made to the District’s budget to replenish the fund balance.

Commissioner Koukol inquired into whether the District will be able to draw down the fund balance. President Wehrli stated that the goal is to grow the fund balance year-to-year, not expend the funds that are initially transferred.

Commissioner Purcell stated that the amount transferred is separate from the goal and policy question. Regardless of the amount transferred, the District will need to present and work towards a surplus budget each year.

The Board of Commissioners provided direction to bring forward a motion at the following Commission meeting to approve the fund balance policy, and establish a two-month fund balance reserve by transferring sufficient interest earnings to cover the operating fund deficits, and repay Kendall County for claim deductible payments owed.

XV. Citizens to be Heard

Megan Gessler presented two memos to Commission, submitted to Director Guritz for consideration requesting consideration of salary increases for Natural Beginnings Lead Instructors and conference funding to allow Lead Instructors to attend a regional conference in December.

Megan Gessler stated that the conference registration is due November 20 for the two instructors for the January AEYOC Opening Minds conference in Chicago.

Within the memo, Megan Gessler indicated that Laura McCoy, former Environmental Education Supervisor, had provided her approval for staff to attend the conference.

Megan Gessler also presented a request to increase the salary of Natural Beginnings Lead Instructors from $10 to $12 per hour.

Jennifer Black, a parent of a student currently enrolled in Natural Beginnings, expressed her support for salary increases for Lead Instructors. Jennifer Black shared insights into the
Natural Beginnings budget, and suggested that she would submit her letter at some point following the meeting.

A petition signed by parents of students enrolled in Natural Beginnings was submitted to the District as part of the public record.

Kerry Sapet, a parent of a student currently enrolled in Natural Beginnings, expressed her support for salary increases for Lead Instructors. Kerry Sapet reported on the number of views a recent video posted to the internet received showcasing the Natural Beginnings program.

**XVI. Relocation Towing Agreement Updates**

Director Guritz provided a report on the towing rates for Grant Towing, Inc. President Wehrli stated that the rate information had been sent to Commission, and the agreement will be presented to Commission for approval.

Commissioner Koukol stated that he was not in favor of establishing a contract.

**XVII. Winter 2015-2016 Public Programs**

Director Guritz stated that the Programming and Events Committee had reviewed the winter programs, and is recommending approval of the fees and charges.

**XVIII. Shaw Media Proposal for Website Development and E-mail Marketing**

Director Guritz stated that the Programming and Events Committee had reviewed the Shaw Media proposal, and is recommending approval of the development of a website and one email marketing blast.

Commission packets included examples of websites produced by Shaw Media, and email campaign results.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the proposal, emphasizing the need for building in search optimization for the new site using key words.

Director Guritz stated that this will provide a new storefront for District programs, with eventual connections to online registration capabilities.

Consensus of the Committee of the Whole was to move forward with approval of the two items presented.
XIX. Review of Position Descriptions: Farm Manager and Resident and Events Coordinator

Director Guritz presented two draft position descriptions for review. Both descriptions are under review by the State’s Attorney’s Office.

Commissioner Gryder asked about the primary responsibilities for the Farm Manager position.

Director Guritz stated that the Farm Manager is a part time position, with a requirement to establish residency in the apartment at Ellis House.

This position will be responsible for overseeing grounds and maintenance, providing assistance for weddings and events, and assist with overall site administration.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the Farm Manager position, focusing on whether the apartment will produce the incentive needed for attracting qualified candidates to fill the position.

XX. Executive Session

Commissioner Wehrli made a motion to enter into executive session under 2(c)1 of the Open Meetings Act for the purpose of discussing 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 Gilmour.

Roll Call: Commissioners Cullick, Davidson, Gilmour, Gryder, Koukol, Prochaska, Purcell, and Wehrli, aye. Opposed, none. Executive Session called to order at 8:50 pm.

Commissioner Koukol made a motion to adjourn from executive session. Seconded by Commissioner Prochaska. All, aye. Regular meeting reconvened at 9:05 pm.

XXI. Other Items of Business

The Committee of the Whole discussed potential raise increases for District staff in the coming year. A proposal and recommendation will be developed following budget approval, providing that a budget savings is recognized. This proposal and recommendation will be presented to Commission for review and approval.
XXII. Adjournment

Commissioner Gryder made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Prochaska. Aye, all. Opposed, none. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District