

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES ~ EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE
JULY 12, 2023

CALL TO ORDER – At 5:04 PM, Don Peasley called to order the Lincoln Park District’s second meeting of the Efficiency Committee.

ROLL CALL – Commissioners attending were Don Peasley, Gary Nodine, Dave Perring, and Bob Thomas. Laura Duffer was absent. Attending from the Park District were Becky Strait and Angie Coombs. Community Representative present was Aimee Galvin and Sam White was absent.

Becky provided Bob with a quick recap from the previous meeting and introduced him to Aimee.

MINUTES –

Don Peasley made the motion to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2023 meeting. Dave Perring moved to second the motion, which then passed after a unanimous, roll-call vote.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Becky Strait

Becky informed the Committee that she and Angie had attended an Illinois Association of Park District webinar about the Efficiency Committee. It provided everyone with important details to note and other general information. Jason Anselment created a report, which was included in the packet for review, as a generic template for and guide for park districts to utilize. He did speak about the conversation within the government about possible consolidation of smaller units of local government. It is proposed that 5% of voters could be required to pass a referendum to dissolve local government entities. IAPD is currently fighting this legislature. It was stressed that the Efficiency Committee requirement does offer the opportunity to show the community how LPD is providing benefits. Thankfully, IAPD was able to get a lot of burdensome aspects removed from the requirements to ease the process.

In review of the large packet, a sample report was provided by IAPD with suggestions of what to fill in where to complete the report. The verbiage also states that the committee must meet, at minimum, 3 times within the 18-month period allotted to complete the report. Once the report is finalized and approved, it needs to be filed with the County. Gary inquired about the potential for the public to dissolve small units of local government with only a 5% measure, and who chooses which units to dissolve. Angie provided a brief explanation from her experience working at the City of Bloomington Township. There has been discussion for several years about the necessity of having Townships and the possibility of absorbing the duties by other local units of government. Some cities have succeeded in doing so, relocating the services at the City Hall, but then the public proceeded to complain about the “riff raff” constantly at City Hall regarding their Township services. She continued to explain that the State mandates the existence of Townships to provide basic (general) assistance with rent and utilities for individuals with very little to no income. Many townships also provide cemetery and county highway maintenance as well. Other than the General Assistance program, the maintenance services could be potentially absorbed by other local units of government, or at least that is what is speculated. The

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Township Officials of Illinois have been keeping a close eye on the matter, as Townships have been mentioned since the beginning of the consolidation topic.

Gary questioned the point of the report, which Becky explained that it provides LPD with the opportunity to demonstrate why Lincoln needs LPD. Aimee explained that the consolidation of small, local units of government has been a perpetual question at the State house. She continued to state that 2019 saw a property tax task force created to examine how it can be fixed and, as a result, derived the 5% minimum as a suggested solution. The local units of government would be fighting the efforts of 5% of the voters. Gary asked how any tax money would be saved when the monies / tax line item would be ultimately absorbed and then levied via a different entity. Aimee stated that by allowing 5% to make that determination, it is State's "play offense before defense" argument.

Becky pointed out that the County is the repository for all local units of government to file reports but is unsure if the County forwards any up the chain. Becky did credit IAPD for providing the packet as a good guideline to use. Gary and Bob stated that they would like to watch the webinar.

Becky inquired about Aimee and Sam's experience with the Open Meetings Act requirement, of which Aimee is familiar with and has completed the training for her full-time job. Bob asked Aimee where she sees the direction of the efficiency committee requirement going, and Becky explained that it has been proposed to require it every 10 years. Aimee verified that it would take a group of citizens or organizations to have a serious issue with a taxing district to consider even starting the process. Gary stated that such actions would risk a reduction in services and benefits to the entire community. Becky assured the Committee that IAPD has a good overview of what Park Districts do and provide their communities, and how they work.

Gary asked if Ordinances, such as the recent Conduct Ordinance that was passed would be included in the report. Becky verified that yes, and the samples provided can be removed or personalized for each Park District. By listing the ordinances passed for such matters, Becky thinks that it will give LPD the opportunity to record policies and ordinances in one place for a quick reference point. Becky points out that the last page lists possible guidelines to focus on during the process. The process also allows LPD to show its efficiency in providing numerous services and programs to the community with minimal tax dollars supporting the effort and will help justify the fees charged.

Becky reminded the Committee that she and Angie would be working on the Budget & Appropriation more in the next few months. November would be a good time to regroup, once the budget is tentatively done for the next fiscal year. Dave opined that it would be interesting to see what other tax districts submit in their reports, specifically those that received COVID funds and how they spent those dollars. Becky would like to think of this as an opportunity to back up why Lincoln Park District exists independently from the City of Lincoln and Logan County. Aimee pointed out that the report can also be used if the City revives the discussion about why LPD is independent and used as justification for LPD to remain a separate unit of government. Becky did state that she thinks that since the City

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Council has been more involved in discussions on matters, that there has been more collaboration, and the communication has improved.

ADJOURNMENT: 5:39 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is to be determined; Becky will notify everyone.