

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF WILLOWBROOK HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023 AT 5:30 P.M. AT THE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER, 825 MIDWAY DRIVE, WILLOWBROOK, DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

THE VILLAGE WILL BE OFFERING A ZOOM WEBINAR FOR THE MEETING TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ATTEND BY VIDEO OR AUDIO IF DESIRED. IF A MEMBER IS USING ZOOM, PLEASE EITHER USE YOUR PHONE OR COMPUTER, NOT BOTH.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Frank Trilla.

2. ROLL CALL

Those physically present at roll call were Village Clerk Deborah Hahn, Mayor Frank Trilla, Trustees Mark Astrella, Sue Berglund, Umberto Davi, Michael Mistele, Gayle Neal, Gregory Ruffolo, Village Administrator Sean Halloran, Assistant to the Village Administrator Alex Arteaga, Director of Community Development Michael Krol, Director of Parks and Recreation Dustin Kleefisch, Chief Robert Schaller, Deputy Chief Lauren Kaspar, Deputy Clerk Christine Mardegan, and Public Works Foreman AJ Passero.

Absent: Chief Financial Officer Lora Flori and Deputy Chief Benjamin Kadolph

A QUORUM WAS DECLARED

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Trilla asked Clerk Hahn to lead everyone in saying the pledge of allegiance.

4. VISITOR'S BUSINESS

Mr. Arteaga indicated that resident Jennifer Selden was present via zoom. Ms. Selden wished to speak on the topic of SEASPAR becoming the Special Recreation provider for Willowbrook. She indicated that as a parent who has been involved with the Ray Graham program in the past, she has not been happy the results achieved. She felt her daughter was not receiving the full benefit and opportunities afforded this type of program. She indicated she would love to have SEASPAR be the provider for the Willowbrook program. Based on her own research, the features offered by the SEASPAR program are outstanding compared to those offered by Ray Graham. She hopes that the resolution would come before the Board so that the Village can move forward with SEASPAR, not only for her daughter but for future Willowbrook residents.

Mayor Trilla thanked Ms. Selden for her heartfelt comments. The Board hopes to make a decision in the near future and will keep her and other residents informed.

The Mayor recognized resident Caryn Verduin, present at the meeting, as

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the next speaker.

Ms. Verduin indicated she had questions about the transition from Gateway to SEASPAR. What is the term of the contract and when would it start up?

Director Kleefisch stated that the transition period would be 18 months from July 1, 2023; so an August 2024 start with SEASPAR. The contract is an ongoing one, so technically no end date. There is an exit clause in the contract which can be exercised by the Village if not satisfied with the programs and services being provided.

Ms. Verduin asked if either Gateway or SEASPAR had come to the Village to provide additional information, or perhaps program guides, or brochures? Director Kleefisch indicated that, yes, SEASPAR had provided complete information on their programs which has been reviewed by staff. Neither association has arranged to present in-person information to the Village.

Ms. Verduin asked if Gateway would be given the opportunity to address the Board. Mayor Trilla indicated that this was not something that was generally done and would be discussed internally with the Board and staff. Willowbrook is represented on the Gateway board by Director Kleefisch and the Village is aware of the inner workings of Gateway.

Ms. Verduin also provided an update on the results of the weekend state championship basketball tournament which saw the local team bring home the gold. The excitement and joy experienced by all of those involved was palpable. She noted that keeping this type of group together is an important goal in choosing a Special Recreation association.

The Mayor thanked Ms. Verduin for her comments and input.

5. DISCUSSION – UPDATE REGARDING THE SOUTH EAST ASSOCIATION FOR SPECIAL PARKS AND RECREATION (SEASPAR)

Mayor Trilla asked the Director of Parks and Recreation to present the information.

Director Kleefisch updated the Board on the events occurring since the February 13th [2023] meeting:

- Communication with all participating resident families, including one-on-one phone calls.
- The Mayor, Administrator and Director held a meeting February 7th to speak as a group and gather the unique input, perspective and needs of each family.
- At that meeting, the Director also shared information on the transition details and timeline, the increase in programs that would be available.

- Providing the families with information on what drove this decision and why the Village began to look into a change in the first place, including communication responsiveness, financial audits and financial disclosures of the Gateway board and staff.

In a review of the 2020 Ray Graham Association [provider of the local Gateway services] audit, the most recently available audit, the line item for the Willowbrook \$600 thousand dollars contribution indicated it was allocated for "recreational services." This is not an accurate portrayal of where the tax dollars are going or what they are being used for. This is of concern to the Village and the families represented. The Ray Graham Association has not been responsive to the Village, nor the families they serve.

Additionally, there have been staff to client ratio decreases at Ray Graham. For clarification, any after-school program in the state of Illinois must follow DCFS [Department of Children and Family Services] rules, with a 10 to 1 staff to client ratio. For special needs participants, that ratio increase to a 10 to 3 staff to client ratio. Right now, the Gateway programs are running at a 10 to 1 ratio. This is problematic.

In Willowbrook, our participants fall at all of levels of the special needs spectrum. This means we, as a village, must do everything we can to provide service for all our residents.

One other issue which came up with Gateway is in regard to the actual number of participants from Willowbrook. Director Kleefisch was initially given a verbal count of 16 participants. When a roster was finally provided, it listed only 12. Upon further examination, only 5 of those were actual residents, the remaining 7 residing in unincorporated Willowbrook.

Additionally, on February 13th, Gateway staff informed program participants that the Village was immediately withdrawing from the program in order to save money. This fact was disputed by the Village, as, in actuality, the move to SEASPAR will cost the Village more. Again, using misinformation to scare our residents, has caused an even greater distrust of the Gateway program and its professionalism.

Reinforcing again, the transition to SEASPAR would be an 18-month process. SEASPAR staff would come and meet our resident-participants and their families to assist with the transition. An additional point that has been clarified in these discussions, is that non-residents would be able to participate in either program, Gateway or SEASPAR. For residents, there is precedent from other Special Recreation associations, to "grandfather" participation in their original program for 18 months beyond the changeover, with the local government covering the additional cost to the residents. Mayor Trilla was particularly interested in this aspect and would recommend offering this option to residents.

Trustee Berglund inquired regarding the difficulties with transportation faced by some participants and whether this is something with which the Village could assist. Director Kleefisch indicated that SEASPAR does have local community drop-off locations which would become an option for some families. Administrator Halloran added that staff has already been looking into possible drop-off locations for Willowbrook and whether any door-to-door options exist.

Trustee Davi appreciated the communication and the amount of detail provided.

Trustee Mistele agrees in principal with the program, whether Gateway or SEASPAR, that the Village will take care of its residents. He would however like additional information on costs and the length of time the program would be available.

Staff is requesting a consensus of the Board to move forward with the resolution to join SEASPAR which would be brought to the Board for a vote in April. By their comments, the consensus of the Board is to move forward to join SEASPAR in service to our residents.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Made by Trustee Davi and seconded by Trustee Mistele to adjourn the Special Meeting at the hour of 5:56 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Trustees Astrella, Berglund, Davi, Mistele, Neal and Ruffolo. NAYS: None. ABSENT: None.

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

PRESENTED, READ, and APPROVED.

_____, 2023.

Frank A. Trilla, Mayor

Minutes transcribed by Deputy Clerk Christine Mardegan.