

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

MARCH 2026

ADMINISTRATION

The Park District received 16 college scholarship applications for this year's program. The judging committee, consisting of staff members and Board Members, is reviewing each of the applications based on a set criterion, where all identifying factors were removed to eliminate any chance of bias. Park staff will forward names of successful candidates to the Lincoln-Way East High School PPS office, and FSPD representatives will attend the May 7, 2026, Community Scholarship Night to present the awards.

Made possible by an OSLAD grant through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the renovation of Hunter Prairie Park has been a wonderful experience, and it is rewarding to see residents enjoying the park and hearing their stories. While planning for the project started years ago, the OSLAD grant has a two-year timeframe ending March 31, 2026. Staff have entered the required plans, reports, photos, and financial documents into the AmpliFund portal, which is required for all grant projects. Lauterbach and Amen is currently completing an audit of the project and staff expect the results shortly. Once complete, the IDNR will distribute the remaining grant funds.

The current fiscal year's capital improvements primarily focused on the three large projects - renovations at The Square, the Hunter Prairie Park OSLAD redevelopment, and the new practice area at the golf course. Staff are working on the proposed 2026 – 2027 capital improvements list for Board consideration. The list contains projects based upon resident requests as well as scheduled priorities.

The latest draft of the proposed 2026 – 2027 budget includes the 2.9 % increase in the property tax line items based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This is the CPI used for the 2025 Levy, which agencies primarily receive in 2026. It does not account for new growth which will be detailed in the Will County Tax Rate Calculation expected at the end of this month and incorporated into the April Draft of the Operating Budget.

The Fund Balance Policy was established to provide financial stability, sufficient cash flow for operations, support long-term infrastructure plans, and ensure the Park District can respond to emergencies with fiscal strength. Following completion of this year's capital improvement projects, all policy targets continue to be met, and the Park District remains in a strong financial position.

March is the annual review of full-time personnel. Packets will be delivered for Board review in advance of the meeting. I will request an Executive Session at the conclusion of the regular meeting for discussion.

Staff are preparing for the next audit which will review FSPD financials and all areas of its operation. The audit planning meeting will be scheduled in late March/early April.

MAINTENANCE

The recent warm temperatures gave us all a taste of spring, and we are now filled with the anticipation of getting outside to play on playgrounds and athletic fields District-wide. Our maintenance staff manages their scheduled spring cleanup tasks and numerous special requests while balancing turf protection and care before the growing season begins.

The mowing contractor will begin work in early April for the 2026 season.

RECREATION

The dance competition season is well underway and our BDC dancers are having a phenomenal year. Congratulations to the entire BDC family on their many awards and amazing experiences!

Preschool program registration has increased over last year and the instructors continue to grow the program by introducing new opportunities. This month's extended hours with the Little Foodies program have been very popular and attracted new students.

Registrations for F.A.N. passes are up 20% over last year, with senior passes accounting for the largest area of growth. While many registrations are pass renewals, staff are also welcoming many new members. The morning hours continue to grow in popularity.

SPECIAL RECREATION

The March LWSRA Board Meeting was cancelled and required actions will be completed at the April meeting.

Many LWSRA programs are held in our community and staff from both agencies are scheduling time at the golf course, Nature Center, and Lincoln-Way North to provide upcoming program opportunities.

GOLF COURSE

Bank stabilization work was completed by the 8th hole tee box using rip rap to prevent erosion.

We are preparing to open the golf course on or about March 16. Spring cleanup is underway and amenities are being brought out of winter storage and placed back out onto the course and driving range. We are excited to welcome golfers for another great season at Square Links!

Many of the new golf lessons filled immediately and Dan Coughlin worked with Suzie Owens, LPGA Professional, to open additional timeslots to accommodate those on waiting lists.

OFFICE

Improvements were made to the online registration system providing residents with greater access and control over their account information. Also, online information was reorganized to help residents find the information they need with fewer clicks.

COMMUNITY UPDATES

The Maddog Strong Foundation is pivoting this year to a walk format for the annual Miles for Maddog event on June 27, 2026. This is always a busy day in the community, and we appreciate the continued cooperation of various community groups to support each other's activities.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The American Heart Association recently introduced new CPR guidelines, and our CPR/AED instructors completed their training and certification updates. The FSPD's 2026 training calendar was also released, and staff are reserving their slots for this important training.

FOIA

Staff received and fulfilled a FOIA request from Judiciocracy LLC. Many public agencies received the same request, and it was not specific to our agency. The request included invoices and agreements with attorneys. Staff time and costs are reflected in the FOIA summary that is posted with the March agenda, and the document will be updated to include attorney fees once the Ancel Glink invoice is received.

Respectfully submitted:

Audrey Marcquenski
Executive Director