

SOUTHWEST SPECIAL RECREATION ASSOCIATION
12521 SOUTH KOSTNER
ALSIP, IL 60803

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING November 7, 2007
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CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of South West Special Recreation Association (SWSRA) was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Director Gleason. The meeting was held at the Alsip Park District, Alsip, Illinois

ROLL CALL

Present at roll call were:

MIDLOTHIAN PARK DISTRICT	EVELYN GLEASON
ALSIP PARK DISTRICT	JEANNETTE HUBER
PALOS HEIGHTS RECREATION DEPT.	MIKE LEONARD
VILLAGE OF MERRIONETTE PARK	BRENDA DZIALLO
SUMMIT PARK DISTRICT	TOM SUHS
BLUE ISLAND PARK DISTRICT	DOMINIC COGAN
JUSTICE PARK DISTRICT	CALI DEBELLA

SWSRA STAFF PRESENT:

LORI CHESNA	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARGE COZZONE	BUSINESS MANAGER
ERIN LYNCH	SUPERINTENDENT OF RECREATION

ABSENT

POSEN PARK DISTRICT	REPRESENTATIVE
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ADDITIONS OR REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA: None.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD - None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 10, 2007

Motion made by Director Huber to approve Minutes of Regular Meeting held on October 10, 2007. Motion was seconded by Director Leonard. All Directors were in favor; none opposed.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Director DeBella. Director Suhs made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report with a combined ending balance of \$67,589.07. Director Dziallo seconded the motion. Director Suhs questioned the payment to PACE in the amount of \$1.50. Marge Cozzone responded that this was the balance due after they applied a credit for two months of lease payments to reimburse us for the physicals and drug testing that they required us to take. Roll was called with all Directors voting yes. The motion carried, 7—0.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- A. **OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS**
Executive Director Chesna reported that the Brown County Fall Getaway took place but Erin Lynch had already reported on that. The 80's Dance went fairly well, although it was too hot in the facility. The heat was regulated and it was on a timer so we couldn't change it. We did get a complaint regarding this. We attended the Halloween Hip Hop, but the Johansen Farms & Children's Zoo was cancelled due to low enrollment.
- B. **EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH**
Executive Director Chesna announced that Erin Lynch was the Employee of the Month. Erin has gone through a transitional period working through issues with a new employee, but now Erin seems to be able to get on with her responsibilities instead of getting involved in two jobs. On the recent trip, she did all of the arrangements for Oak Lawn who also went, so we are still building relationships with Oak Lawn. We did make a profit. She was also involved with the PACE issue since she is in charge of the vehicles. Lori read the wording ("Make It Happen...") on the plaque which was presented to Erin.
- C. **PACE UPDATE**
Lori asked Director Gleason to give a report on this subject. The board was informed that at the recent South Suburban Directors meeting, Lori and Director Gleason found out that all of the PACE agreements will be honored for anyone who now has a current vehicle that needs to be purchased for \$1. Lori stated that we did not sign new contracts with PACE. We did follow up and get everyone tested so our drivers went through one-hour training. Some had to go through a supervisor's training. It was a hassle, but Lori said that she learned a lot. Director Huber thanked Director Gleason who was instrumental in getting this situation solved for all of us. Director Gleason said that she was amazed at how many people spent money on lawyers and got nowhere.
- D. **5-YEAR PLAN**
Executive Director Chesna said that she thought the board was supposed to read through this and then discuss how we should start implementing them. Actually, we are already implementing them. The bus was in there which was part of the process. Director Leonard said that the important part is not the plan, but the implementation of the plan. Lori agreed and said that we will be discussing more about this as we go on with the meeting.

Director Gleason said that one of the things that should be included is the layout or changing of the corporate logo. Lori said that she wants to do this soon. Director Gleason doesn't think that our current logo represents what SWSRA does. Lori said that she spent money on the logo when it was done in 2000. That's not that long ago, but it's not a practical logo and she wants to redo it.
- E. **SWSRA HOLIDAY PARTY**
Fountain Hills is where our holiday appreciation and recognition party will be held. In addition to recognizing our staff and volunteers, we wanted to come up with a recognition program to award the people who have helped us. This year it will be for one of our member districts. We are going to recognize their board. They will not be invited to the party, but we will go to their board meeting and present the award. This year we will recognize Senator Maloney for his help with the grant money. The third award will be presented to a person or group that may be in your district who understands the process of SWSRA. We do have someone in mind, and they will be at the party. Lori is finalizing the details.

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Director Suhs returned to the topic of the logo. He asked what is going to happen with the new logo. Lori said that we will be looking for help from anyone who has the background in marketing and design. We can also work with printers. Director Leonard mentioned that he knows of a PR firm named Barcelona & Company who he could approach. Lori said that we will be prepared to spend the money although we are a non-profit organization so we can't go overboard. Director Suhs suggested that we put it on the agenda for next month. Director Gleason wants to see what some of the other SRAs have and who they used. Director Leonard asked if Lori could make it a competition? Lori said that is what we did last time. We wanted clients to submit their ideas and keep it simple. The person who ended up winning did have some experience. Lori said that she will get copies of other logos from SRAs by the next meeting. Director Gleason said that there are a lot of them in the SSPRPA book.

F. NEW SWSRA BUS ARRIVES

Lori had planned to take the executive board for a ride on the new bus today. Director Huber said we could still take a ride over to the golf course if we wanted. Lori said that she took it to the Candlelight Bowl and her husband, Bob, who is 6' 4", had to sit in the back seat. There are four seats that have built-in child booster restraints. There is room for two wheelchairs. Director Gleason asked if SWSRA was going to get its name on the bus. Lori said that she is worried about the stigma argument. Lori said that she will probably use a magnet. Someone suggested that we put Senator Maloney's name on the back with wording like "provided by..."

G. CENSUS

Executive Director Chesna thanked Director Suhs for bringing this material to her attention. It was quite shocking, and each one of you can examine your own district. Lori talked about what constitutes a disability and how they can be served. The fact that these are statistics means that we need to extrapolate what is important to us. Marge helped me pull together some percentages and some of the communities are very low. We are under serving these communities. I think we knew this, but I don't think we knew this to the extent that the percentages show. The SRA survey that was done stated that typically an SRA serves 1% of the population. Other SRAs are "fudging" their numbers. They count everything like the candlelight bowl or a golf outing, etc. SWSRA only uses the numbers of actual clients who participate. Lori told the board that she left a column blank for each district to figure out what percentage they serve. Where are you at? Are your numbers in the same proportion as SWSRA's? What this tells us is that we have to find more people to serve. We all sat down as employees and brainstormed some ideas to accomplish this. West Suburban SRA has a media and outreach person and Lori had given the board an outline of their duties. There are a lot of places that we need to "hit up."

Director Dziallo is trying herself as a board member to get in the door with the school district. Director Dziallo added that it is difficult for a school to recommend this because then they would have to pay for it. We want to go through the schools, but we need to go in the backdoor to present it. We can't go through the schools, but we can go through the PTA. They put out a newsletter. We do a little blurb and that goes to every student. The follow-up to that is a flyer. You all (park districts) do it, why can't SWSRA? We have been sitting around and bandying this back and forth, and I have been trying to figure out how to get to schools. What about the parochial schools? Director Huber said that it is a great idea. The only thing we found is that we have to send a flyer to the administrative building, and they have to approve it first and then send it home. Director Dziallo said that in the District 125 newsletter, we are planning a two sentence blurb. Director Huber said that she understands why they won't write into an IAP. It's not that they won't pass out a flyer about it. Director Dziallo related what happened to her personally when her son was five. She was in a meeting with five different people at the school, and

when she asked them what she could do to help her son; they wouldn't answer her because they didn't want to be liable.

Executive Director Chesna said that this past year we have been pumping it up. Just this past week we went to the Autism Conference at the Oak Lawn Hilton. Lori walked around and distributed a referral sheet that we have for SRAs and introduced herself. This sheet has the SRAs listed in alphabetical order on one side and on the other side, it shows the communities that they serve. Lori distributed the ideas that the staff had put together.

Lori proceeded to review the list of suggestions that she and the staff had outlined. Lori commented that some of these things had already been tried and failed. One of the problems is that not all of the people are residents in our districts. Lori stated that we can start up the Leisure Ed program again now that we have the new bus. The fact that SWSRA doesn't offer credit card payment was discussed, and it was agreed that this would be a good idea. As far as on-line registration, the website is not being visited and it's not worth the money to institute it. Director Suhs said that there is some way he's heard of that you can register on line, but it's actually more like an email. Lori told the board about a new website that we are all participating in, and we will get referrals back. You won't be able to get them or get a link unless you contributed. It cost between \$300 and \$500 to get it running. We are all looking for ways to develop our numbers. The staff had training on the site recently via the web.

Lori continued down the list of ideas. Lori told the board that SWSRA could include information about bigger events that member districts have—like the Alsip Fun Fest. Director Cogan commented that the Blue Island Fest hadn't gone too well and they were discontinuing it. The board discussed their fests and events and their success or failure. Executive Director Chesna suggested that if member districts were sending a flyer out, it would be nice if there could be one or two sentences about SWSRA. Some of the member districts already give SWSRA space in their brochures. Director Huber thought SWSRA might want to consider sending a brochure to every one of the districts' clients. Lori said that each brochure we print costs SWSRA \$1. Director Dziallo said that she thinks a lot of things have to change. She has talked to people who have no idea about the Jeffrey Hickman Fund. Even though it is in the front of the brochure, they look at the table of contents and go to what they want. Lori said that there is a lot of information that PDRMA requires us to include, but we put that toward the back of the book.

Director Leonard said that he thinks that brochures are the best marketing piece that park districts and SRAs can do. Director Suhs said that we are on the cusp of all of these things being on the website, for example, "for additional information on this program, go to swsra.com" The brochures will all be on the web in another fifteen years. You can download the registration form and master right now. Director Leonard said that he would make a motion to approve a position for a 20 hour per week marketing outreach person right now, but Director Gleason said to wait and do it under "New Business." Lori asked the board to please take more personal responsibility of telling the SWSRA story. Lori used Director Leonard as an example who in the past had failed to tell her about an organization. Lori told him that we had a Chamber Fair and Director Leonard said that he should have told her about their Chamber. Lori did join Midlothian Chamber, but it is hard to get to all of these meetings. Lori said that if you are going to do it, let us know because we will want to do it. Director Huber said that the Chambers do mailings every month. Lori asked Director Cogan if he had one in Blue Island. He said that they do, but he doesn't attend the meetings.

Lori said that she and Director Suhs had been talking about a Justice/Summit satellite office, and we could have someone there part time. This would make it more accessible out there so they could easily register. We need to get to know the school district out there. That side of town definitely needs the attention. Lori said that she knows the board has their own events to attend, but it would be nice if you could attend a SWSRA function, especially if it is at your facility. The board could divvy them out at the beginning of the year. Then you could all say, “Wow, this is why we do what we do” because you become distant from that. Lori said that some districts are giving SWSRA the use of more facilities than others. Some districts don’t have any to offer. By having programs and events in your area, it will help us pump up the numbers in your area.

Lori talked to the new major of Crestwood, Robert Stanczek. We have a priority to take care of our own member districts now. To bring in someone new right now is not the biggest priority. Lori asked the board to submit some of their own ideas by email. Director Suhs said he was wondering about what the staff put together. There is so much here. We have talked so much about the various items—maybe it is a matter of zeroing in on one particular thing rather than trying to do too many. Maybe it would be developing children’s programs. Are there more children in the Alsip area as opposed to other areas? Lori thanked Director Suhs for recognizing this. What came out of the 5 Year Plan isn’t new to us. We have tried a lot, but haven’t mastered it. Last Christmas we put together programs for a school in Summit and sent out flyers and met with the teachers. We were planning two days in-house and one day for a downtown field trip. Not one person signed up!

When a new position is created, that person will need priorities to focus on. Lori will sit with staff and see what should be done in three months and then six months, etc. Director Leonard said that the board should see a full job description and then make the motion. Director Gleason said we need to look into taking credit cards and debit cards. Go through IAPD. Director Suhs said that there is a way of doing this on line with their registration. Director Huber said that Alsip does this now—the people fax in their registrations with their credit card number on it. Director Gleason said that this is a must, especially with younger people. They don’t carry cash.

H. PDRMA

Tim from PDRMA encouraged us to submit this program. All it was is that we take a picture of each child with their identifying characteristics such as green eyes, mole in a certain place, etc. Each site director carried it with them. If I have 40 kids on a bus that I am responsible for, this will help me identify them. It ended up winning us \$2,500. Lori added that digital cameras tell the SWSRA story. Some of the camp counselors put together a montage of what happened at Day Camp. They put it on a C/D and distributed it. Director Suhs said that there is your media piece right there—put that on your web site. Lori agreed and said that it is great to see the staff interacting with the children.

I. ROLL 4 DICE BENEFIT

Executive Director Chesna told the board about this benefit for one of our day camp counselors which is set for November 18th at Bourbon Street. Lori stated that she had raffle tickets with her if anyone wished to purchase one. They are \$10 and tickets for the benefit are \$25.

J. BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE

Executive Director Chesna said that she realizes that it is sometimes difficult for the board members to know if they will be able to attend SWSRA board meetings. Director Dziallo is a substitute teacher, so every morning, she can be called. Lori asked the other board members to please let her know in advance if they would be absent. Lori said that sometimes she has to chase people down to see if they will be coming. It would be very helpful if you can name a substitute to attend in your place. Lori asked Marge Cozzone to collect these names.

Director Huber made a motion to accept the Executive Director's Report; seconded by Director DeBella. All Directors were in favor; none opposed.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT –

CORRESPONDENCE – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. RECREATION - No report.

B. FINANCE

1. Approval of Bills & Payroll

Motion made by Director Huber to approve bills for the month of November, 2007 in the amount of \$66,895.28. Motion was seconded by Director DeBella.

C. PLANNING & POLICY – No report

D. PUBLIC RELATIONS - No report

OLD BUSINESS -

A question arose regarding the proposed evening board meeting and when that would take place. Lori responded that the meeting calendar is set with the beginning of the new fiscal year. Director Huber suggested that perhaps the May 2008 meeting would be a good time to have the evening meeting.

Lori advised that we are planning a parent support group meeting in January. Director Leonard asked if one board member would go to the advisory meeting. Lori said that Director Dziallo could do that since she is a parent and a board member. Lori commented that this group would be welcome to some parents and went on to tell about one parent who has a teenage son who likes to escape from the house during the night. Director Dziallo added that the mom has to sleep in front of the front door at night—even with the security system, the son has learned to get out of the house. In addition, she just took in her brother and she is now his caregiver. She doesn't have a clue, and something like this would be real helpful for her. In the front of SWSRA's brochure it says about getting an advisory group—we could get that from the support group.

NEW BUSINESS –

Director Leonard made a motion to approve the Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended April 30, 2007. The motion was seconded by Director DeBella. Some of the points in the letter to the Board of Directors were discussed. Lori informed the board of the new procedure to improve control over payroll processing whereby Marge gives her a payroll report verifying all information along with the time sheets and payroll checks. In regard to bank deposits, Marge said that there is always a “double count” which Lori signs off on and makes the deposit. Regarding member district contributions, Marge explained that there has always been confusion regarding the timing of the contributions versus the collection of the taxes by the member districts versus the audit which reports the first payment of one fiscal year and the second payment of the next fiscal year. This results in the budget amount not corresponding with the audit amount. The auditor is recommending that this be changed in the future so that revenue will be recognized on the same schedule. Roll was called with all Directors voting yes. Motion carried, 7—0.

A discussion followed regarding the auditors and their rates. A few of the Directors agreed that there are other firms out there who are good, but when it comes to comparing rates, Knutte has the best. Regarding SWSRA’s investment policy, Lori is working on that.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Director Leonard to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Director DeBella. All Directors were in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Marge Cozzone, Corresponding Secretary

Mike Leonard, Corporate Secretary