

Efficiency Report for the Des Plaines Park District

Approved by the Park District's
Committee on Local Government Efficiency
January 4, 2024



I. Purpose

The Des Plaines Park District formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on May 16, 2023, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, *et seq.* (the “Committee”).

II. Committee Membership

The Committee consisted of the following individuals:

Board President Jana Bishop Haas

Commissioner Erin Doerr

Commissioner James Grady

Commissioner Donald Rosedale

Commissioner Eli Williams

Resident Member Donna Adam

Resident Member Brian Inzerello

Resident Member Sharon Lynch

Resident Member Ann Fastert

III. Committee Meetings

The Committee met as follows:

Meeting Date	Meeting Time and Place
October 5, 2023	Des Plaines Park District Administrative and Leisure Center 6:00 pm - 7:20 pm David L. Markworth Board Room 2222 Birch Street Des Plaines IL, 60018
November 2, 2023	Des Plaines Park District Administrative and Leisure Center 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm David L. Markworth Board Room 2222 Birch Street Des Plaines IL, 60018
November 30, 2023	Des Plaines Park District Administrative and Leisure Center 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm David L. Markworth Board Room 2222 Birch Street Des Plaines IL, 60018
January 4, 2024	Des Plaines Park District Administrative and Leisure Center 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm David L. Markworth Board Room 2222 Birch Street Des Plaines IL, 60018

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Park District's website www.dpparks.org or upon request at the Park District's administrative office.

IV. General Overview of Governing Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction

The Park District was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of the Park District on January 25, 1919. All Illinois park districts, including the Park District, are governed by the Park District Code, 70 ILCS 1205/1 *et seq.*

Having a separate and distinct taxing body for parks, recreation, and conservation within the local community, which operates apart from general-purpose governments, is extremely beneficial to the community for many reasons, as detailed further in this report.

- **Elected, non-partisan, non-compensated board.** The Park District is governed by a board of five commissioners. Commissioners must reside within the boundaries of the park district and are elected at the Consolidated Election in odd-numbered years. Pursuant to state law, commissioners are non-partisan and serve without compensation.
- **Accessible and focused representation.** Having a dedicated board to oversee these essential facilities, programs, and services provides the community with increased access to their elected representatives and allows those elected representatives to remain focused solely on those facilities, programs, and services. This is contrasted with general-purpose governments where elected representatives are responsible for broad oversight on a wide range of issues. This special purpose benefit is particularly advantageous when it comes to budget and finance oversight.
- **Increased transparency.** Having a dedicated unit of local government to provide park and recreation services also improves the relationship between the park district and its residents because of the transparency and openness related to the board and park district operations. Having a detailed agenda and action items allows taxpayers to be better informed about the inner workings of their local government. When individual units of government are responsible for providing specified services like park districts, transparency is increased because action items and budget procedures are more detailed. Additionally, these items and budgetary decisions are subject to more scrutiny by locally elected officials than is the case with larger, multi-purpose governments with a multitude of departments.
- **Protection of revenues.** Because the Park District is a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for park district purposes. This assurance is contrasted with general-purpose governments like cities, villages, and counties that provide a multitude of services such as fire, police, public works, economic development, etc., where revenues that are generated specifically for parks and recreation can be expended on these other services with limited, if any, input from voters.

- **Protection of assets.** Public parks and other real property owned by the park district are held in trust for the residents of the park district and, subject to very limited exceptions, can only be sold or transferred if residents approve of the sale or transfer by providing legal meetings to hold input from the community. This is contrasted with general-purpose units of government, which have the authority to sell or dispose of property by a vote of the governing board.
- **Providing the Community More with Less.** The Park District does more with fewer funding options. Unlike other units of local government that receive direct state funding and income, sales, use, hotel/motel, motor fuel, and other numerous taxes, the Park District's only tax revenues come from a modest portion of a resident's overall property tax bill. In fact, despite its limited funding options, the Park District's share is only 4.8% of the local tax bill. We ensure annual public transparency by reviewing the tax levy ordinance and providing a Truth in Taxation hearing.

As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the management of day-to-day operations, the Park District has also adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures:

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| • Operations Manual | • Safety and Risk Management Policies |
| • Board Policies and Procedures Manual | • Strategic Plan |
| • Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual | • Comprehensive Master Plan |
| • General Conduct Ordinances | • Annual Report Comprehensive Financial Report |
| • Personnel Policies/Employee Manual or Handbook | • Environmental Plan |
| | • Community Needs Assessment Survey |

V. List of Shared Services and Partnerships

The Park District works diligently to provide the best possible programs, services, and facilities to our community at the least possible cost. One of the many ways the Park District achieves this goal is by partnering with neighboring park districts, school districts, other units of local government within or near the community, the State, non-profit organizations, and for profit corporations. Below is a comprehensive list of the current partnerships, agreements, and other relationships that assist the Park District's mission of delivering the best possible services at the least possible cost to our community.

1. Membership in Maine Niles Association of Special Recreation (MNASR)

The Park District is part of the Maine Niles Association of Special Recreation (MNASR), a Special Recreation Association ("SRA"). Special recreation associations are a form of intergovernmental cooperation among units of local government that are authorized under the Illinois Constitution, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, the Park District Code, and the Municipal Code. Their formation is rooted in a fundamental belief and recognition that "Recreation is for Everyone." They are shining examples of local government efficiency.

By partnering together, local communities are able to effectively and efficiently deliver more successful program opportunities to community members who have special needs. Furthermore, by participating in the SRA, the Park District networks with six other local governments to provide many more program opportunities for our community members who have special needs and offers a choice between participating in the SRA's programs or in programs that are provided by the Park District.

The Park District and the SRA also achieve efficiency by utilizing existing facilities that are owned and operated by the SRA's members, including the Park District. Utilizing these existing facilities allows the SRA to deliver services to its member communities at a lower cost. Currently, the Park District provides the SRA access to the following facilities for their program offerings:

- Golf Center
- Lake Park
- Lakeview Center
- Mt View Mine
- Prairie Lakes Aquatic Center
- Prairie Lakes Community Center
- Arndt Park
- Chippewa Pool
- Mystic Waters
- West Park
- Administrative and Leisure Center

The SRA also provides the support needed for participants with special needs who choose to register for the Park District programs or inclusive programming. The SRA collects information on the registered participant and determines what support is needed for that participant to be successful in this inclusive setting or the Park District program. This could include additional training of the supervisory staff, additional support staff, the use of adaptive equipment, behavior management, and/or other measures that will assist in the successful participation of this individual in the Park District program. Although success may not look the same for everyone, the SRA works with the Park District's staff to ensure the best possible results for all the participants in the program. The Park District's cost of providing these services would be much greater without its participation and partnership in the SRA.

In 2022, the SRA successfully served 72 residents in 341 programs. The SRA also supported 30 participants in inclusive programs that were provided by the Park District.

The Park District is very proud of the ongoing collaboration with the SRA. By working cooperatively with other local governments, not only are we better able to collectively serve all citizens within our communities, including persons with disabilities, but we are able to do so in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

2. Other intergovernmental agreements with other park districts, forest preserve districts, conservation districts, or municipal recreation agencies

- Park Ridge Park District (Ice Rink)
- Glenview Park District (Golf)
- The Frisbie Senior Center

3. Intergovernmental agreements with other units of local government

- Community Consolidated School District 62 (Gym)
- City of Des Plaines Craig Manor Stormwater Management agreement
- Des Plaines Police Department provides additional policing resources during larger Park District events

4. Intergovernmental agreements with the State of Illinois

- Sourcewell Joint Purchasing Program (for non-profit and government agencies).

5. Partnerships or agreements with athletic or similar affiliate organizations that operate sports or other leagues

- Des Plaines Warriors Soccer Club
- Jr. Warriors Football and Cheerleading

- Des Plaines Youth Baseball
- Des Plaines Girls Softball
- Excellent Volleyball Professionals Academy Youth Volleyball
- Shotokan Karate
- Oakton Ice Arena

6. Partnerships or other interrelationships with non-profits

- Des Plaines History Center
- Des Plaines Camera Club
- Des Plaines Art Guild
- Rand Park Dog Training Club
- The Frisbie Senior Center
- MNASR (Maine Niles Association of Special Recreation)
- Des Plaines Friends of the Park

7. Partnerships with for profit organizations

- Fox Tail Restaurant Group
- Dream World Golf
- Top Golf
- Rivers Casino
- Millennium Bank
- Abbott Laboratories

8. Informal cooperation with other units of local government, which saves taxpayer dollars by eliminating redundancy.

- City of Des Plaines
- Maine Township

VI. Other Examples of Efficient Operations

Use of volunteers. One way in which the Park District reduces the burden on taxpayers is through the use of volunteers. Last year, 80 individuals volunteered 1,600 total hours of service to the Park District assisting staff and reducing payroll expenses.

Youth employment. The Park District is a major employer of youth in the community. Last year, the Park District employed 575 youth. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment serves as a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

Joint purchasing The Park District participates in joint purchasing cooperatives pursuant to the Governmental Joint Purchasing Act (30 ILCS 525/0.01 *et seq.*), thereby saving taxpayer dollars through economies of scale. These include:

- Vehicles
- Mowing equipment
- Roofing Projects

The Des Plaines Friends of the Park Foundation. Last year, the Foundation raised \$357,000 in private donations, which helped alleviate the burden on taxpayers. The Foundation also supported the Park District by:

- Donation of \$330,000 to the Park District for capital improvement projects
- Provided \$27,000 for our in-need community members' recreation and camp scholarship programs, helping more than 60 families.

Collaboration with other park districts on best practices. Because park districts are not in competition with one another, they are more willing than the private sector to share best practices. These best practices help to avoid unnecessary costs and deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

Reliance on Non-Tax Revenue. Unlike most local governments that rely on a wide range of sales, use, and income taxes, the Park District is not permitted to assess these types of taxes. Additionally, although the Park District is an economic engine for the community and generates much revenue for the state and our community in the form of hotel/motel, sales, and motor fuel taxes, our Park District does not receive any of these revenues. Also, unlike Illinois cities, villages, counties, and school districts that received billions of dollars in direct financial assistance from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), our Park District did not receive any such direct federal aid. Our Park District also does not receive state funding under the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) or General State Aid (GSA) that these same cities, villages, counties, and school districts receive through the State budget.

Instead, the Park District provides all of the programs, facilities, and services to the community with a very modest amount of property taxes and from non-tax sources such as memberships, program registrations, and other user fees as well as private donations and grants.

VII. Transparency to the Community

The following information about the Park District may be obtained by citizens in the location listed. The Park district is undergoing a website redesign and some of the links may become disconnected. Our web site address is www.dpparks.org

Documents and Location(s) Available

- Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance - <https://www.dpparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Annual-Budget-2023-2024.pdf> / Administrative Offices
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Audit for Fiscal Year Ended April 30th, 2023 - <https://www.dpparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Des-Plaines-Park-District-ACFR-23-FINAL-09.2023.pdf>
- Annual Tax Levy - <https://taxreportsearch.cookcountyclerk.kil.gov/RevisedTaxReportSearch.aspx> / Administrative Offices
- Agenda and Minutes - <https://www.dpparks.org/agendas-and-minutes-2023> / Administrative Offices
- Statement of Receipts and Disbursements - Administrative Offices
- Conduct Ordinances - <https://www.dpparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/23-03-Park-Board-Policies-Ordinances-Rules-Patron-Reference-Version.docx.pdf> / Administrative Offices
- Long-range Plans - www.dpparks.org / Administrative Offices
- Strategic Plans - <https://www.dpparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2019-2024-Strategic-Plan-Final-Addendums-Updates-for-2023-3.6.24.pdf> / Administrative Offices
- Capital improvement Plan - <https://www.dpparks.org/capital-projects/> / Administrative Offices
- Community Needs Assessment <https://www.dpparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Des-Plaines-Park-District-Community-Needs-Assessment-Final-Report.pdf> / Administrative Offices
- Community Needs Survey - <https://www.dpparks.org/community-needs-survey/> / Administrative Offices
- Company Status for 2022 Minority Owned, Women Owned Business, Veteran Owned - <https://www.dpparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Copy-of-MINORITY-VENDOR-REPORT-TO-BE-PUBLISHED-1.4.24-003.pdf> / Administrative Offices
- ADA Transition Plan - Administrative Offices

The Park District offers residents many opportunities to provide feedback. These include:

- The Board of Commissioners meets once each month. Residents may provide public comment at every meeting.
- The Park District's annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance is available in tentative form at least 30 days prior to its adoption at an open meeting of the Park District board. Additionally, at least one public hearing is held prior to final

action, and notice of the hearing is published in the newspaper at least one week prior to the hearing.

- The Park District's annual property tax levy is approved at an open meeting of the Park District board in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The Park District follows all public notice and hearing requirements under the Truth in Taxation Law prior to the adoption of this annual tax levy.
- The Park District holds public hearings every two years in accordance with the Bond Issue Notification Act (BINA) 70 ILCS 1205/ of the Park District Code.
- Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at 847.391.5700 or email at registration@dpparks.org

Committees, Boards, etc. that have community representation.

- The Des Plaines - Kiwanis International
- The Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- The Optimist Club of Des Plaines
- The Frisbie Senior Center
- The Des Plaines History Center
- MNASR (Maine Niles Association of Special Recreation)
- Des Plaines Garden Club
- Des Plaines Friends of the Parks

Community surveys and other resident surveys in the past 5 years

- 2022 Des Plaines Park District Community Needs Survey
- Program Participant Surveys - Seasonal
- Fitness Member Surveys - Seasonal

Public hearings where community input was obtained in the past 5 years

- Des Plaines Friends of the Parks Board Meeting - Monthly
- Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act Committee Board Meetings
- Special Park District Board Meetings – Periodically
- New Park Planning

VIII. District Awards and Recognition

The Park District's achievements have been recognized in numerous ways.

- Joint Distinguished Accredited Agency
- Board President Jana Bishop Haas, Commissioner James Grady, and Commissioner Donald Rosedale Longevity Distinction of 20+ service years.
- Certifications held by the Park District staff:
 - Don Miletic, CPRP
 - Annette Curtis, CPRP
 - Nicole Dale, PHR
 - Joe Weber: CPO, CPRP
 - Paul Guza: UST Operator, CPO
 - April Lohr, CPRP
 - Jennifer Boys, CPO, CPRP
 - Candice Basista, CPRP, HIS Instructor Cert
 - Ryan Panneka, CPSI
 - Brian Panek, CPRP
 - Jim Alferes, CPSI, Pesticide Applicator
 - Patrick Barton, Pesticide Applicator
 - Ziggy Wisniowski: CPO
 - Esteban Cardenas: CPO
 - Jim Poloniak: CPO
 - Amanda Javers: CPO
 - Mike Tuntland: CPO
 - Tyler Fuchs: CPRP
 - Esteban Cardenas: CPO

Certified Pool Operator (CPO), Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), Professional in Human Resources (PHR), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI), Underground Storage Tank Operator (UST)

IX. Benefits and Services

The Park District serves the entire community, from the youngest child to the oldest adult and all ages in between. It does so in a variety of ways.

The Park District offered the following facilities to the community last year:

Facilities

1. Administrative and Leisure Center
2. Arndt Fieldhouse and Pool
3. Chippewa Pool
4. Golf Center Des Plaines
5. Lake Park Golf Course and Marina

6. Lakeview Center
7. Mountain View Adventure Center
8. Mystic Water Aquatics Center
9. Oakwood Maintenance Center
10. Prairie Lakes Aquatics Center
11. Prairie Lakes Community Center

Parks

1. Apache Park
2. Arndt Park
3. Blackhawk Park
4. Bluett Park
5. Centennial Park
6. Central Park
7. Cherokee Park
8. Cheyenne park
9. Chippewa Park
10. Cornell Park
11. Craig Manor Park
12. Cumberland Terrace Park
13. Des Plaines Manor Park
14. Yates Crossing at Weller Creek
15. DiMucci-Lowenberg Park
16. Eaton Field Park

17. Hawaii Park
18. Hoffman Park
19. Jaycee Park
20. Kiwanis Park
21. Kylemore Greens Park
22. Kutchen Park
23. Lake Park
24. McKay-Nealis Park
25. Menominee Park
26. Mohawk Park
27. Mystic Waters Water Park
28. North Golf Cul de Sac Park
29. Northshire Park
30. Orchard Court
31. Prairie Lakes Park
32. Potawatomie Park

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| 33. Rand Park | 40. West Park |
| 34. Seminole Park | 41. Westfield Gardens |
| 35. Sesqui centennial Park | 42. Westfield Park |
| 36. Sioux Park | 43. Willow Park |
| 37. South Golf Cul de Sac Park | 44. Winnebago Park |
| 38. Teton Park | 45. Woodlawn Park |
| 39. Tomahawk Park | 46. Yale Court |

Programs

The Park District offered the following programs this year.

- Preschool
 - Terrific 3s, Fabulous 4s and 5s, Pre K, Spanish Immersion
- School Days Off
- Dance
 - Dance Classes, Dance Idol, Ballet Barre Burn, Poms Dance Team, Acrobatics and Aerial Silks
- Theater
- Music
 - Community Concert Band, Jam Band, Music Lessons and Rock-n-Tots
- Swim
 - Swim Lessons, Warriors Swim Team, Aqua Exercise, and Water Polo
- Special Events
 - Chili Open, Winter Wonder Land, Frosted Fairy Fest, Reindeer Regatta, Holiday Tree Lot, Floating Pumpkin Patch, Trunk or Treat, H2O Night,

Kiwanis Cup, The World's Largest Swim Lesson, Movies in the Park,
Family Day, Fall Fest, and Daddy Daughter Dance

- Adult Programs
 - Fitness, Personal Training, Pickleball, Raquetball, and Golf
- Athletics
 - Soccer, Flag Football, Basketball, Ice Hockey, Volleyball, Tennis, Karate,
Foot Golf and Gymnastics
- Dog Obedience
- Camp
 - Teen, Youth, Sailing, and Golf

Program Participation 2023

Registration total participation: 13,798

Registration unique participants: 4,108

1. Additional Services

The Park District provided the following additional services to the community.

- Special Recreation Services
- Scholarships for families in need
- Provide Recreation Space through Internal Governmental Agreements (IGA) with School Districts

2. Other Benefits

While the Park District is a special purpose district, its impact on the community is multi-faceted and far-reaching. For example, the Park District's parks, recreational programming, and other opportunities improve the community's overall physical and mental health and wellness, thereby reducing healthcare costs. Before and after school and summer programs offer safe, convenient, and affordable childcare options for working families during critical times when school is not in session. These opportunities

also help reduce juvenile crime. The Park District's open space and trees help improve air and water quality and mitigate flooding.

- Increased property values
- Contribute to community identity
- Provide active and passive recreational opportunities
- Provide equitable programs for all ages
- Contribute to the health and wellness of a community
- Stewards of the community's valuable green space
- Parks reduce neighborhood crime
- Provide storm water management
- Population growth

X. Recommendations for Increased Accountability and Efficiency

1. Intergovernmental Fees and Charges

One opportunity for efficiency would be the elimination of fees and charges assessed by other units of government. By way of example, below are amounts that other units of local government charge the Park District even though the Park District's taxpayers are also taxpayers of these other units of local government. Such fees and charges, and the bureaucracy that accompanies them, inhibit the Park District's ability to deliver programs, facilities, and services at the least possible cost.

- The Park District is exempt from fees related to building permits, local liquor licenses, elevator licenses and inspections, business operations, restaurants, burglar alarms, vending, entertainment events, construction permits, building inspections, stormwater management, impervious surface charges, water reclamation usage (which saves millions for the City), fire inspections, towing, health inspections, sprinkler inspections, pool permits, and reduces grass maintenance expenses for the school district significantly.
- The Park District is not charged for police services for patrolling its parks and buildings, except during Fall Fest, when we incur expenses for police presence due to increased size and security requirements.

Other units of local government should recognize that intergovernmental fees often lead to inefficiency in the expenditure of taxpayer dollars through extra bureaucracy and administrative costs. In many cases, the unit of government assessing the fee ultimately benefits from the project or event, meaning it can recoup its costs through the extra sales tax or other revenue that will be generated. Where such fees are absolutely necessary, general-purpose units of government should offset the fee by crediting the Park District for all benefits they will receive from a project, event, or property. For example, open space that is protected and maintained by the Park District helps mitigate stormwater management costs, so assessing stormwater management fees on the Park District not only leads to inefficiency but is also shortsighted.

Governmental units should be discouraged or prohibited from charging more than their out-of-pocket costs associated with the activities covered by a fee that is assessed to another unit of local government with the same taxpayers. Put another way, one unit of local government should not profit by taxing another. Eliminating local permit fees is a way to reduce administrative costs without impacting overall public revenue. Local government best serves the people when it cooperates and works together. Some communities recognize this and do not charge fees to other units. All communities should be encouraged to follow that model to receive the best results for local taxpayers and to promote governmental efficiency. We do work well with agencies to reduce charges to one another.

2. Inefficiency of Other Governments

The Park District is also negatively impacted by the inefficiency of the state and other units of local government.

- The Park District has experienced delays in grant reimbursements or other payments from the state that have caused change orders and delays in projects that increase taxpayer expenses.
- The Park District has experienced several years wherein financial strain was created due to delays in tax levy money disbursements.
- The Paid Leave Ordinance requires Cook County employers to provide employees with up to 40 hours of paid leave during a 12-month period on an accrual or frontload basis. While the State's Paid Leave for All Workers Act expressly excludes school and park districts, Cook County's Paid Leave Ordinance does not. Considering the number of seasonal and part-time staff that operate Park Districts, The Park District anticipates a significant financial burden.
- The Park District has experienced delays in permit processing, grant agreements, or other paperwork that has had negative financial or other detrimental consequences.

3. Unfunded Mandates

Unfunded state mandates are another cost driver. While the Park District recognizes that there are benefits to some of these mandates, modifications could help alleviate some of the burden to the park district.

- a) **Non-resident FOIA Requests.** Last year, the Park District spent more than \$10,000 in staff time and legal fees to fulfill FOIA requests. Often, the individuals/businesses submitting the FOIA requests are from outside of the Park District boundaries, and they appear to be serving a specific agenda rather than assuring better local government.

Under current law, resident taxpayers end up footing the bill for these non-resident or commercial requests. In order to help alleviate the burden for these non-resident requests, the law could be amended to: (1) add a requirement that non-residents identify/explain the purpose of the request for information; (2) add a time limit on how far back a non-resident can request information; (3) staff time and costs could be included in the amount that is reimbursable for non-resident and commercial requests; (4) move back the deadline for non-resident requests 10 business days so that the park district does not have to delay services to its residents in order to comply with a non-resident request.

Sunshine laws are supposed to protect taxpayers by allowing them to shed light on any issue that is not exempt from FOIA. However, local government can be burdened by having to drop everything to rearrange priorities to meet FOIA deadlines, particularly if it has limited resources. Since local residents ultimately bear the expense of complying with FOIA, treating resident and non-resident requests differently would be justified.

b) Criminal Background Checks. All Park Districts are statutorily required to conduct criminal background checks on all employees pursuant to Section 8-23 of the Park District Code. The background checks must be done through the Illinois State Police (ISP). Last year, the Park District spent \$4,500 for criminal background checks. The Park District does not recommend eliminating this mandate because it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of children and other Park District patrons. However, the State should explore ways in which it could improve the current system and make it less costly for Park Districts to comply with the law.

The mandate also raises the fundamental question as to why one layer of government is forced to charge its taxpayers to comply with a State mandate when the State made the determination to impose the mandate. Put another way, if the State has determined that criminal background checks are necessary for public safety, the State should assist with compliance.

The Park District recommends studying whether there can be a more efficient background check process implemented through the ISP to reduce the time and expense it takes for background checks. Another suggestion is for ISP to waive the fee for checks on minors or waive all fees for name checks. If there is a "hit" from a name check, the fee could be charged for the more costly fingerprint check. Since it is a state mandate, perhaps the fee structure for Park Districts should also be reviewed to determine whether the fee being charged exceeds the actual cost of doing the check and, if so, perhaps the ISP could consider reducing its cost to local governments.

c) Prevailing Wage. One way to reduce the burden on local government staff is to limit the prevailing wage requirement to larger capital contracts. This would free up tracking of the paperwork on small repairs and projects. One reason for creating a threshold requirement is the cost of the administrative burden relative to the cost of the actual project. For example, eliminating the prevailing wage on smaller projects, e.g., those less than \$50,000, will result in more local bids and decrease the overall cost for these smaller public works projects. However, it would be helpful to have a centralized state posting to eliminate the cost burden of the compliance of posting in local newspapers.

d) Newspaper Publication. The newspaper is no longer the most effective way to provide notice. Websites are cheaper and reach more people. Permitting the Park District to post the information on its website in lieu of newspaper publications would reduce costs.

4. Opportunities for Increased Transparency

As illustrated above, the Park District is very transparent in its operations. The following are opportunities for the Park District to ensure transparency with the semi-annual review of:

- Existing information to identify any gaps.
- Stakeholder engagement to gather perspective on improving transparency.
- Community input channels such as online forums or suggestion boxes at facilities or online.
- Transparency plan outline with a timeline for posting reports, updates, and other relevant data to the website.
- Regular updates and communications provided to the public through newsletters, social media platforms, or email subscriptions highlighting new information
- Maintaining a feedback mechanism
 - Our main department heads and supervisors' contact information is listed under the Contact Us link at the bottom of our website main page to provide direct access to the staff to whom feedback may need to be directed.
 - Our social media sites managed by our marketing and communications staff, provide feedback opportunity that is monitored and distributed to the appropriate departments.
 - All of our buildings front desk staff can also assist with customer or public comments ensuring that the information is provided to the correct person.

5. Opportunities for Other Intergovernmental Agreements

- Joint utilities contracts with other municipal agencies for better savings.
- Joint group health insurance packages to drive cost down for the Park District and the employees.

6. Opportunities for Savings such as Energy Efficiency Projects, Joint Purchasing

- Solar fields
- Electric vehicles
- ComEd lighting update program

Dated: January 4, 2024 [INSERT DATE FINAL REPORT APPROVED BY EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE]

Signed:  [CHAIR'S SIGNATURE]