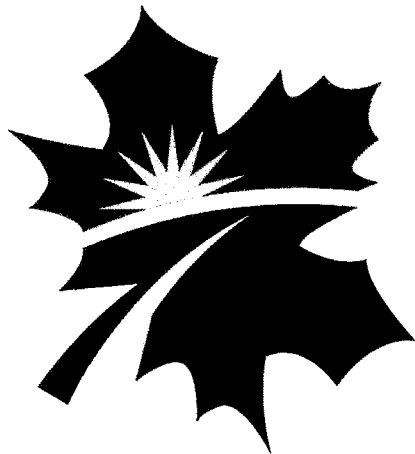


**EFFICIENCY REPORT FOR THE  
GENESEO PARK DISTRICT**



**GENESEO  
PARK DISTRICT**

[www.GeneseoParkDistrict.org](http://www.GeneseoParkDistrict.org)

(309) 944-5695

**APPROVED BY THE PARK DISTRICT'S  
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY  
ON MARCH 12, 2024**

## **I. Purpose**

The Geneseo Park District ("Park District") formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on May 9, 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:

Doug Bodeen, Board President

Nate Vorac, Board Vice President

Bethany Winkleman, Board Secretary

Julia McAvoy, Board Commissioner

Christina Zobrist, Board Commissioner

Marty Golby, Resident Member

Valerie Shoemaker, Resident Member

Andy Thurman, Executive Director/Chairman of Committee

Jodie Olson, Administrative Assistant/Secretary of Committee

### **III. Committee Meetings**

The Committee met as follows:

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Meeting Time and Place</b>
<b>September 12, 2023</b>	<b>7:00 pm Community Center</b>
<b>February 13, 2024</b>	<b>7:43 pm Community Center</b>
<b>March 12, 2024</b>	<b>7:15 pm Community Center</b>

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Park District's website 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 in 1953. 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 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 is 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 a referendum. This is contrasted with general purpose units of government, which have 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 much 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 portion of a resident's overall property tax bill.

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:

- Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual
- Personnel Policies Manual
- General Conduct Ordinance 2011-117
- Safety Manual
- Strategic Plan
- Master Plan
- ADA Transition Plan
- Annual Report
- Operations Manual
- Volunteer Manual
- Crisis Management Plan
- Ethics Ordinance 2017-147
- Board Policy Manual
- Municipal Directory
- Job Description Booklet

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

- PDRMA – pooled risk management and health insurance
- NRPA – National Park and Recreation Association
- IPRA – Illinois Park and Recreation Association
- IAPD – Illinois Association of Park Districts

### **2. Intergovernmental agreements with other units of local government**

- City of Geneseo – contributed towards turn lane for new addition North of town to help increase population, marketing campaign to brand the community, special events at the City Park, reduced permit fees and pickleball court usage.
- School District – marketing campaign to brand the community, use of facilities by gymnastics team, 8<sup>th</sup> grade football, Swim Club, Cross Country, Life Skills. We use their facility for the Prairie Fire Theater Program.
- Geneseo Police Department – Warming/Cooling Center and National Night Out.
- Hammond Henry Hospital – Personal Training, Health Seminars, Fitness Programs.
- Hillcrest Home – Emergency Shelter

### **3. Partnerships or agreements with athletic or similar affiliate organizations that operate sports or other leagues**

- Geneseo Youth Football for Athletic Field building and field usage, including mowing and utilities, staff member serves on board.
- Geneseo Youth Baseball/Softball usage of fields for special events, advertising exchange, staff member serves on board.

- New Geneseo Basketball Association - reduced price on rental for youth basketball.
- Quad City Pickleball
- Quad City Rugby
- Davenport Archery Club

#### **4. Partnerships or other interrelationships with non-profits**

- Sundance for our Soldiers
- Lunchbox Program
- Geneseo Food Pantry – Financial Assistance Program
- Growth Inc – Daycare rental
- Izaak Walton League – outdoor programming.
- Geneseo Kiwanis – Annual Fun Day, long term rental.
- Geneseo Chamber of Commerce – Special Events.
- Inspire Continuing Care – regular facility usage.
- Geneseo Rotary Club – long term rental
- Seth Ernst Memorial Soccer Slam – soccer goals.
- Geneseo Park District Foundation
- Abilities Plus - grants
- Geneseo Foundation – Capital Projects, Programs

#### **5. Partnerships with for profit organizations**

- Central Bank – Central Theater Building rental
- Fareway – Turkey Trot
- Geneseo Campground – Kayak/Canoeing
- Tony Rokis – Santa



- Most Wanted Productions – Mother/Son, Daddy/Daughter Dances
- Wild Side and Midnight Riders – Active Adult Dances
- Musical Memories – Music Classes
- Smith Studio and Gallery – Art Classes
- A Spotted Apron – Cooking Classes
- Lewis and Clark Circus – Foundation Fundraiser
- Bethany Winkleman – Youth Athletic Grant

## 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, 50 individuals volunteered 430 hours of service to the Park District.

**Youth employment.** The Park District is a major employer of youth in the community. Last year, the Park District employed 54 youth. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment serves as a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

**The Geneseo Park District Foundation.** Last year, the Foundation gave the Geneseo Park District \$638,566.40, which helped provide programs, activities, special events and capital projects while alleviating some of the burden on patrons and taxpayers. Some of the programs, activities, special events and capital items sponsored by the Geneseo Park District Foundation include: A playground at the Athletic Field, Lifeguard Training reimbursements, Free 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Swim Lessons, Free Water Walking in the Current Channel, Free Middle School Events, STEM Programs, FUNding Positive Recreational Experiences Scholarships, Free Active Adult Programming, Free Movies at Central Theater, Free Swims & Free Inflatables, Free Outdoor Movies Series, Santa at the Center Event, Turkey Trot, Free Special Roller-skating, Easter Egg Hunt, Community Campout, Back to School Bash, Christmas Walk Obstacle Course, Health & Nutrition Seminars, Letters from Santa, Stories in the Park and Kayak/Canoeing.

**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 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 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 on the Park District website [www.GeneseoParkDistrict.org](http://www.GeneseoParkDistrict.org). All of these reports are also available upon request at the administrative offices of the Park District.

- Operating Budget Summary Graphs
- Budget & Appropriation Ordinance
- Certificate of Estimate of Revenues
- Annual Audit
- Annual Financial Statement
- Board agenda and minutes
- Public Notices
- Master Plan
- Strategic Plan
- Community Wide Survey Results
- Goals
- ADA Transition Plan
- Park District Policies & Procedures
- Park District Rules & Regulations

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

- The board of commissioners meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of 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.
- Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at 309-944-5695 or email at [info@genesoparkdistrict.org](mailto:info@genesoparkdistrict.org). There is a Contact Us link on our website.
- Social Media.

- There is a Voice Your Opinion Page on our website.
- Program and Facility Evaluations are emailed to participants.
- We have an Advisory Board that meets every other month. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to assist the Board of Commissioners and Park District staff with investigating new ideas, evaluate programs and facilities, study possible changes and improvements, and to serve as advocated for the Geneseo Park District throughout the Geneseo Community. Advisory Committee members are residents and/or current active users of Geneseo Park District programs, facilities, and services.
- January 2020 Staff and Community Needs Assessment Survey conducted.
- September 2022 Staff Survey conducted.
- September 2022 Community Wide Survey conducted.

## **VIII. District Awards and Recognition**

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

Illinois Distinguished Agency Accreditation

IPRA Outstanding Facility & Park Award – John & Carla Edwards Aquatic Center

PDRMA Accreditation Award

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award

IPRA Health & Wellness Exceptional Workplace Award

IAPD Outstanding Journalist Award

## **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.

### **1. Facilities**

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

- Community Center includes Cardio/Weight Rooms, Indoor Pool, Sauna, Indoor Elevated Track, Recovery Room, Activity Room Games/Activities, Gym, Wallyball, Racquetball & Pickleball Courts
- John & Carla Edwards Aquatic Center includes Pool House, Splash Pad, 6 lane lap pool, drop slide, 2 diving boards, climbing wall, Activity Pool, zero depth entry, Lily Pad Walk & Current Channel
- Athletic Field includes building with restrooms, Youth Football press box, concessions and equipment storage and the Sideline Room which includes a sink, refrigerator, and tables & chairs in a bright and inviting space, Playground, Tennis Court, 2 Pickleball Courts, Basketball Court, Running/Walking Track, Corn Hole Court, Ping Pong Table, Open Green Space,
  - Athletic Field Games, Kickball & bases, Wiffleball balls, bat and bases, Horseshoes horse shoes & stakes, Disc Game foam discs & targets, Giant Dice Set/Rollzee Scoreboard, Disc Golf baskets & discs, Giant Checkers, Scoop Ball Set, Spike Ball, Giant Wooden Tic Tac Toe, Potato Sack Race Bags, Giant Egg Spoon Race Game, Giant Jenga, Soft Tip Target Toss, Ladder Toss
- Anderson Memorial Park – gazebo, swing, benches, and an ADA compliant picnic table allow citizens a place to rest, relax and reflect and a Walking path.
- Central Theater - The theater seats 177 and offers digital cinema projection with 7.1 Dolby surround sound. The digital conversion in 2012 means a higher quality motion picture and sound experience for the moviegoer.
- Edwards Farm Property
- Rental Home

### **2. Programs**

The Park District offered the following programs last year.

- Swim Lessons
- Swim Team
- Water Fitness Classes

- Private & Semi-Private Lessons
- Fitness Classes
- Personal Training
- Health & Wellness Seminars
- Preschool
- Early Childhood Programs
- Preschool Soccer
- Flag Football
- Day Camp
- Active Adult/Senior Programming
- Adult & Youth Basketball
- Adult & Youth Volleyball
- Leagues
- Gymnastics
- Gymnastics Team
- Music Classes
- Fine Arts Classes
- Turkey Trot
- Daddy Daughter Dance
- Mother Son Dance
- Babysitting
- Cooking Classes
- STEM
- Santa Visits
- Lifeguard Certifications
- Yoga
- Cycling
- Fitness Access
- Summit
- Golf
- Running

### **3. Additional Services**

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

- Central Movie Theater
- Roller-skating
- Lap swimming
- Open Swims
- Special Free Events
- Rentals
- Pickleball
- Birthday Parties
- Open Gym
- Cardio/Weight Room
- Recovery Room
- Racquetball
- Pickleball
- Tennis
- Indoor Pool
- Outdoor Aquatic Center
- Athletic Field
- Memorial Park
- Scholarship Program
- Letters from Santa
- Bingo
- Cards/Games
- Free Movies
- Senior/Active Adult Dances
- Fellowship Opportunities
- Parent Led Playgroups
- Memberships



- Walking Club

#### **4. Other Benefits**

While the Park District is a special purpose district, its impact to 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 health care costs. 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 offers employment and volunteer opportunities.

## **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.

- Illinois State Background Checks \$500 - \$1,000 annually
- Health Inspections
- Boiler Inspections
- Permit Fees

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.

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.

### **2. Inefficiency of Other Governments**

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

### **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) 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 \$670 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.

**b) Prevailing Wage.** One way to reduce 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 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.

**c) 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.

## XI. OTHER

The Geneseo Park District has been recognized as a Distinguished Accredited Agency since 2013.

**Dated:** March 12, 2024

**Signed:**  \_\_\_\_\_ [CHAIR'S SIGNATURE]