



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 5, 2026
TO: Forest Preserve District Executive Committee
FROM: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Presentation and Approval of the President's and Commissioner's Expenses Attending the 2026 IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference in Chicago

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Committee with information to consider the approval of the conference and travel expenses for the Commissioners who attended the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD)/Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) Soaring to New Heights Conference in Chicago, Jan. 29-31, 2026.

BACKGROUND:

The Local Government Travel Expense Control Act, Public Act 99-0604, requires all non-home rule public agencies, including forest preserve districts, to regulate the reimbursement of all travel, meals and lodging expenses of their commissioners, employees and representatives, effective Jan. 1, 2017. The District approved, by resolution on Dec. 13, 2016, a policy for the regulation of said expenses, which requires all travel expenses for commissioners be approved through a public meeting of the Commission.

President Lenert, Commissioners Jon Gripe, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, and staff attended the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference in Chicago, Jan. 29-31, 2026. Expenses listed below, include conference registration, hotel accommodations, meals, and travel.

President Lenert: \$526.25
Commissioner Jon Gripe: \$925.44
Commissioner Bill Roth: \$914.44
Commissioner Jarett Sanchez: \$877.39

More than 2,400 parks, recreation and conservation professionals and commissioners attended this multi-day conference, which includes more than 120 educational sessions and workshops, as well as an exhibition hall featuring hundreds of product and service vendors. Some commissioners and staff earn continuing-education credits, to maintain professional certification status in their respective fields, through attendance of educational sessions and workshops.

Also, during the conference, annual meetings are conducted for IAPD, IPRA, the Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts (IACFPD), and the Forest Preserve and Conservation Section of IPRA of which the District, commissioners and/or staff are members. The Friday Conference Awards Luncheon recognizes and honors leaders and volunteers of park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation, and special recreation agencies.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funds totaling \$10,000 were budgeted in the 2025/2026 fiscal year for conference and meeting expenses. Sufficient funds are available in the Conferences and Meetings Account # 01-11-11-5001 for this expense totaling \$ 3,243.52.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Committee approve the conference and travel expenses for the President and Commissioners who attended the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference held in Chicago, Jan. 29-31, 2026 totaling \$ 3,243.52 as presented.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.
