

# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

### Waukegan Park District Executive Director Jay Lerner's first 100 days

**Waukegan, IL (November 3, 2017)** – Since assuming leadership of the Waukegan Park District in July, Jay Lerner has had a busy first 100 days, according to Board President George Bridges.

“Our new Executive Director leads the organization in a wise and agile manner; he navigated multiple senior leadership changes flawlessly and has engaged employees in assessing the organization. He already has completed several major projects and leads the district as it continues to address community needs at a high level of excellence.”

Leadership changes included the promotion of Scott MacLean to Superintendent of Recreation, Errick Beverly to Superintendent of Recreation, and Jon Beckmann to Superintendent of Finance and Administration. Kaitlin Fischer moved into the Manager of Sports and Fitness position previously held by Errick Beverly and Rafael Ayala moved into the Manager of Parks Maintenance position previously held by Scott MacLean. Quincy Bejster was promoted to Manager of Field House Operations and Aquatics. Shelby McDonald was promoted to Recreation Supervisor- Field House and Kalina Garcia moved into the Supervisor of Finance role. The ability to fill these important positions from within is a direct result of the District's commitment to hiring top performing candidates, substantial employee development practices and succession planning.

During Mr. Lerner's first 100 days, the Belvidere Park renovation and pool replacement project has taken shape with the selection of a construction manager and a local firm, Stuckey

Construction, as the general contractor. Final discussions by the board and staff about the park's design concept are underway. Jay has emphasized the importance of replacing the playground with equipment that will make Belvidere Park an exciting place to visit and play.

Initially, the Belvidere Park renovation plan called for an addition to the Belvidere Recreation Center for administrative offices followed by demolition of the Rose Administrative Center. The proposed cost of this addition was close to \$3 million. Instead, property at 1324 Golf Road (the former Waukegan Savings Bank) was purchased to repurpose and provide flexible space for less than half the cost and twice the size of the proposed addition.

Two important contracts have been negotiated under Jay's leadership: the GolfVisions management contract for Bonnie Brook and Greenshire was renewed and a multi-year union agreement was approved. The Field House gymnasium was retrofitted with LED lights, taking advantage of a Commonwealth Edison rebate of \$25,000 with projected annual savings of more than \$9,000 in energy costs. The Waukegan Park District received a Standard and Poor's rating of AA for its recent bond issue and the latest tax levy represented no increase, requesting the same tax dollars as the previous year.

A new playground was installed at Yeoman Park, with a ribbon cutting held in July. Playground installations at Adelphi, Country Lane and Washington Parks are in process and will be completed soon. The renovation of Clearview Park has progressed rapidly; the majority of the work is complete. Landscaping elements, including a fence requested by neighbors, will be added either this fall or next spring, depending on weather. The park is projected to open in early spring 2018.

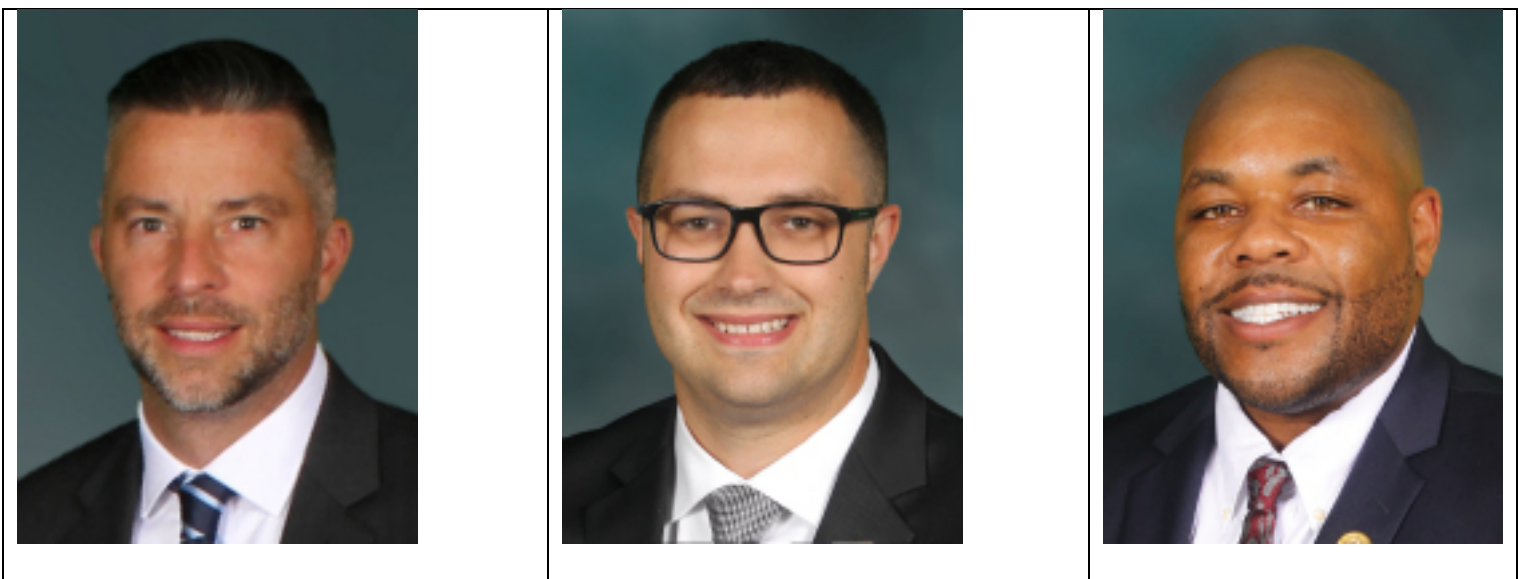
Jay has worked to increase financial transparency by posting bid information on the district website along with bid results. The first park district annual report was published in the winter program guide and recently the District learned that it was awarded the Distinguished

Budget Presentation Award for Fiscal Year 2017-18 from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the sixth consecutive year.

Throughout his tenure, Jay has worked to improve the local economy through revenue generating sports tournaments at park district facilities. He is an advocate for hiring Waukegan residents as evidenced by current staff. New this year, the District held its first Vendor Fair with governmental agencies, institutions, businesses and the public invited to talk with local vendors, contractors and park district staff. Parks staff presented a session for vendors regarding bidding requirements and processes. The well attended event received many compliments.

Finally, Mr. Lerner was offered and accepted appointment to the Illinois Park and Recreation Association Leadership Academy Board of Regents. He attends their bimonthly meetings and leads sessions for development of future parks and recreation leaders.

“As you can see, there are a lot of good things happening at the Waukegan Park District. Under the guidance of Executive Director Lerner and the Board, the future looks very bright indeed!” said President Bridges.





Pictured from left to right are: Jay Lerner, Executive Director; Jon Beckmann, Superintendent of Finance; Errick Beverly, Superintendent of Recreation; Scott MacLean, Superintendent of Parks; Kaitlin Fischer, Manager of Sports and Fitness; Rafael Ayala, Manager of Parks Maintenance; Quincy Bejster, Manager of Field House Operations and Aquatics; Shelby McDonald, Recreation Supervisor-Field House and Kalina Garcia, Supervisor of Finance.

### **About the Waukegan Park District**

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 48 sites and more than 735 acres of land, including the 18-hole Bonnie Brook and 9-hole Greenshire Golf Courses. Properties are managed to the highest environmental and conservation standards. Facilities operated by the district include the Field House Sports, Fitness and Aquatics Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, the Waukegan SportsPark, the Waukegan Skate Park, the Waukegan BMX Track, recreational centers, disc golf course, dog exercise area and agility course, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, and sports courts including basketball, tennis and pickleball. A full range of programs and services are offered year round for all ages, from infants to seniors

as well as special needs populations. Healthy lifestyles, wellness initiatives, and a connection with the outdoors and nature are integrated throughout programs, services, and special events. Cultural events are provided by the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, and the Waukegan History Museum. There is something for everyone! The award-winning District employs 61 full-time and over 230 part-time, year round, seasonal, and temporary employees. The District is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), and Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The district maintains national accreditation from the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) Distinguished Agency accreditation and Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) accreditation and maintains a Level A Loss Control Program. The district was a NRPA Gold Medal Finalist in 2012 and 2013, and awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013.

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