

**ROBERTS PARK FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING
JULY 28, 2026
MINUTES**

**CALL TO
ORDER**

The special meeting of the Roberts Park Fire Protection District Board of Trustees was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by President Bernardoni at Station #1, 8611 S. Roberts Road, Justice, Illinois, for the purpose of conducting special meeting business of the District, proper notice having been given and posted accordingly.

Secretary Stratakos led the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present:

President Brian A. Bernardoni

Treasurer Dan Borst

Secretary Steve Stratakos – Remote attendance by phone

Fire Chief Chris Spoo

Absent:

Fire Commissioners - prior notice was given.

Others Present: OM Stacey Collaros

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GUESTS

President Bernardoni acknowledged the guests from Discovery Works Collaborative.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

President Bernardoni opened the floor for public comments at 12:02 p.m. With no comments, questions, or concerns, President Bernardoni closed the floor for public comment at 12:02 p.m.

Motion to close the floor was made by Treasurer Borst, seconded by President Bernardoni. Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Secretary Stratakos, Treasurer Borst, President Bernardoni; Nays: None.

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

President Bernardoni stated that he would like to reorder the New Business items.

- A. There was discussion of the candidate to fill the BOFC vacancy. President Bernardoni asked that the candidate appointment and approval be added to the next Board of Trustees meeting agenda. President Bernardoni asked that it be stated on the record that Don Fontana inquired about the vacancy and the Board decided to represent each township on the BOFC.
- B. The Board approved the signing of a letter supporting the Senate Resolution directing the FTC to investigate anticompetitive practices and antitrust violations in the fire truck manufacturing industry.
- C. The Board opened a discussion with the Discovery Works Collaborative staff. Jennifer Volk of DWC stated that the purpose of today's meeting would be the Board Charge and the development of a Facilitating Team. The facilitating team will engage the community and gather feedback for a potential ballot initiative. Key points to include will be the need to increase full-time staffing, improve training, and new equipment. The board discussed the challenges of funding and the impact of the assessment increases. Discussion continued about the various community engagement activities, including open houses, and workshops to gather information. The community engagement will help assess support for any referendum and educate the community on potential needs and funding levels. Additionally, the board proposed recruiting diverse community members, including business owners, residents and community leaders.

The importance of clear communication to ensure continuity of service and public trust was discussed. The community engagement will result in a recommendation or guidance from the facilitating team that will be tested prior to the ballot. The limits of what a community is willing to support can be tested to enhance the probability of a successful ballot question. The next few months should be engaged in listening, and be interested in what the community values and what expectations they have. After this process it will be up to the board to decide what will appear on the ballot.

DWC asked the board to think about what they want to get out of this process in developing the Board Charge. Treasurer Borst emphasized trying to communicate to the residents the district's purpose and function, including mutual aid. Secretary Stratakos stated that our call volume has increased significantly along with our costs. President Bernardoni commented on the branding process that can be developed and was mentioned at a prior meeting. He mentioned the demographics of the community and the property tax reassessment process that is occurring. President Bernardoni along with Chief Spoo emphasized that our services are not only emergency services but community healthcare services, including lift assists. The board stressed that they are concerned about apathy within the community and finding people willing to engage in this process.

Chief Spoo stated that the Pension Board will hold a meeting to decide if they will pay for a study to see what the costs of raising our full time staff by 9, 12 or 15 members would be. He also mentioned that our accountant James Howard could help in this process and included that we need to increase our current salaries to be in line with other surrounding departments and districts. He stated that another costs could be estimated and considered for having two paramedics on each ambulance instead of just one. He added that he wanted to raise the level of training.

Discussion continued regarding what findings the facilitating team could come up with. The facilitating team could recommend a proposal for the referendum or they could simply provide data and findings. The second option would allow the board and DWC to be involved with the final proposal and the referendum amount. Additional costs regarding future apparatus purchases, training, increases to salary, equipment and insurance were discussed. Also the cost of lift assists to the district were reviewed.

Jennifer Volk of DWC stressed the development of the facilitating team and putting together a list of names from residents, business owners and community leaders. Members can be nominated, volunteer or can submit applications. There may be social media opportunities to ask residents about their experiences with the district.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

President Bernardoni opened the floor for public comments at 1:54 p.m. With no comments, questions, or concerns, President Bernardoni closed the floor for public comment at 1:54 p.m.

Motion to close the floor was made by Secretary Stratakos, seconded by Treasurer Borst. Voice Vote – Ayes: Secretary Stratakos, Treasurer Borst, President Bernardoni; Nays: None.

Motion carried.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

No comments

CLOSED SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:55 p.m. was made by Secretary Steve Stratakos, seconded by Treasurer Borst. Roll Call Vote - Ayes: Secretary Stratakos, Treasurer Borst, President Bernardoni; Nays: None.

Motion carried.