



KidsWork Children's Museum Advisory Board Minutes of the Regular Meeting

KidsWork Children's Museum, 375 Veterans Parkway, New Lenox
Thursday, January 16, 2025

#25-01

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of KidsWork Children's Museum Advisory Board was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Beth Alderson in the multipurpose room of KidsWork Children's Museum.

ROLL CALL

The following were present: Paul Bradtke, Laura Brannigan, Linda Brunner, Sarah Burdick, Cheryl Hamill, Alia Shalabi, and Marleen Thom.

Sarah Machamer was present via a virtual meeting.

Also in attendance were Community Engagement Director Beth Alderson, Executive Director Nicole Underwood, and Jeff Hayes, the former accountant for KidsWork Children's Museum.

QUORUM

There being a sufficient number of members of the corporate authorities in attendance to constitute a quorum, the meeting was in order.

ELECTION

As per Resolution No. 23-06 of the New Lenox Village Board, the Advisory Board was to elect a Chairperson and Secretary at the Advisory Board's first regular meeting in each calendar year. Ms. Alderson reviewed the responsibilities of each position, those being that the Chairperson is to preside at all Advisory Board meetings and the Secretary is to keep the minutes of all Advisory Board meetings. Ms. Alderson first asked for nominations for the Secretary role. Ms. Hamill made a motion to nominate Ms. Burdick as Secretary of the KidsWork Children's Museum Advisory Board. Ms. Shalabi seconded. Ms. Alderson next asked for nominations for the Chairperson role. Ms. Brannigan made a motion to nominate Ms. Hamill as Chairperson of the KidsWork Children's Museum Advisory Board. Ms. Thom seconded. Ms. Alderson thanked both Ms. Hamill and Ms. Burdick for accepting their roles.

ADVISORY BOARD ROLE AND PURPOSE

Ms. Alderson reviewed the role and purpose of the KidsWork Children's Museum Advisory Board. The overarching role is to submit recommendations in an advisory capacity to the Village President or his assigned designee (in this case, Ms. Alderson) that are aimed at improving the children's museum.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Because this is a new entity, Ms. Alderson reviewed some administrative housekeeping items regarding the operation of the Advisory Board. As per Resolution No. 23-06, the Advisory Board is to meet quarterly at a minimum. These meetings were set by Ms. Alderson via email for the third Thursday of January, April, July, and October of 2025, those



dates being January 16, April 17, July 17, and October 16. Meeting times had been set for 7:00 p.m. Members of the Advisory Board expressed interest in potentially hosting these meetings at an earlier time of 6:00 p.m. No action was taken on this at this time.

Ms. Alderson reminded the Advisory Board members that their meetings must be open to the public and must be in conformance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. As such, all Advisory Board members must successfully complete training on compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Advisory Board members have 90 days to successfully complete this training. Ms. Alderson requested that all certificates of completion be sent to her for the Village's records.

The Illinois Open Meetings Act training can be found here: <https://illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/open-and-honest-government/pac/pac-training/>

Ms. Alderson confirmed that a quorum will be made up of a majority of the members of the Advisory Board and that the group roster currently totals 8.

Ms. Alderson also discussed the rules regarding virtual meetings with the Advisory Board. She informed the group that they must vote to allow remote electronic attendance for future meetings. Ms. Burdick made a motion to allow electronic attendance at future meetings, and Ms. Shalabi seconded. Following the motion, there was conversation about whether this allowance would then be afforded to members of the public who also wished to attend remotely. Ms. Alderson stated she would look into this and would report back to the board. Ms. Burdick requested to make her motion dependent on the answer to this inquiry, in that she only wished the motion be put forward if the electronic meeting allowance is made for members and not the general public. The board agreed.

FRIENDS OF KIDSWORK CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Ms. Alderson reminded the Advisory Board that in addition to this board, KidsWork is also served by Friends of KidsWork Children's Museum, which is a separate nonprofit entity with a goal to raise funds in support of KidsWork. Ms. Alderson explained that the expectation was that the Advisory Board and the Friends would work closely together as the Advisory Board helped to recommend what exhibits and features would benefit the museum and then the Friends would raise the money to provide those exhibits and features. The Village/KidsWork expects that many members of the Advisory Board will also be members of the Friends. The Friends and the Village/KidsWork need to remain separate entities to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

Ms. Alderson asked if any Advisory Board members wished to be included as members of Friends of KidsWork Children's Museum: The following people wished to be part of Friends of KidsWork Children's Museum: Laura Brannigan, Sarah Burdick, Cheryl Hamill, Sarah Machamer, Alia Shalabi, and Marleen Thom. Also requesting to be a member of the organization was Jeff Hayes.

Mr. Hayes took a few moments to update the Advisory Board and staff on some outstanding accounting items regarding the museum. Mr. Hayes let the board know that an account for the Friends has been set up at Old Plank Trail Community Bank and that the account needs two official signers from the Friends organization added to it. These signers will need to visit Old Plank Trail Community Bank with Mr. Hayes and Ms. Underwood as they are the current signers. No decision was made on who will be the signers for Friends of KidsWork Children's Museum.



Mr. Hayes also reminded the group that tax returns will need to be filed from the former KidsWork Children's Museum, and he handed off W2s to Ms. Underwood to distribute.

Ms. Alderson stated that the Village of New Lenox had their attorney create bylaws for Friends of KidsWork Children's Museum, which were based upon the bylaws of the former KidsWork Children's Museum Board of Directors. Ms. Alderson will confirm that the Friends of KidsWork Children's Museum bylaws were approved, and if so, will send them to all members of Friends of KidsWork Children's Museum.

KIDWORK CHILDREN'S MUSEUM UPDATES

Ms. Alderson provided updates on the current status of the exhibits at KidsWork Children's Museum. She told the board that the exhibitor, L3DFX, has not met expectations in terms of what was to be provided for the museum (as per the contract and renderings) as well as in terms of the quality of what was provided. Ms. Alderson used the example of the mechanic area, which was intended to have a vehicle with interactive features that would teach children about the inner workings of a car engine. Instead, the product provided by the exhibitor was a consumer-grade ride-on toy that had no functionality and has not held up to repeated use. Ms. Alderson said there are examples like that throughout the museum, but this one is a good illustration. Ms. Alderson also pointed out that the craftsmanship of much of the museum has not held up to the of a museum and that there were many oversights in that regard as well. In example, flat paint rather than a primed and durable paint was used throughout the facility.

Ms. Alderson let the board know that Village and KidsWork staff are working on improvements. This week, numerous members of the Village's Public Works staff have been working to add lights, sirens, and radios to both the fire truck and ambulance. They also added lights and horns to the crane. They are planning to reinstall the projector in the light room, which was installed incorrectly and has not worked for months, within the next week. In the months prior, they've also added multiple safety elements, such as the gate near the front entrance and the railing above the fire truck, and they've also built two tot spots. She said they will continue to work on these projects and will also be working on repainting and improving aesthetics.

Ms. Thom asked if it was appropriate for Advisory Board members to respond to social media comments regarding the state of the museum. Ms. Alderson responded yes, but it would be best if they responded with talking points provided by KidsWork to help maintain a cohesive message. Ms. Thom clarified that she agreed, and Ms. Alderson said she would provide messaging options for the Advisory Board.

Ms. Underwood brought up that despite the issues the museum has faced, admissions have been strong. She let the board know that since opening, the museum has had over 22,000 visitors.

As far as long-term plans for the exhibits, Ms. Alderson told the Advisory Board that the first priorities were to find a car for the mechanic area and to replace the water table. She said this would be happening likely within the next year and that she and Ms. Underwood had been looking into new options. She also let the board know that the New Lenox Village Board had just approved the order for the outdoor exhibits, which will now be provided by NuToys, not L3DFX. Ms. Alderson apologized for not having a rendering on hand, and Ms. Underwood went to get a set from her office. Ms. Alderson detailed the plans, which will encompass the entire fenced-in outdoor area. It will include a large playground structure with ramps that are accessible for wheelchairs but will also be beneficial for parents with smaller children. There will also be an accessible spinner, sensory panels, and a shaded picnic area. Ms. Alderson said that they also planned on planter boxes for the area but that those would likely be built in-house. Ms. Alderson also let



KidsWork

children's museum

the group know that the entire outdoor area would be covered in a poured-in-place rubber surface. She said the targeted date for opening is May 1 of this year.

QUESTIONS AND/OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No additional questions or comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Sarah Burdick and seconded by Cheryl Hamill. The Regular Meeting of KidsWork Children's Museum Advisory Board adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

APPROVED