

PARK RIDGE  
PARK DISTRICT,  
ILLINOIS

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**



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# PARK RIDGE PARK DISTRICT, IL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Park Ridge Park District (PRPD) Board of Park Commissioners seek to hire a forward-thinking Executive Director with a proven record of being a collaborative and innovative leader that can combine vision, strategy, and effective governance in the oversight of the agency. The Executive Director will instill a positive work culture, demonstrate high ethical standards, promote a cooperative work environment, provide motivational leadership, and champion the professional development of employees.

The successful candidate will be approachable, regularly engage with members of the community, and build positive relationships with board members, strategic business partners, other taxing bodies, Park District employees and the community at large.

The new Executive Director should have experience leading an organization of similar complexity and possess a broad range of experience with the diverse types of services, programs, and facilities that the PRPD offers. Experience in working with both union and non-union employees is desirable. Reporting to the seven-person elected Board of Park Commissioners, the Executive Director will implement and administer the policies adopted by the Board.

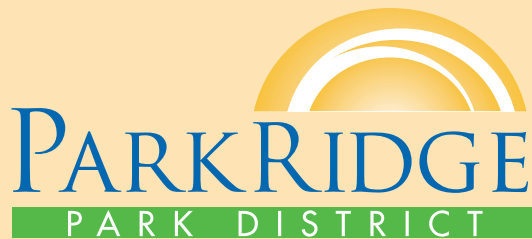
The ideal candidate will demonstrate a thorough understanding of all functions and facets of parks and recreation as well as a robust knowledge of park and facility construction, maintenance, budgetary planning and execution; high-level written and verbal communication; parks and recreation planning, programming and administration; proven internal and external customer service and interpersonal skills; strategic planning; clear and concise decision-making with regard to complex operational issues; and effective public speaking skills to internal and external audiences to include City/State/Federal officials, the public, staff, and Commissioners. Prior record of implementing sustainability and green practices is a priority. The successful candidate will possess active listening skills that display a sincere openness to other people's thoughts and be an effective delegator. The new Director will also be an organized decision-maker who uses research-based critical-thinking skills to choose a course of action and be open to change.

This recruitment is being conducted on a local, regional, and nationwide basis, encouraging applications from all individuals who meet the qualifications. All inquiries relating to the recruitment and selection process for the Executive Director position are to be directed to the consultants listed below who are working with the Park Ridge Park District and its designated Search Committee.

Steve Scholten or Charles Balling  
GovHR USA  
630 Dundee Road, Suite 225  
Northbrook, IL 60062  
TEL: 847-380-3240

Formal applications should be  
submitted to: [www.govhrjobs.com](http://www.govhrjobs.com)





## ABOUT THE PARK RIDGE PARK DISTRICT

The PRPD is located fifteen miles northwest of downtown Chicago in an affluent, financially stable, established community consisting primarily of residential property. The PRPD is in a key geographic location close to O'Hare Airport, major expressways, and rail transportation. The PRPD encompasses approximately eight square miles, services a population of 39,656 people, and is nearly coterminous with the City of Park Ridge, but also serves a small portion of the Village of Niles. The PRPD operates under a board-manager form of government. All Illinois park districts, including the PRPD, are governed by the Illinois Park District Code, 70 ILCS 1205/1 et seq.

The PRPD offers 21 park sites totaling 138 acres of park land, 15 playgrounds, 5 aquatic facilities, driving range, indoor ice arena, 4 recreation centers, 2 nature centers, fitness center, dog park, and multiple outdoor sports courts and athletic fields. The PRPD offers a wide variety of year-round recreation programs. The PRPD has very high participation with 38,759 program registrants and over 320,000 daily attendance at facilities last year.

In November 2022, the PRPD passed a \$33.4 million referendum for improvements at Oakton Park and Facilities. In addition to replacing outdated mechanical systems at the Oakton Ice Arena, the renovations include new support facilities, a new studio ice rink, and a new indoor turf athletic facility, as well as improvements to the park.







## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The City of Park Ridge was incorporated in 1910. Just four years later in 1914, the PRPD was established, and continues to remain a vital part of life in the community. For generations the PRPD has provided exceptional recreation opportunities and valued open space for the community.

The PRPD is a special unit of local government with its own taxing authority and financial and legal responsibilities. The PRPD has an annual operating budget of more than \$17 million, funded by program and facility revenue (47%) and taxes (43%), with the remainder comprised of replacement taxes, interest, grants, and donations, and miscellaneous. The Park District has a current capital budget of \$7.9 million, which excludes the Oakton referendum project. The PRPD property tax is 4.94% of the total tax bill.

Key financial highlights include:

- Standard & Poor's Rating: The PRPD continues to maintain a credit rating of AA+ with a stable outlook from Standard & Poor's Rating Service. An AA+ rating indicates that Standard & Poor's sees the PRPD's capacity to meet its financial commitments as very strong.
- Financial Excellence Award: For the past 40 years, the PRPD has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States.

The PRPD is governed by seven elected Park Board Commissioners whose primary function is policymaking and setting the direction for the organization. The Board's more significant responsibilities include approval of the budget, the tax levy, ordinances, and long-term financial and capital planning, as well as the appointment of the PRPD's Attorney and hiring and overseeing the Executive Director. Park Board members reside within the boundaries of the PRPD and provide their services without compensation to the community for four-year staggered terms.

Reporting to the Park Board, the Executive Director carries out the policies adopted by the Board and manages the day-to-day operations of the PRPD staying focused on core services, including recreation programming, personnel management, facility operations and development, parks maintenance, and oversees the completion of capital projects and business operations. The Executive Director oversees a staff of approximately 62 full-time, 530 part-time, and 230 seasonal employees. The PRPD offers more than 3,000 programs and special events to the community. The PRPD is a member of the Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation (M-NASR) with the Executive Director serving on the Board. The agencies work collaboratively to provide recreational activities for residents with special needs.

The PRPD has received industry awards and honors through the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The Centennial Aquatic Center received the IPRA Outstanding Facility Award, Wildwood Nature Center received the IPRA Outstanding Sustainability/Conservation Award, and Prospect Park received the IPRA Outstanding Facility & Parks Award. In addition, PRPD received the Youth License Plate Award for Best Promotional Practices from the Illinois Association of Park Districts.



## MISSION STATEMENT

PRPD's mission is to enhance the quality of life by providing park and recreation opportunities for all residents while being environmentally and fiscally responsible.

## QUICK FACTS

Population Served **39,656**

2023 Operating Budget **\$17 million**

2023 Capital Budget **\$8 million**

Number of Full-time Employees **62**

Number of Part-time Employees **530**

Number of Seasonal Employees **230**

## FACILITIES

Number of Park Locations **21**

Number of Acres **138**

Golf Driving Range **1**

Fitness Center **1**

Indoor Ice Skating (includes Studio Rink opening in 2025) **2**

Nature Center **2**

Recreation Centers **4**

Indoor Turf Facility (opening in 2025) **1**

Outdoor Skating **3**

Indoor Pool **1**

Outdoor Pools **3**

Splash Pad **1**

Playgrounds **15**

Dog Park **1**

Football Fields **3**

Outdoor Tennis Courts **14**

Outdoor Pickleball Courts (includes 2 additional planned) **15**

Outdoor Basketball Courts **7**

Indoor Basketball Courts **3**

Jogging & Biking Paths (includes 1 new opening in 2025) **4**

Sand Volleyball Courts **1**

Lagoons **2**

Skate Park **1**

Outdoor Soccer Fields **15**

Community Garden Plots **1**

Outdoor Nature Classroom **1**

Racquetball Courts **2**

Softball and Baseball Fields **14**

Picnic Areas **2**

Picnic Shelters (includes 3 additional planned) **8**

Fishing Pier **1**



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Executive Director can expect to work closely with the Park Board and staff on the following opportunities and challenges:

- Oversee the construction, purchases, operational preparations, start up and financial success for the new Oakton Sports Complex, expected to start construction in late Spring 2024 and completion in Summer 2025.
- In addition to overseeing the entire capital plan, oversee two large OSLAD (Illinois Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development) grant-funded capital projects in 2024/2025 at Hinkley and South Parks.
- Update the PRPD's vision statement and system-wide Comprehensive Master Plan, developing financial strategies to provide for long-term capital repairs and improvements of park assets.
- Annually review the PRPD's Strategic Plan core value areas and long-term goals, then update the agency's strategies, annual tactics, and measures.
- Develop an action plan and successfully lead the agency in the Illinois Distinguished Agency Accreditation process that will help sustain the high level of services being offered to the community.
- Proactively pursue grant opportunities and alternate revenue sources while keeping fees and charges a value to users.
- Pursue and implement new sustainability practices, programs, and green infrastructure opportunities that will benefit the PRPD and the community.
- Maintain and further enhance cooperation and trust with all nine PRPD active and valued affiliates.
- Work collaboratively with the Park Ridge Historical Society, who lease the Solomon Cottage on Park District property.
- Understand the importance of maintaining cooperative programming and overall historical collaboration with several community organizations.
- Communicate regularly and maintain agreements with the Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 and Maine Township High School District 207.
- Continue a strategic path in developing current staff with effective training and mentoring in preparation for succession in leadership roles; recruit new talent to best position the District's human capital.
- Mentor executive leadership to include a newly appointed Superintendent of Finance and future successor for the impending retirement of our Human Resources Director.



## ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will be expected to continuously demonstrate the character, experience, interpersonal skills, and judgment to create trust, deliver results, resolve conflicts, and influence a positive culture. The PRPD Board is looking for an active, confident leader who values teamwork, effective communication, and manages people with accountability as they carry out their duties and responsibilities:

- Directs action taken across all departments, programs, parks, and services of the PRPD within the framework of the policies and annual budget enacted by the Board of Commissioners.
- Develops the vision and short and long-term strategies of the PRPD.
- Reports to the Board of Park Commissioners and advises on operational matters on a regular basis. Responds to Board inquiries regarding policy execution, personnel and patron issues, program, facility, and fiscal operations.
- Serves as chief representative of the PRPD at all Board meetings.
- Sets Board meeting agendas in collaboration with the administrative teams' input, Board President, and Board Secretary's approval.
- Provides direct supervision, support and coaching for administrative level staff including: Superintendent of Finance, Superintendent of Recreation, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, Human Resource Director, Marketing and Public Relations Director, and Executive Administrative Assistant.
- Assures effective operations of diverse and complex facilities, programs and parks through direction and collaboration with staff responsible for the well-being of the entire workforce ensuring a safe environment, a culture that nourishes human capital, and that it is developed and grows to meet the needs of today and the future of the PRPD.
- Communicates regularly with the PRPD general counsel and seeks advise on legal matters.
- Consult with Park District Risk Management Association (PDRMA) legal counsel on risk-related matters of a serious nature.
- Represents the PRPD or directs representation in negotiations and agreements between the PRPD and vendors, schools, local governments, State and Federal governmental agencies, and collective bargaining units.
- Ensures all safety requirements are met, supports the PRPD's Safety Manager and Committee, provides input and guidance to assure all PDRMA and other



regulatory agency requirements, including training, are met.

- Recommends and presents a sound budget to the Board for their approval, and ensures staff adheres to the budget.
- Determines long-range planning and capital development needs.
- Ensures the Administrative Policy, Personnel Policy, Safety Manual, and PRPD Ordinance Policy are adhered to and makes recommendations to the Board on modifications.
- Represents the PRPD through continued contact and engagement with the public, community groups, and attendance at events throughout the PRPD and community.
- Develops and maintains relationships with other governmental bodies to collaborate on projects and sharing resources including but not limited to the city manager, and school superintendents for Districts #64 and #207.
- Develops and nurtures relationships with legislators to promote the PRPD, keeps the legislators apprised of initiatives, legislation that affects park districts, and seeks support for state grants.
- Ensures PRPD conformance with all statutory laws and regulations governing PRPD programs and operations, reviews pertinent legislation, and remains abreast of statutory amendments pertaining to the responsibilities and authorities vested in the PRPD.
- Serves as senior official spokesperson for the PRPD.
- Adheres to all policies and practices of the PRPD, along with local, state, and federal government requirements.
- Performs other duties as required or assigned and as contained in the formal employment agreement.



## CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Parks and Recreation, Facility Management, Public Administration, Business, Finance, or a related field.
- 15 years or more of experience at a park and recreation agency, park district, municipal department, or related field, with at least 10 years in a senior leadership management role and experience in overseeing the management of a large team of employees and/or a department with similar scope of services and complexity.

## LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS:

Must have valid Illinois driver's license; Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) designation is preferred; and CPR/AED/First Aid Certified or ability to obtain certification within 90 days.

## SALARY RANGE AND BENEFITS:

The hiring salary range for this position is \$160,000-\$190,000. The actual salary will be determined by the selected candidate's qualifications and commensurate experience. Additionally, the PRPD offers an extensive benefit plan, including a defined benefit pension plan with the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, competitive health, dental, vision, and life insurance, recreational benefits, and a voluntary 457 savings plan and flexible spending plan.

## APPLICATION:

Apply online at [www.GovHRjobs.com](http://www.GovHRjobs.com) with résumé, cover letter, and contact information for five (5) professional references by January 8, 2024, to the attention of GovHR USA Steve Scholten or Chuck Balling, Vice Presidents, and Executive Recruiters, GovHR USA. TEL: 847-380-3240.

The Park Ridge Park District is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

