

Park and Recreation Board Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026
Minutes

Members Present: Art Taft, Erin Borland, DeeAnna Brady-Leader, Pat Carroll, Valerie Scheevel, and Victoria Hunt

Staff Present: AJ Smovir, Jessica Compton, Sarah Griffin, Kevin Vining, Todd Seymanski, and Bryan Lockerby

Guest Present: Shannon Wilson, Jenn Rowell, Ron Brattin, Mary Kerber, Yvonne Stemple, Carol Stelli, Erie Chigbrow

Meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board motioned to approve December 08, 2025 as written. Motion was seconded and carried, 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS

- Adopt a Park
 - There are many groups adopting parks.
 - At this board meeting, the Department recognized various members in attendance with annual certificates of “Thank you.”
- Tennis Assessments
 - The assessments are expected to be received this week.
 - This will provide additional opportunities for funding and grant applications.
 - Sarah will email the information once it is received.
- RFP Update
 - In December, Matrix conducted onsite interviews with staff and various community groups.
 - Matrix provided an initial draft for Jessica and Bryan to review.
 - Two mini polls have been released; this represents the first two of five polls.
- Raise A Pint Night
 - Mighty Mo – 2/23/2026 6-8 p.m. – This will help raise money for projects in Gibson Park.
- Board Expectations
 - Board members are encouraged to volunteer at upcoming events.
 - Board members are asked to serve as advocates for the Department.
 - It was requested that a calendar of events be sent to board members.
- Communications
 - Please let us know if you prefer a different form of communication.
 - We typically communicate via email or social media.

NEW BUSINESS

- Board and Commissions Training

- Board and Commissions Forms were distributed.
- The upcoming Board and Commission Training for new board members was reviewed, and the flyer was distributed.
- Wadsworth Park
 - Copies of the 1998 Master Plan were handed out to board members.
 - The 1998 Master Plan, which included a CIP, was reviewed
 - Wadsworth Park was never established with a CIP.
 - All recent improvements made to Wadsworth Park have been completed through donations and grants.
 - Board members asked why the Saddle Club lease was an issue.
 - The issue was posed to the individual who raised the concern at the Commission Meeting, Ben Cipriano. In attendance at Board Meeting.
 - Ben raised concerns regarding the main entrance.
 - Ben mentioned that the Saddle Club is utilizing a large section of Wadsworth Park for a small portion of the Great Falls population that is able to utilize the property or club.
 - Ben expressed concern that members of the club appear to be using that portion of Wadsworth Park for private benefit, including storing and raising horses, given that club members live across from the leased property.

Art Taft made motion to gather further information on Wadsworth Park and its Master Plan and have a separate work session on this topic to provide later feedback from the board. Motion was seconded and carried, 6-0.

- SAHBS Update
 - Additional programming is taking place.
 - Private swimming lessons are being offered, including work with the Wound Warriors Program.
 - Home School programs are utilizing the facility for their programming.
 - ECWC Girls Tournament held last weekend and had a great turn out!
 - A sound bowl was held at the pool and was very popular.
 - Birthday party options are being expanded.
- Marketing
 - Meredith is working on improving Google search standing to increase the visibility of our listings.
 - A mural is being developed for the side of Aim High.
 - Vertical signage in progress.
 - Weekly school Wednesday envelopes are being utilized.
- Commission Work Session
 - On 2/17/2026 Park and Recreation will present updates on Park and Recreation and Forestry Department.
 - Board members are encouraged to attend.
 - An invitation will be sent to board members.
- Board Elections
 - Chairman and Vice Chairman Elections

Erin Borland made a Motion to nominate Jim Sargent as Board Chair, Pat Carroll seconded the Motion, carried, 6-0.

Erin Borland made a Motion to nominate Art Taft as Board Vice Chair, DeeAnna Brady-Leader seconded the Motion, carried, 6-0.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Staff Reports
 - Kevin – Parks Manager
 - There has not been much snow removal required this season.
 - At Pinski Park – staff are cleaning out landscape beds that have been invaded by nightshade.
 - At Gibson Park, staff are working on landscaping beds with stones.
 - A longtime maintenance employee has retired, and the department is working on hiring a replacement.
 - Staff are addressing and cleaning up graffiti throughout the parks.
 - Work is underway on a remodel of the Hurds restroom.
 - AJ – Trails
 - A section of trail that had washed over was cleared.
 - Kingsbridge Grant – work is underway on the contractor section.
 - Grant work is ongoing.
 - Trails Stewardship Grant – Gibson Park.
 - New trail signage is in the process of being installed.
 - Todd – Forestry
 - The division currently has three full-time employees.
 - Two full-time positions are currently posted.
 - Tree removal efforts are ongoing with the available resources.
 - The winter conditions have negatively impacted trees, and staff have begun watering trees in Gibson Park.
 - Additionally, Wilt-Pruf was purchased (\$60/Gallon) for the Pine Trees in Gibson.
 - Jessica- Deputy Director
 - 46th Ice Breaker – 4/26/2026.
 - Winter Trails Day (Silver Crest) – 2/7/2026.
 - Director Positions has been re-posted.

PARK BOARD

- Art Taft – Inquired about the next steps regarding the Centene Funding project he has been working on.
 - Art proved a brief overview of the funding situation and expressed concerns that the Commission did not conduct the process correctly.
 - Pat Carroll suggested that the Board send notice to the Mayor and the Legal Department requesting a written response.
 - Pat Carroll requested that the City Manager and the Commission provide justification for their decision.

- Art Taft, DeeAnna Brady-Leader, and Pat Carroll will meet to review the research Art has completed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ben Cipriano - Stated that he wants the space at Wadsworth Park to be used efficiently and asked that the Master Plan be reviewed to evaluate how the space is currently utilized.
 - Shannon suggested that we get his Commission Meeting comments to review.

Next Meeting February 9, 2026
Meeting adjourned at 5:23 p.m.