



CITY OF MERRILL
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
AGENDA • WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

4:15 PM

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**
 - 1. Minutes from February 7th meeting
- III. Approval of Claims**
 - 1. Approve February claims
- IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration**
 - 1. Continued discussion and potential decision on connector trail name
 - 2. Updated 5-year capital plan discussion
 - 3. Review/approve 2024 Bierman Family Aquatic Center operating hours (request to change slightly)
 - 4. Review/potentially approve request from Merrill Fastpitch to write a grant for potentially placing lights on fields and playground upgrades at the MARC
- V. Monthly Reports**
 - 1. Review Director's Report
- VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting**
- VII. Public Comment**
- VIII. Adjournment**

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PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

February 7, 2024

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 4:15 p.m., at Merrill City Hall.

Members Present: Kyle Gulke, Chad Krueger, Dan Novitch, Rebecca Rutkowski, Jean Ravn, Joan Tabor and Mark Weix

Members Excused Absent:

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

***Motion by Ravn, seconded by Weix to approve the minutes from the December 2023 meeting.

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion by Weix, seconded by Rutkowski, to approve the claims from December 2023 and January 2024.

Krueger questioned how much the city had to pay for pickleball courts. Wendorf stated it was from a grant from Bierman Foundation.

Novitch questioned what the payment to the Brewers was for. Wendorf stated it was for a bus trip for the summer of 2024

***Carried unanimously.

Public Comment: none

The next item on the agenda was to review and update 5-year Capital Plan. Wendorf stated that he updated the 5 year Capital Project Request. Wendorf requested the commission members review it and make any suggestions they feel are important. Gulke stated that he would like to see the refurbish Stange 2-arch bridge moved up instead of being in 2028; he would like to see it moved up to 2027. Krueger stated that he would like to see lights at the MARC softball fields added to the list. Kyle also suggested that maybe the key fobs should come out of a security budget if there is one, since it is a security issue. Wendorf stated he would look into it. This item will be back on the agenda in March.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss a citizen request for a "Wall of Hope" in or near the Agra Pavilion area. Wendorf stated that Pam Lemke Dodge proposed doing this project in light of the events that happened in 2023 with some teens. Wendorf stated he did not think there is enough room around or near the Agra building. Wendorf thought that this is something that should be placed in or around a cemetery. After some discussion it was decided that Wendorf needs to talk with Pam Lemke Dodge and see how big the Wall of Hope would be and maybe discuss a couple different locations. Wendorf will look into an area and design of some sort that could non-specifically accomplish the same purpose. Wendorf stated that if we say yes to this we would then have to design more memorial criteria. This item will be brought back to next month's meeting.

The next item on the agenda was continued discussion of connector trail name. Wendorf stated that everyone had a flyer in their packet with different name ideas for the trail. Wendorf

suggested that all the commission members pick their top 3 names and Wendorf will bring the results back to the March meeting.

The next item on the agenda was monthly reports. Wendorf asked if anyone had any questions. Wendorf stated that he did talk with the County on the ARPA funds and it was stated that in March decisions will hopefully be made on the money. Wendorf will keep everyone updated.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

Public Comment: none

***Motion by Ravn, seconded by Krueger to adjourn at 5:30 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith
Recording Secretary

2/1/2024

CINTAS	UNIFORMS	1/31/2024	4181851126	\$128.85	10-55200-03-460000
AMERICAN WELDING & GAS	CYLINDER RENTAL INVOICE	1/31/2024	9887059	\$123.36	10-55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING & GAS	CYLINDER RENTAL INVOICE	1/31/2024	9887443	\$83.85	10-55300-03-41500
BLUEJAY 96.3	ADVERTISING	1/31/2024	17648-11	\$1,005.00	10-55400-03-41000
CENTRAL WISCONSIN WHOLESALE AUTO	DEGREASER	1/31/2024	29867	\$166.20	10-55200-03-40000
CINTAS	MOPS/MATS	2/7/2024	4182569285	\$154.58	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	2/7/2024	4182569434	\$128.85	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	2/14/2024	4183288906	\$128.85	10-55200-03-46000
DAVE'S COUNTY MARKET	CONCESSIONS SUPPLIES	2/18/2024		\$65.46	10-55300-03-41500
ENTRANCE TECHNOLOGIES, LLC	PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE	1/31/2024		\$135.00	10-55400-02-168000
FERGUSON	PARTS FOR SHOP	2/20/2024	7538558-1	\$102.05	10-55400-03-50000
LACROSSE QUEEN CRUISE	SUMMER BUS TRIP	2/5/2024		\$400.00	10-55300-03-41500
LEXI BUNTROCK	SECURITY REFUND	2/13/2024	VOUCHER	\$100.00	02-13-24
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	PAINT BRUSH	1/29/2024	231918	\$13.98	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FLEX GLUE	2/7/2024	232179	\$14.99	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	HOOKS	2/6/2024	232141	\$23.53	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL FOTO NEWS	AD CHAMBER BOOK	1/1/2024		\$349.00	10-55400-03-41000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-15 2020 DODGE RAM	1/4/2024	19772	\$220.39	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-13 JOHN DEERE	1/23/2024	19791	\$1,286.46	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-13 JOHN DEERE	1/15/2024	19783	\$825.76	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-13 JOHN DEERE	1/4/2024	19774	\$200.30	10-55200-03-50000
NASSCO	TOILET TISSUE	2/5/2024	6387987	\$220.68	10-55400-03-40000
THE LIFEGUARD STORE	LIFEGUARD SUITS	2/7/2024	773537	\$742.24	10-55420-03-40000
TROLLEY TOURS	BUS TRIP	2/5/2024		\$100.00	10-55300-03-41500
WALMART	WHISTLES FOR BASKETBALL	2/6/2024		\$24.85	10-55300-03-415000
WALMART	FILE FOLDERS	2/13/2024		\$26.58	10-55400-03-10000
WALMART	CONCESSIONS SUPPLIES	2/16/2024		\$71.73	10-55300-03-41500
WEBSTAIRANT STORE	STAINLESS STEEL TABLE	2/13/2024		\$569.55	AQUATIC CENTER NON LASPE
WISCONSIN BUILDERS	BOARDS FOR PICNIC TABLES	2/8/2024	9559611	\$618.25	10-55200-08-91500
MERRILL YOUTH HOCKEY	BIRTHDAY PARTY	2/20/2024	341	\$40.00	10-55400-03-40000
WISCONSIN BUILDERS	BOARDS FOR PICNIC TABLES	2/22/2024	9559751	\$420.76	10-55200-08-91500
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	CHAIN COIL	2/12/2024	232271	\$177.94	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	OIL	2/22/2024	232533	\$59.99	10-55200-03-40000
WALMART	CANDY FOR EASTER	2/26/2024		\$209.02	10-55300-03-41500



City of Merrill
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"Top Three" List of Connector Trail Name Suggestions

Commissioner #1:
(Novitch)
Prairie River Pathway
River Rat's Prairie River Pathway
Trail of two rivers

Commissioner #2:
(Ravn)
Prairie River Pathway
Two River Trail
Loggers Lane

Commissioner #3
(Krueger)
Ted's Prairie River Trail
River Rat Timber Path
Jenny Bull Falls Lane

Commissioner #4
(Gulke)
Athletic Park Path
Tributary Trail
Brook Trout Boulevard

Commissioner #5
(Tabor)
Prairie River Pathway
Tributary Trail
Ted's Prairie River Trail

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill



Parks & Recreation Department 5-Year Capital Project & Equipment Requests

Park/Project	Priority Order	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Key Fobs at Smith Center		\$25,000				
Replace rental skates at Smith Center		\$10,000				
Remove/repave Streeter Square basketball Court (repeat request)		\$40,000				
Refurbish decking & rails on Prairie Trails bridge (repeat request)		\$20,000				
Keypad locks on park shelters		\$10,000				
Replace all park entrance signs (repeat request)		\$30,000				
Finish concrete around park shelters(Riverside/Ott's/Normal/Stange) (repeat request)		\$20,000				
Replace Streeter Square Playground		\$100,000				
Replace 2003 Polaris UTV		\$30,000				
Replace Stange Park Playground			\$150,000			
Replace (2) Aquatic Center feature pumps			\$30,000			
Refurbish Stange 2-arch bridge			\$40,000			
Replace large field mower			\$120,000			
Repave parking lot closest to Smith Center			\$175,000			
Replace compact tractor				\$70,000		
Replace safety netting at Athletic				\$35,000		
Funding for 5-year Outdoor Recreation Plan				\$10,000		
Replace one of our ½ ton pick-up trucks				\$65,000		
Replace Ott's Park Playground				\$125,000		
Replace boardwalk at Prairie Trails				\$50,000		
Replace Zamboni Batteries					\$20,000	
Replace 2002 1-ton truck					\$75,000	
Install lights on MARC D2 varsity field					\$175,000	
Install lights on MARC trails					\$75,000	
Replace chiller system in Smith Center					\$300,000	
Replace existing diamond dragger						\$30,000
Renovate Legion Building for rentals (including ADA)						\$100,000
Replace parking lot(s) Ott's, Kitchenette, Lion's						\$430,000
Connect Prairie Trails to City Forest						\$20,000?

****The above plan (year 2025) reflects the items that have been requested and not received funding. I added them to next year to show accumulation. I understand that we will most likely not be able to fund all projects requested – so we will have to prioritize this list for our official request again early this fall.**

Other items for future/current consideration:

Smith Center generator (back-up generator to run chiller system if power goes out)
Construct shelter at City Forest – depending on County ARPA requests
Diamond dragger replace existing at some point
Security cam upgrade inside and outside of Smith Center
Security cam upgrade at Aquatic Center
Sound system inside Smith Center (replace aging Sound Sphere)
Replace burgundy ½ ton truck
Replace “water utility” ½ ton truck
Kayak rental facility (self-rental)
Prairie River clean up – siltation from dam removal (work with WDNR on remediation)
Field turf at Athletic Park? Does install cost outweigh maintenance (and historical context as well)
Field turf on varsity softball field at MARC? Does install cost outweigh maintenance
Fitness trail segment – RBT
Connect Prairie Trails to City Forest (this connection would connect City Forest/Underdown/Prairie Dells
Parks & Trails to Prairie Trails and River Bend Trail)
Curling facility constructed at Smith Center (still dependent upon local interest and fundraising)
Resurface tennis courts at Ott’s Park
Resurface pickleball courts at Ott’s Park (should be beyond this 5 year plan but include for awareness)



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March 2024 Parks & Recreation Director's Report

Parks: February brought us just about every type of weather imaginable once again. We did have to do some snow removal and hopefully those days are numbered and we can enjoy a nice spring season? With the continuation of this unseasonable weather, our crew continues to accomplish tasks that we simply never get to do during a traditional winter. They have been pruning park trees, cutting and removing brush, cleaning garbage in the parks, fixing dugout benches, shelter clean up, to name a few. This should really help us to possibly be ahead of the game when spring actually arrives, and maybe give us time to do some athletic field and facility prep. It will also allow us to get started a bit earlier than previous years on our spring craziness. On 2/12 I met with the Parks & Recreation Director for the City of Wausau/Marathon County and the Facilities Director for DCE/Greenheck. After our meeting I got a behind the scenes tour of the new 100,000+ square foot Greenheck Turner Athletic Complex. It is an amazing facility to say the least! On 2/15 I met with Administrator/Engineer Akey and representatives from SD Ellenbecker Construction at the Nicklaus Bridge site to discuss potential options for re-decking the bridge. It was a great meeting and we decided that removing all of the decking boards and replacing it with concrete would work and be the best material for durability and application. We worked out an agreement with them already and work will be accomplished this summer. We are going to remove the existing decking then install treated plywood (along with help from the Street Department). Once we are finished with that, Ellenbecker will come in and pour concrete to half of the bridge and let it set up then return and pour the other half. It will be 6 inches thick and will have a broom finish on it to be slip-resistant and perfect for durability and for pedestrian travel. Best part of this is it should be virtually maintenance free. We will work with the RDDF to inform the public of the bridge closures this summer so that people can plan for alternate routes during the times that we have to close it. I met with a consultant from the State of Wisconsin on 2/21 at the Sunnicht Property that we purchased with the ARPA Tourism Grant. This is part of the final close out process to visit the site, take pictures, and answer their final questions. On 2/24 the "Snowbound in the Underdown" event hosted by Iron Bull was held at the City Forest. Even without much snow they were still able to do their Fat Tire Bike Race and "Snow Shoe" Races. Their numbers were down a little from what they were anticipating but that was to be expected when there is no snow. I will be meeting this week with a representative from a dock company at Riverside Park to look at the best dock to use there. I would like to go with a "roll in" dock with a wheel kit on it so that it is easy for us to put in and remove (even quickly if our water levels are rising). The company I am looking at builds docks that are commercial and they weld their decking to the frame so that it cannot be removed/stolen, which is a very good thing in our business. Hopefully it goes well and we can get it coming for this season. I am also continuing to work on the remainder of our 2024 Capital Projects that were funded and hope to have everything set up for this year.

Forestry: I was able to take advantage of the unseasonable weather and get somewhat caught up on some winter inspections. The Street Department has been really working on tree prunings/removals and are right on my heels, which is a great thing heading into spring. With very little snow removal to do, they have had time as well to work on trees and other things so we can almost have a fresh start with tree maintenance this spring. In the coming weeks I will be out and about as much as possible to compile a new list of trees and work on certain areas of town that are in need of tree maintenance work. Once again to talk about the weather, I am really hoping for an average spring for tree health so we hopefully avoid any tree health issues. Early budding and leaf out, followed by frost or hard freezes can really create issues for tree health. Things have a way of evening themselves out and I would assume this year will be no exception to that so we just have to wait and see what happens.



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Recreation: Our recreation programs are mostly completed and will be ready for distribution very soon. We partnered with the Foto News once again to have our hard copies created and we thank them once again for helping us. Our Little Dribblers Youth Basketball league recently wrapped up and was a success once again this year. As with all programs, we will continue to adjust to any issues that present themselves and use that to improve for the future. As previously mentioned, it would be great to increase these numbers and we will continue to work on that. There is only so much we can do to promote and to encourage people to participate and I feel really good about how much we promote our programs. Our annual Easter Egg Hunt is coming up on March 23rd. We are moving it this year to the MARC simply because there is more room for parking and for running the event. Lion's Park was a great spot but with the numbers we have been getting, it has become a bit more difficult to park everyone and it was crowded there. We are going to open up our Summer Playground sign ups online beginning April 1st. We are only doing online sign ups this year so that we can keep everything stream lined and more efficient. As we discussed last year with some of our issues, we will continue our fair, firm, and consistent enforcement of our rules so that everyone that chooses to enjoy this summer can and will. Our annual Children's Festival will be held inside the Smith Center on April 6th. We always look forward to hosting that one as it is a great way for children and families to see what our wonderful community has to offer. We have had a really good response from our community partners and I think families are really going to find this event useful again this year. All of our bus trips are set up as well and past participants have been notified. Hopefully we can fill them all up again this year.

Smith Center: The last day of ice was March 3rd and we are currently in the process of removing the ice as we speak. It is a bit of a process to remove the ice from the arena and is typically pretty messy. Hopefully it comes out smoothly so we can clean the entire arena and get ready for the dry floor season. We had a good ice season overall. Our ice buy from Youth Hockey was down a bit due to them not having enough kids in one age group to fill a team. On a positive though it looks like they will have enough next year to have teams in each age division so that should help them (and us) out. We have also been working with Youth Hockey on summer ice again for this year. We are going to have summer ice at the end of July into early August. We also have dry floor events starting with Children's Festival and continuing during the ice-out season and we have a good line up again this year. We are going to re-open and discuss potential changes to our Concessions Agreement with Merrill Youth Hockey after the season is over. There are a number of things that we need to address with them initially before I ultimately bring it to the Commission for further discussion. When we discuss at the Commission level, we will have that discussion in closed session as it is a contract. We have had a Concessions agreement with them since the building was opened and have made several revisions to it in the past but we haven't rekindled these talks recently as there wasn't much need to do so. As I do each year, I really need to thank all of our staff after a busy ice season. From our Arena Specialists, Parks Crew, public skate workers, Dawn for working with the groups on the ice schedule, and everyone in between – THANK YOU for all of your great work on another fine ice season!!

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill