



CITY OF MERRILL

Parks & Recreation Dept. - Smith Center

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MARCH MEETING NOTICE

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission will have a meeting on **Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.**

Voting members of Commission: Jean Ravn, Brian Artac, Kyle Gulke, Joan Tabor, Mark Weix, Chad Krueger and Dan Novitch

The following items will be included on the agenda:

1. Approve minutes from previous meeting.
2. Approve claims.
3. Public Comment
4. Review/approve bids for Ott's Park Pickleball Courts
5. Consider proposal for waste collection/removal for park shelters and athletic fields.
6. Monthly reports.
7. Set date for next meeting.
8. Public comment
9. Adjournment

Submitted by,

Dan Novitch, Chairperson
Parks and Recreation Commission

The Merrill City Hall is accessible to the physical disadvantaged. If special accommodations are required, please contact City Hall at 536-5594

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

February 1, 2023

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 4:15 p.m., at Merrill City Hall.

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

Members Excused Absent:

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

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

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion by Weix, seconded by Tabor, to approve the claims from December 2022 and January 2023.

Wendorf stated that on the bills in December, John Deere and Riesterer & Schnell are the same invoices, they were accidently listed twice.

***Carried unanimously.

Public Comment: none

The next item on the agenda was to review/approve bids for new front mower. Wendorf stated that there was only bid from Riesterer & Schnell for \$62,209.98. Wendorf stated that included in the price was a front blade, snow blower, broom, tire chains, drop spreader, rear weights and hard cab. Wendorf also stated that the old equipment that they currently have will be going to Nick at the City Hall. Artac questioned how long the warranty was. Wendorf stated it was a three year warranty. Weix questioned how long the equipment would last. Wendorf stated hopefully 9+ years like the last one.

***Motion by Gulke, seconded by Artac to approve the bid from Riesterer & Schnell for \$62,209.98 for the new front mower.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss 2023-2024 budgetary challenges and potential solutions. Wendorf stated that because we haven't had much of an increase in our budget, and the cost of goods and services has increased significantly, we have to make some unfortunate decisions on some of our programs and aquatic center. Wendorf stated that he would like to cap summer playground at 60 kids, and by capping the program we could keep our employees at 5 people. That would be 3 less than last year. Ravn questioned how many kids we had in the program last year. Wendorf stated around 80. The summer playground program will also go to week to week registrations. We will not save any spots, because what happens is if we save your spot and you decide not to come for the full month of July we just lost \$200.00. You will be able to register ahead of time for every week that you want your child to attend. Wendorf stated that we just can't do the same things we did 20 years ago; the value of the dollar is not the same.

Public Comment: Hallie Savall stated that she moved back from Black River Falls 2 years ago and her kids attended the summer playground program. She stated that it is so nice because daycares are full and it's hard to find someone to watch your kids. She did state that it would be nice if the program went a little longer than 3 but she is grateful for the program and her kids really like it.

Wendorf stated that they will continue to look into ways to make the program more profitable but in all reality the only thing they can do is cap the program. Wendorf will keep the Park and Recreation Commission updated, and continue budgetary discussions to be proactive before working on the 2024 budget.

The next item on the agenda was to review and approve Bierman Family Aquatic Center operating hours for 2023 season. Wendorf stated that he does not want to bring this to the commission but again with budgets not increasing and everything else going up in price there is no other option. Wendorf proposes that the Bierman Aquatic Center should remain closed on Monday's. Monday's are the slowest day at the pool and it would give the workers a chance to do inventory, restock, clean and do any maintenance on the pool. Wendorf also stated the lifeguards could use Monday's for doing in-service training. Wendorf also stated that he figures there would be a savings of between \$15,000 to \$17,000 in staffing. Gulke questioned if the prices in the concessions go up. Wendorf stated that they do go up, determined by what we pay. Tabor stated that if the commission chooses to close the pool on Monday's it has to be communicated to the public ahead of time. Wendorf agreed and stated that is why he is bringing it to the commission now.

***Motion by Gulke, seconded by Krueger to close the Bierman Aquatic Center on Mondays in 2023 due to budgetary restraints.

***Motion carried 6 – 1 with Jean Ravn voting no.

The next item on the agenda was continued discussion on waste removal options for park shelters. Wendorf stated that the Parks Department can't continue to pay over \$10,000 every year to haul everyone's garbage. Wendorf stated that he has been talking with Dustin Bonack about the possibility of using the big garbage totes; building a small shelter to keep them in and whoever rents the park will get a key so they can put their garbage in there. Weix questioned if people who don't rent the park abuse the dumpsters and Wendorf stated that this is a really big problem. Wendorf also stated that baseball and softball may have to rent their own dumpsters for their tournaments and leagues from now on. No decision was made and this item will be put back on agenda.

The next item on the agenda was to review and approve route for River Bend to Prairie Trails Connector Trail. Wendorf included a map of the route. Ravn questioned if the route was gravel. Wendorf stated that the city would be paving some areas of the route. After some discussion Wendorf stated that there is a possibility of some changes so he requested that no motion be made at this time, but the commission by consensus like the proposed route.

The next item on the agenda was to review and potentially approve property acquisition form MADC along the River Bend Trail. Wendorf stated that MADC would like to give the Park and Recreation Department the property next to the River Bend Trail, approximately 8.56 acres. Wendorf stated that there are no strings attached and it would not increase any work for the department as it is just mostly trees. Wendorf stated there is a lot of wildlife that is in that area and the Thrivent Trail runs through it.

***Motion by Artac, seconded by Ravn to accept the property acquisition from MADC along the River Bend Trail.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda is review of Personnel and Finance committee Grant acceptance discussion. Wendorf brought this item to the commission because he stated that he would hate to work on a grant for weeks or more just to bring it to Personnel and Finance and City Council and have them potentially deny it. Wendorf stated he will bring any grants that meet this amount to the commission before writing them. Weix stated that this is something that he and other department heads should probably talk with the interim City Administrators with. Wendorf stated he would.

The next item on the agenda was monthly reports. Wendorf asked if anyone had any questions. Ravn questioned if the Park and Recreation Department has seen increased traffic with the ice age trail. Wendorf stated it really doesn't affect the Park and Recreation Department but he has heard there has been a slight uptick in some of the area businesses. Weix questioned if any signage has been put up for the Pinery Water Trails. Wendorf stated that he is working with the organization on getting signage.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

Public Comment: Kyle Gulke stated that the library has an Ice Age Trail Backpack and also snow shoes that can be checked out.

***Motion by Ravn, seconded by Artac to adjourn at 5:50 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith
Recording Secretary

2/1/2023

R & R SPECIALITIES	BATTERY FOR ZAMBONI	12/1/2022	78038	\$11,918.60	26-31-5365
ACCENTU	TENT FOR BADGER STATE GAMES/FAT TIRE	2/11/2023	3B90F6F	\$800.00	26-55250-08-27250
AMAZON	PARTS FOR SHOP	1/12/2023	2169057	\$46.40	55200-03-40000
AMAZON	FIRST AIDE KITS AND SUPPLIES FOR POOL	2/28/2023	114-6806779-3956240	\$378.82	10-55420-03-40000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	1/31/2023	9087576	\$117.64	55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING	ACEYLENE/OXYGEN/HAZADOUS MATERIAL FEE	2/9/2023	9104897	\$184.24	55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	1/31/2023	9087980	\$80.30	55300-03-41500
ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION	MEMBERSHIP	2/23/2023		\$20.00	55200-08-92000
BAJA'S	LITTLE DRIBBLERS SHIRTS	2/3/2023	18407	\$567.50	55300-03-41500
BAUMGART WASTE REMOVAL	CARDBOARD PICK UP/WASTE HAULING	2/1/2023		\$148.00	55400-02-23600
CARQUEST	CONTACT TIP	2/8/2023	10846-239384	\$7.59	10-55200-03-50000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	1/26/2023	414623847	\$120.70	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	2/2/2023	4145325202	\$109.57	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MOPS/RUGS	2/9/2023	4146025760	\$197.21	55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	2/9/2023	4146025978	\$109.57	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	2/16/2023	4146725560	\$109.57	55200-03-46000
FERGUSON	PARTS FOR SHOP	1/17/2023	7044399	\$262.98	55400-03-50000
FOTO NEWS	WEDDING PLANNER	1/30/2023		\$220.00	55400-03-41000
FOTO NEWS	EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	1/23/2023		\$292.00	55400-03-41000
FOTO NEWS	BID NOTICE	1/30/2023		\$252.00	55200-08-91000
INTEGRITY	MAIN HEAD WAS LEAKING AIR	1/30/2023	63919	\$265.00	55400-03-50000
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ARBORICULTURE	MEMBERSHIP	2/28/2023		\$45.00	10-55200-03-32000
J.WENNING	ZAMBONI KNIFE	1/24/2023	102706	\$86.00	55400-03-51500
MARY JO BYER	SECURITY DEPOSIT	2/15/2023	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
MEDTECH	WRISTBANDS FOR AQUATIC CENTER	2/24/2023		\$519.03	10-55420-03-400000
MENARDS	STOW- AWAY SHED	1/31/2023	30160496	\$393.24	55300-03-41500
MENARDS	PAINT/WOOD	2/17/2023		\$671.54	10-55200-08-915000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	PULL UTILITY	1/25/2023	222540	\$57.93	55400-08-82000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FASTENERS	1/13/2023	222308	\$33.64	55200-08-91500
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	SPAR URETHANE	1/13/2023	222319	\$59.99	55200-03-40000

MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	ZAR EXT POLY GLOSS	1/17/2023	222295	\$45.98	55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	TRASH BAG/AIR BLOW GUN/KEYS	2/1/2023	22633	\$60.72	10-55400-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	PRE CLEARNER/REMOVER	1/31/2023	222621	\$9.99	55400-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	SQUEEGE/SPONGE/MOPHEAD	1/16/2023	222268	\$49.43	55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	BATTERY/PAINT/COUPLE HOSE	2/14/2023	222933	\$140.53	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	RYL INT SG WHT	2/15/2023	223029	\$40.99	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-2 FORD 250	1/20/2023	18465	\$113.64	55200-03-50000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-15 - 2020 DODGE RAM	1/3/2023	18447	\$175.53	55200-03-50000
MILWAUKEE BREWERS	GROUP TICKETS	2/2/2023	914909	\$1,464.00	55300-03-41500
NAPA AUTO PARTS	CLEANER	1/23/2023	4900	\$187.97	55200-03-40000
NAPA AUTO PARTS	BATTERY TESTER/WELDING WIRE	2/8/2023	7304	\$44.98	10-55200-03-40000
NASSCO	MOP BUCKET	1/30/2023	6255035	\$112.26	10-55400-03-50000
PAUL PROULX	SECURITY DEPOSIT	1/24/2023	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
PRECISION LASER AND POWDER COATING	PLOW BLADE	2/21/2023	40761	\$150.20	10-55200-03-50000
PREMIER	ASSORTED WHITE DOOR DECALS	1/18/2023	18072	\$115.00	55400-08-82000
RIESTERER & SCHNELL INC	PARTS FOR SHOP	2/2/2023	2350913	\$366.53	55200-03-50000
RIESTERER & SCHNELL INC	PARTS FOR SHOP	2/2/2023	2350913	\$366.53	10-55200-03-50000
RIVERS EDGE LP	LP FOR ZAMBONI	2/21/2023	2874	\$188.00	55400-03-51500
SUNRISE BROADCASTING	ADVERTISEMENT	2/4/2023		\$249.00	55400-03-41000
THE LIFEGUARD STORE	LIFEGUARD SUITS	2/16/2023	745956	\$648.90	55420-03-40000
THE LIFEGUARD STORE	LIFEGUARD SHIRTS	2/16/2023	745996	\$335.50	55420-03-40000
URBAN WOOD NETWORK	MEMBERSHIP	2/15/2023		\$150.00	55200-08-92000



Park Department – Waste removal cost savings options

After detailed discussions at our December and February Commission meetings, I would like to propose that we eliminate contracted dumpsters at our park shelters and athletic field locations. These discussions were prompted by the increased costs for our department to provide dumpsters at each of these locations for the season during a time in which our budget is no longer able to absorb those costs.

After doing more research, there are a lot more communities that do not provide dumpsters and complete waste removal than do. We are going to be charged with the task of reducing as many costs as we can for the foreseeable future and this is one way to help those efforts without having a significant impact on our level of service.

As part of the proposal, I would like to replace the dumpsters at Ott's Park, Kitchenette Park, Riverside Park, Normal Park, Agra Pavilion, and Stange Park with two of the new City issued 96 gallon carts. There is no cost to using them and the carts still provide ample space for waste storage from a routine event. We would inform park renters that if their event is larger, they are responsible for their own waste removal. I would also inform our youth sports organizations that utilize dumpsters that they are responsible for waste storage and removal for league and tournament play. This would be for Lion's Park, Athletic Park, and the MARC. We would still have to keep a dumpster at our park shop and the Smith Center. We generate enough garbage consistently at the Smith Center/Aquatic Center to warrant a dumpster and the Park Shop would have to be a central area we can dump garbage that we collect from the parks and the carts after reservations. We have to empty the garbage cans that we place around the parks either way so this will add a little more effort on our part, but the savings for our department is immediate and impactful.

The ultimate goal would be to go to a "carry out what you carry in" policy that State & National Parks have (and a number of other communities) so that we don't have to spend so much time always moving people's waste. It takes up so much staff time that could be better spent on improvements and beautification efforts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill



March 2023 Parks & Recreation Director's Report

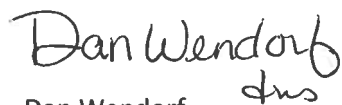
Parks: The theme continues with the crazy weather fluctuations. In the middle of all of the weather swings it got warm enough to ruin our ice rinks enough to where it wasn't worth working on them any more so we closed them down. Then the snow returned and had us back to snow removal, which is pretty normal for this time of year in Wisconsin. In between, the crew has been working to finish up picnic table repairs before we get to spring so they are ready to be placed back where they came from. Our online shelter reservations have been going good again this year (we still have a few people stop out that don't like online, but all in all CivicRec has been a great convenience for people to take advantage of). I ordered our new mower and associated implements right after our last Commission meeting and it looks like we should have it at some point in September. This is looking to be the trend moving forward with long delays in getting equipment unfortunately. I spent a great deal of time working on specifications and bid documents for our pickleball courts over the past month plus (bids are due on 3/7/23 and I'll bring them direct to you for approval at the meeting). I am also thankful for City Engineer Rod Akey's assistance as well. Throughout the process I reached out to and talked with a lot of other communities who have recently built pickleball courts to try and learn from their successes and their failures to hopefully make the right decisions for our community. Hopefully we get some good, well rounded bids to choose from. I am also currently working with our IT Director to get our security camera's ordered for Stange and Kitchenette Parks as part of our 2023 Capital Projects. The goal is to get those here and installed by the time we open our shelters for reservations to immediately cut down on vandalism and foolish activity. We hosted the Badger State Games Fat Tire Bike Races again at the City Forest on February 11th. It was a great success once again with riders from all over converging on our community to participate. I shared the video with you from the individual who won the gold medal. I thought that was a pretty cool way to showcase the entire trail and a great potential marketing piece for us to use. I am really hoping for an average spring coming up very soon so that we can get Badger Pool up here to get our leaks fixed without having to delay any pool openings. I am also going to be working with Water Utility to separately meter the water in and out of the actual pool itself so that we don't get sewer charges being that we don't send any of that water back to the sewer plant. High School winter sports are coming to an end and that means that spring sports are right around the corner. And as the theme goes, we are hoping for average weather to help us with enough time to prepare our fields and facilities for the upcoming seasons. I have also had to attend a series of mandatory virtual webinars for our Tourism ARPA funding that we received for the Sumnicht property that we purchased last year. Even though we already purchased it and received the funding, the State of Wisconsin is requiring all recipients to participate in all of their webinars.

Forestry: The Street Department has made great progress over the past several weeks (during our dry spell from snow) in starting to catch up on our pruning/removal list. I have a growing list of requested inspections already for this spring that I will start working on over the next several weeks as time and weather allows. I will also be looking at some of our younger trees this spring to see how they bounce back after the crazy weather swings and conditions we had this winter. We will most likely go back to a spring Arbor Day observance and Tree City USA recognition this year.

Recreation: Our Little Dribblers Co-Ed youth basketball league has come to an end and it was a very successful season to say the least. Special thank you to Dawn for organizing, volunteer parent/coaches for their time and to the MHS Boys Basketball team and coaches for leading the skills and drills portion the first few weeks. We are working diligently on wrapping up the final details for our spring/summer/fall recreation programs and trips. Our plan is to have it finished up within a week so our fine partners at the Foto News can print the hard copies for us and create the digital booklet that we can share on our website. As always, a big thanks to Dawn for her hard work in getting all of these fine details organized and set up for everyone to enjoy. This gives us enough time to roll out all of our programs and information by the Children's Festival that we host in the Smith Center on April 1st. This will include the first opportunity for people to register for our Summer Playground Program. We will then have all programs ready for online registration on our CivicRec online portal. We will see how the Summer Playground registration cap plays out this year, but I do think it is necessary for us to control our costs where we can in areas where we cannot back it up with equal revenue.

Smith Center: Time sure does fly as we are getting ready to remove the ice on March 9th and through that weekend. It was a really good ice year overall with more youth hockey tournaments here than we have had in a very long time. This is great because it brings more people into Merrill and more people into our rink. The Ice Reflections Figure Skating show was a smashing success again this year with big crowds and great performances. It is looking like the East/Merrill United Co-Op Hockey team will exist for at least one more season (2023-24). After that the future will be uncertain due to Wausau School District's recent plan approval to combine their High Schools. Hopefully Merrill has enough of their own kids out for hockey at that point to reform our own team without having to Co-Op with anyone. We did receive our new Zamboni batteries in early February and had them installed right away and they are working very well. We are going to have to plan to budget for replacement batteries approximately every 6 years or so. We are still saving a lot of money with our electric Zamboni because we don't have to have our LP tanks filled every week throughout an entire ice season. Once the ice is out and we clean the arena, we will very soon after be hosting dry floor events. We have a very good dry floor season shaping up this year already and we are adding more.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Wendorf" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill