

**CITY OF MERRILL
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2024 MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS 4:15 PM**

I. Call to Order Roll Call:

Present: Gulke, Krueger, Novitch, Tabor, Malm, Osness, Alderperson Rutkowski

Present Not Voting: Parks Director Dan Wendorf

Excused:

Absent: Chairperson Novitch called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting

1. **October 2024 Minutes** - Krueger motioned to place minutes on file. Tabor seconded and the motion Passed.

III. Approval of Claims

1. **October 2024 Claims** - Alderperson Rutkowski motioned to approve. Krueger seconded and the motion Passed.

IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration

1. **Update on 2025 Budget** - Wendorf began discussion by summarizing the budgetary process after all three Committee of the Whole Budget Meetings have now been completed. He informed the Commission that the operating budget passed without alterations and as presented to the Commission. Wendorf also said the Capital Requests remained the same as updated at the last meeting with several items being partially funded, one item fully funded (pool heater) and one item not funded at all (shelter key locks). Wendorf stated his wish that the capital budget process would involve clear direction from City Council that involved an amount of funds that the Council was comfortable borrowing so that departments could formulate their capital requests to fit that amount. This would cut down on debates about the merits of individual projects at the highest level being that we have already had those conversations at our individual Committee/Commission levels.
2. **Consider Smith Center public skate punch passes** - Wendorf began the discussion by informing the Commission that he would like to switch from season passes in the Smith Center for skating to punch passes to mirror what we have done at the Aquatic Center over the past several years. Wendorf stated that punch passes still bring value to the consumer but also captures more realistic revenue for the department. Punch passes can be carried over from year to year if there are still visits remaining on them and can be used by anyone the punch pass holder would like. Wendorf stated the costs and types of punch passes would be exactly the same as the Aquatic Center: \$85 for 25 visits, \$37 for 10 visits, and \$20 for 5 visits. The cost for admission is regularly \$5.00 per person so there is a savings and the passes are worth it for anyone

who intends to visit the rink multiple times and for families as well.

Gulke motioned to approve. Tabor seconded and the motion Passed.

3. Consider adjusting Smith Center birthday skate party packages

- Wendorf led the discussion off by stating he would like to do the same with birthday party packages as with the punch passes and adjust their offerings to mirror what we have been doing at the Aquatic Center with success. Wendorf stated that they have been doing birthday parties at the Smith Center for many years but the adjustment he is requesting would be an overall cost for up to 10 people with a per person charge after 10 people. The prices cover our costs better and the up to 10 people is clearer for the users and easier for us to work with. Wendorf stated that he is proposing the three packages are as follows: Ice Cream Package would be \$90 for up to 10 people and includes admission, skate rental, reserved table, paper products, balloons, ice cream cup, soda, and a treat for the birthday person. Each child will receive one free skate pass for their next visit and there will be a \$7 charge for each person beyond 10. Hot Dog Package would be \$120 for up to 10 kids with the same language as stated above with a charge of \$8 for each additional person beyond 10. Pizza Package would be \$150 with the same details and language as stated above with a charge of \$9 for each additional person.

Krueger motioned to . Alderperson Rutkowski seconded and the motion Passed.

V. Monthly Reports

- 1. November 2024 Report** - After hearing no questions related to the monthly report, Wendorf was asked to summarize projects that the department accomplished this year. Wendorf stated that they were able to accomplish the following projects in 2024: Nicklaus Bridge re-decking with concrete, Ott's Park dock and boat launch (dock was a generous gift from Lincoln County ARPA funding), Normal Park path, lights, and power station project (all made possible through \$75,000 donation from past City Band fundraiser and \$10,000 from monies raised by Chamber Foundation previously), Prairie River Pathway (trail to connect Prairie Trails with River Bend Trail) - there is still a portion to finish yet and signage but a good portion is now complete, Riverside Dock, Gruling Family Playground @ Agra Pavilion/Rotary Park (\$25,000 contributed in memory of Bob & Eppie Gruling). Wendorf stated how thankful he was for all of the cooperation they receive from the Street Department and other departments to help keep the cost down on all of these projects and also mentioned his sincere thanks to all of their community partners for always contributing to help accomplish these impactful projects. Wendorf mentioned to the Commission that since he started working here, through forming strong partnerships/relationships with local organizations, businesses, foundations, and writing grants that the Parks Department has brought in over \$9 million dollars in grants and donations. That is \$9 million dollars of projects,

programs, and initiatives that did not require tax payer funding or borrowing and may have never happened without strong partnerships, relationships, and successful grant writing.

VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting

1. Wednesday, December 4th, 2024 @ 4:15 p.m. -

VII. Public Comment There was no public comment.

VIII. Adjournment Krueger motioned to adjourn. Alderperson Rutkowski seconded and the motion Passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.