



CITY OF MERRILL
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
AGENDA • WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2025

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

4:15 PM

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**
 1. December 2024 Meeting Minutes
- III. Approval of Claims**
 1. December 2024 claims
 2. January 2025 claims
- IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration**
 1. Discuss 5 year capital plan
 2. Continued discussion on potential Special Event Permit
 3. Update on MARC ballfield lights grant
- V. Monthly Reports**
 1. February 2024 Monthly Report
- VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting**
 1. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be March 5th, 2025 at 4:15 in the Council Chambers at Merrill City Hall
- VII. Public Comment**
- VIII. Adjournment**

The Merrill City Hall is accessible to the physically disadvantaged. If special accommodations are needed, please contact the Merrill City Hall at (715) 536-5594.

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

I. Call to Order Roll Call:

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

Present Not Voting: Parks Director Dan Wendorf

Excused: Joan Tabor

Absent:

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

II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting

1. **November 2024 Minutes** - Krueger motioned to place minutes on file. Alderperson Rutkowski seconded and the motion Passed.

III. Approval of Claims

1. **November 2024 Claims** - Osness asked Wendorf what the charges were from Stainless Specialists for the Smith Center. Wendorf stated it was contracted start-up that they always perform while we are getting ready to turn the floor on and make ice for the season. They go through all of our mechanical equipment to ensure it is running well. Krueger asked about the two charges for tree planting. Wendorf stated that in our operations budget we have funding to plant trees and we have additional funding through the capital budget that has been awarded over the past 5+ years to allow the City to try and keep up with regular plantings, requested plantings, and road construction restocking. Without additional funding we would fall further behind on tree planting every year.

Krueger motioned to Approve Claims. Osness seconded and the motion Passed.

IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration

1. **Update on bridge project to connect Prairie Dells County Park to the City Forest** - Wendorf informed the Commission that he has been talking with Lincoln County and they have approved a bid from Custom Manufacturing (same company that did Prairie Trails Bridge and the last Stange Bridge) to provide and install the bridge to connect Prairie Dells County Park with our City Forest. Wendorf stated that work is tentatively scheduled to begin spring/summer of 2025 and will be a tremendous asset to both of our parks. Wendorf also stated that after the work is completed we will both work to mesh our paths to match each side of the bridge to make it user friendly. Wendorf stated that he would keep the Commission informed on the project as things happen in 2025.

2. **Review Commission authority and responsibilities** - Novitch began the discussion by stating that with the number of new Commissioners he wanted to simply provide some information on what a Commission is versus a Board or Committee. He pointed out that it is important for the group to understand what the definition is and the statutory language associated with it. He pointed out that a Commission does have certain capabilities that Boards and Committees do not, but anything the Commission does is with Common Council approval. Wendorf summarized the conversation by stating the a Commission is intended for a better level of specialization meaning they can establish regulations, set fees, accept donations, purchase property, etc. but he reiterated Novitch's point that it is all with Common Council approval.

V. Monthly Reports

1. **December 2024 Director's Report** - Wendorf fielded a few questions from the Commission and summarized his board report by thanking all of the Commissioners for their insight and involvement in 2024. He went on to thank all of the Parks & Recreation Department Staff, volunteers, sponsors, and citizens who helped make 2024 another great year. He said it is always very refreshing to look back and see how amazing the Merrill Community is and we should celebrate that. The support is truly amazing and it allows our department to continue to thrive and serve not only our citizens but bring in thousands of visitors each year to showcase what we have to offer. Wendorf wished the Commission a very safe and happy holiday season.

VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting Novitch said that we typically skip the January meeting each year because of its close proximity to Christmas and the New Year and that the next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, February 5th, 2025. If something pressing comes up we can always have a meeting at the call of the chair.

VII. Public Comment There was no public comment.

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

12/1/2024

ACE HARDWARE	GARBAGE BAGS	11/19/2024	239653	\$7.59	10-55400-03-40000
ACE HARDWARE	NUT DRIVER/HOSE CLAMP	11/25/2024	239807	\$21.15	10-55400-03-40000
ACE HARDWARE	FAUCETS	11/25/2024	239802	\$169.97	10-55200-03-43000
ACE HARDWARE	CLEANER/FILTERS	11/19/2024	239663	\$63.73	10-55200-03-40000
ACE HARDWARE	FILTERS/MICE BAIT	11/22/2024	239759	\$29.55	10-55200-03-40000
ACE HARDWARE	HEATED VEST	11/27/2024	239870	\$149.99	10-55200-03-46500
ACE HARDWARE	ENDCAP/REPAIR TAPE	10/30/2024	239175	\$14.98	10-55400-08-82000
ACE HARDWARE	DW WIRE CUP	11/24/2024	239794	\$22.99	10-55400-08-82000
ACE HARDWARE	WHEELBORROW TUBE	11/23/2024	239784	\$39.97	10-55400-08-82000
AMAZON	SEATS FOR TRUCK	12/17/2024	11-4298239-6588208	\$347.80	10-55200-03-51000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	10/31/2024	10484104	\$83.85	10-55300-03-41500
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	10/31/2024	10483749	\$61.68	10-55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	09.30-24	10414723	\$60.25	10-55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	10/31/2024	10473749	\$61.68	10-55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	11/30/2024	10531010	\$60.25	10-55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	11/30/2024	10531010	\$182.18	10-55200-02-15000
ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION	MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL	12/1/2024		\$35.00	10-55200-03-32000
ATCO INTERNATIONAL	POP UP SWIPES	11/20/2024	10637712	\$317.60	10-55400-08-82000
BAJA'S	SHIRTS	12/6/2024	18670	\$478.00	10-55200-08-91000
BRITTANY JEANSONNE	SECURITY DEPOSIT	12/4/2024	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	11/12/2024	42111410940	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MATS/MOPS	11/12/2024	4211141807	\$225.08	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	11/18/2024	4211731546	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MATS/MOPS	11/25/2024	4212591030	\$80.43	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	11/25/2024	4212591115	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	12/4/2024	4213488203	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MOPS/MATS	12/11/2024	4214220825	\$184.11	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	12/11/2024	4214220777	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	12/18/2024	4214963432	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	12/24/2024	4215596712	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MOPS/MATS	12/24/2024	4215596619	\$144.12	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	12/31/2024	4216306674	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
DAVES COUNTY MARKET	STORAGE BAGS	11/27/2024		\$15.95	10-55300-03-41500
DAVES COUNTY MARKET	COOKIES FOR PROGRAM	12/11/2024		\$18.14	10-55300-03-41500
GREEN LAWN	LIONS PARK	12/5/2024	24-36484	\$300.00	10-55200-02-15000
GREEN LAWN	ATHLETIC PARK	12/5/2024	24-36483	\$284.00	10-55200-02-15000
GREEN LAWN	MARC SOFTBALL COMPLEX	12/5/2024	24-36485	\$274.50	10-55200-02-15000
HOLLIE DEWAR	SECURITY DEPOSIT	12/4/2024	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
INTEGRITY	ANNUAL INSPECTION OF SPRINKLER SYSTEM	12/19/2024	67752	\$423.00	10-55400-02-16500
KATHLEEN SHERIDAN	SECURITY DEPOSIT	12/26/2024	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
KENNETH RUNKEL	SECURITY DEPOSIT	11/25/2024	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
KINGS EVERGREEN WREATH	WINTER WONDERLAND	12/3/2024		\$70.00	26-55300-03-60022
MENARDS	CONSTRUCTION SCREWS/2X6	11/11/2024		\$41.67	10-55400-08-82000
MENARDS	LIGHT CLIPS	11/18/2024	53018	\$11.98	26-55300-03-60022
MENARDS	TABLES/CHAIRS	9/16/2024	30160496	\$13,310.91	CAPITAL
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	GARAGE REMOTE/INNER TUBE	12/13/2024	240289	\$53.98	10-55400-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	CARDWASH ARM/BOLT EYE	12/5/2024	240053	\$21.17	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	AIR COMPERSOR	12/9/2024	240136	\$143.58	10-55400-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	CEMENT PVC/DOOR STOP/CLOSET FLANGE	12/10/2024	240172	\$25.96	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	CAULK	12/17/2024	240339	\$7.99	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	PAINT BRUSHES/STAIN FOR PICNIC TABLES	12/17/2024	240333	\$70.98	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL FOTO NEWS	ADVERTISING	12/1/2024		\$135.00	10-55400-03-41000
MERRILL YOUTH HOCKEY	BIRTHDAY PARTY	11/21/2024		\$75.00	10-55300-03-41500
MERRILL YOUTH HOCKEY	ICE CREAM PARTY	12/26/2024	449	\$45.00	10-55300-03-41500
MERRILL YOUTH HOCKEY	PIZZA PARTY	12/30/2024	454	\$75.00	10-55300-03-41500
MERRILL YOUTH HOCKEY	HOT DOG PARTY	12/30/2024	455	\$60.00	10-55300-03-41500
NAPA AUTO PARTS	BOSS SOLENIOD	11/22/2024	109339	\$39.99	10-55200-03-51000
NAPA AUTO PARTS	HI-PRS CLEANING WANDS	12/17/2024	112867	\$40.99	10-55200-03-40000

NASSCO	BATH TISSUE	11/18/2024	6491967	\$220.68	10-55400-03-40000
PREMIER	TREE MEMORIALS	11/22/2024	22980	\$150.00	10-55200-08-91000
PREMIER	BRASS BENCH PLATES	12/12/2024	23096A	\$50.00	10-55200-08-91000
R & R SPECIALTIES	ICE PAINTING	11/8/2024	83610	\$2,862.61	10-55400-08-82000
RHYME	COPY MACHINE	11/13/2024	AR785241	\$24.68	10-55400-03-13000
RHYME	COPY MACHINE LEASE	11/18/2024	37914721	\$94.69	10-55400-03-13000
RHYME	COPY MACHINE	12/16/2024	AR794226	\$19.61	10-55400-03-13000
RHYME	COPY MACHINE	12/19/2024	38141143	\$94.69	10-55400-03-13000
RYAN GOLISH	MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL	12/3/2024	8878	\$150.00	10-55200-03-32000
STREET DEPARTMENT	P-1, KUBOTA ZERO TURN MOWER	12/5/2024	22100	\$545.07	10-55200-03-51000
SUNRISE BROADCASTING	ADVERTISING	12/1/2024		\$249.00	10-55400-03-41000
SUNRISE BROADCASTING	ADVERTISING	12/31/2024		\$523.00	10-55400-03-41000
ULINE	DOGGIE BAGS	12/2/2024	28327310	\$576.40	10-55200-03-40000
WALMART	PROJECT BOARDS	11/24/2024		\$36.80	10-55300-03-41500
WALMART	WINTER WONDERLAND	12/3/2024		\$88.51	26-55300-03-60022
WALMART	WINTER WONDERLAND	12/4/2024		\$216.49	26-55300-03-60022
WALMART	WINTER WONDERLAND	12/5/2024		\$159.23	26-55300-03-60022
WALMART	PROGRAM SUPPLIES	11/26/2024		\$75.90	10-55300-03-41500

1/1/2025

AMERICAN WELDING & GAS	CYLINDER RENTAL	12/31/2024	10573427	\$247.25	10-55200-02-15000
ATCO INTERNATIONAL	FREE HAND PUMP	1/16/2025	10639676	\$160.00	10-55400-03-40000
BAJAS	BASKETBALL SHIRTS	1/24/2025	18678	\$459.95	10-55300-03-41500
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/RYAN	1/8/2025	4217130397	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MOPS/MATS	1/8/2025	4217130394	\$184.11	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/RYAN	1/22/2025	4218602399	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MATS/MOPS	1/22/2025	4218602331	\$144.12	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/RYAN	1/15/2025	4217865700	\$96.48	10-55200-03-46000
CIVIC PLUS	CIVIC REC ANNUAL FEE	1/25/2025	325618	\$3,803.63	10-55200-03-19000
DAVEY RESOURCE GROUP	TREE KEEPER SOFTWARE SUBSCRIPTION	1/27/2025	9000092567	\$1,800.00	10-55200-08-92000
JOLENE HANIG	SECURITY DEPOSIT	1/27/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
KATHERINE MOOTZ	SECURITY DEPOSIT	1/8/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
MACKENZIE THOMPSON	SECURITY DEPOSIT	1/20/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	PAINTING SUPPLIES	1/14/2025	240936	\$84.96	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	TRASH BAGS/TOILET BOWL REPAIR KIT	1/15/2025	240962	\$63.16	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FILL VALVE LEAK SENTRY	1/17/2025	241011	\$19.99	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL YOUTH HOCKEY	BIRTHDAY PARTY	1/8/2025	467	\$60.00	10-55300-03-41500
MERRILL YOUTH HOCKEY	HOT DOG B-PARTY	1/18/2025	467	\$60.00	10-55300-03-41500
MERRILL YOUTH HOCKEY	BIRTHDAY PARTY	1/27/2025	467	\$60.00	10-55300-03-41500
MILWAUKEE BREWERS	SUMMER BUS TRIP	1/8/2025		\$1,090.00	10-55300-03-41500
NAPA AUTO PARTS	HINGE PIN/DUSING KIT	1/7/2025	115581	\$32.98	10-55200-03-51000
RIVER'S EDGE CAMPGROUND	SUMMER PLAYGROUND	1/15/2025		\$100.00	10-55300-03-41500
STAINLESS SPECIALISTS	HEAT EXCHANGER	1/2/2025	46486	\$5,871.45	10-55400-02-16250
STAINLESS SPECIALISTS	HEAT EXCHANGER KIT CONCESSIONS	1/2/2025	46438	\$987.20	10-55400-02-16250
WALMART	CLEANING SUPPLIES	1/8/2025		\$65.29	10-55400-03-40000



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

Park/Project	Priority Order	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Key Fobs at Smith Center	unfunded	\$25,000					
Replace rental skates at Smith Center	partial	\$10,000 \$5,000					
Remove/repave Streeter Square basketball Court (repeat request)	unfunded	\$40,000 \$5,000					
Replace BFAC Pool Heater	funded	\$35,000					
Replace BFAC pumps	Partial	\$35,000 \$10,000					
Refurbish decking & rails on Prairie Trails bridge (repeat request)	unfunded	\$20,000					
Keypad locks on park shelters	unfunded	\$10,000					
Replace all park entrance signs (repeat request)	partial	\$20,000 \$15,000					
Finish concrete around park shelters(Riverside/Ott's/Normal/Stange) (repeat request)	partial	\$20,000 \$9,000					
Replace Streeter Square Playground	Didn't ask	\$100,000					
Replace 2003 Polaris UTV	Didn't ask	\$30,000					
Key Fobs at Smith Center	Repeat request		\$25,000				
Replace rental skates at Smith Center	Continued		\$5,000				
Remove/repave Streeter Square basketball court (repeat request)	Repeat Request		\$25,000				
Refurbish decking and rails on Prairie Trails bridge	Repeat request		\$20,000				
Keypad locks on park shelters	Repeat request		\$10,000				
Replace park entrance signs	Continued		\$20,000				
Finish concrete around park shelters	Continued		\$16,000				
Replace Streeter Square Playground			\$100,000				
Replace 2003 Polaris UTV			\$30,000				
Replace (2) Aquatic Center feature pumps	Continued		\$30,000				
Repave parking lot closest to Smith Center			\$175,000				
Replace compact tractor				\$70,000			
Replace safety netting at Athletic				\$40,000			
Replace large field Jacobsen Mower				\$130,000			
Replace Stange Park Playground				\$175,000			
Funding for 5-year Outdoor Recreation Plan				\$10,000			
Refurbish Stange 2-arch Bridge				\$50,000			
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	Grant funded				Grant funded		
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?	
Create pedestrian path into Riverside Park							\$100,000
Build Splash Pad at location TBD							\$300,000
Micro surfacing River Bend Trail first section Park St – Stange St							\$75,000

The above plan (year 2025**) reflects the items that have been requested and not received funding or received partial 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 (**No County ARPA funding**)
- 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 – working with Hockey and Figure Skaters on this one currently)
- Replace burgundy ½ ton truck (was used when we purchased it)
- Replace “water utility” ½ ton truck (was recycled to us and is really used)
- 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)
- Mower replacement schedule (especially our zero turn mowers – high hours each year)



City of Merrill
Parks & Recreation Department
 1100 Marc Dr. | Merrill, WI | 54452
 Phone: (715) 536-7313
 parks@ci.merril.wi.us

Event Information

Event Name: _____ Date(s): _____

Event Location Address *(include parking locations and streets to be used if applicable)*: *If the event requires street closures or parking restrictions, permission must be obtained from the Board of Public Works and/or the Health & Safety Committee (Contact Street Department and/or Police Department to obtain this information). *This requires at least 45 days minimum notice.

Is the event located in a City Park? YES NO

If YES, do you have a park reservation? YES NO Park Name: _____

Event start/end time: _____ Event set up/take down times: _____

Total anticipated attendance: _____ Alcohol consumed, sold, or served? YES NO (may require a picnic license)

Vendors: YES NO

Will your event be preparing, selling or serving food? YES NO If yes please explain (type of food and sold/served by who – may require permit from Lincoln County Health Department)

Emergency On-Site Contact Person (full name, cell phone number, and email):

Admission/Entry Fee? YES NO Amplification Equipment? YES NO

Amusement Rides/Inflatables? YES NO Drive anything into the ground? YES NO (requires Diggers Hotline)

Erection of tents/temporary structures? YES NO (requires diggers hotline) Fireworks? YES NO (additional permit required – City Hall)

Horses/Animals? YES NO Food Trucks? YES NO (If YES, they must be licensed through LCHD)



City of Merrill
Parks & Recreation Department
1100 Marc Dr. | Merrill, WI | 54452
Phone: (715) 536-7313
parks@ci.merrill.wi.us

*The Parks & Recreation Department has several 96 gallon refuse containers available for use at each of our park locations for normal/reasonable use. If your event is anticipated to be larger than 100 people the organizer is responsible for providing their own dumpster.

*The Parks & Recreation Department has provided a reasonable number of restrooms at our facilities that can be reserved. For larger crowds it is the organizers responsibility to provide their own portable restrooms to accommodate the size of their anticipated crowd.

*The Organizer shall have an Emergency/Evacuation Plan that addresses severe weather or any other adverse event. This should also include provisions for emergency vehicle access. This plan shall be worked on using the expertise of the Fire and Police Departments.

*The City of Merrill reserves the right to shut down a special event that is in progress if it is deemed to be a public safety hazard and/or public nuisance by Police Services, Fire Department, Emergency Management, or the Parks Department and/or there is a violation of City Ordinances, State Statutes or the terms of the Applicant's permit. The Parks & Recreation Director/Fire Chief/Police Chief/or City Administrator may revoke an approved Special Event Permit.

*Event organizer will complete hold harmless agreement with the City of Merrill as well as supply Certificate of Insurance indemnifying the City of Merrill and its employees against all claims, damages, costs, and expenses including reasonable attorney's fees arising either from the management of the event or from any breach or default on the part of the permittee in the performance of the permit agreement, or from any negligence of the permittee in the event.

*Neither this permit nor any right or duty in whole or in part by the permittee under this permit may be assigned, delegated, or subcontracted without the written consent of the City of Merrill.

*Merrill Street Department phone number: 715-536-4222

*Merrill Police Department non-emergency phone number: 715-536-8311

*Merrill Fire Department non-emergency phone number: 715-536-2233



City of Merrill
Parks & Recreation Department
1100 Marc Dr. | Merrill, WI | 54452
Phone: (715) 536-7313
parks@ci.merrill.wi.us

February 2025 Parks & Recreation Director's Report

Parks: Winter has sure been interesting so far with all ends of the weather spectrum once again. We almost had our outdoor ice rinks ready to go shortly before Christmas then it warmed up and rained and set us back quite a ways. But a majority of the month of January was very cold and that allowed us to repair/rebuild our rinks pretty quickly and open them up for people to use. Not much snow to speak of, but on the few occasions we did have snow, our removal process went very smoothly. Our crew has been working on a lot of different things over the past few months including picnic table repairs which as we know is a constant during the winter months due to the abuse they endure while our parks are open during the warm weather months. They have also been working on various repairs and maintenance to our park facilities and amenities that we struggle to do with limited time during the spring/summer/fall seasons simply because we don't have time to do it. I recently wrote an American Trails Grant that was due at the end of January for potential funding for maintenance for the River Bend Trail. We have never applied for this grant, it is a no match grant so if we are successful, it costs us nothing and we get funding to help with regular trail maintenance. Like all grants today, it will be very competitive as it is nation-wide so we'll see if we are successful. I have started having quite a few discussions with all of our various user groups and organizations for upcoming seasons, plans, needs, wants, schedules, events, and other things that are on their mind so we can hopefully be prepared for their respective seasons and events. There is a tremendous amount of planning and organizing that we have to do to ensure that everyone has what they need when they need it. I have also started working on our 2025 capital projects that we received funding for this year so we are hopefully ready and have enough time to do what we need to do to finish them. On January 15th I, along with a representative of Merrill Fastpitch, met with the Bierman Foundation to discuss our MARC ballfield light grant that we submitted last year. After some great discussion with them, I am pleased to announce that we received funding to install lights on Diamond's 1 & 2 for sure and most likely 3 & 4 as well. The Bierman Foundation requested that I get more detailed cost figures to add diamonds 3 & 4 to the project and if it fits within what they are willing to fund we can do all four fields at once. I am waiting for those numbers to come back and will keep you informed as those details arise. But that is great news to say the least as it will allow for more games, practices, and teams to visit our complex and our community. I will have to bid the project out once we have everything figured out so as far as a timeline I am hoping this is something that can be done by fall this year if everything goes accordingly but we'll see. Special thank you to Lindsey Steinagel from Merrill Fastpitch for all of her help with the grant! Early in January I had a number of discussions with Bill Bertram (Wausau & Marathon County Parks & Recreation Foundation Board President & organizer of the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway) regarding a Memorandum of Agreement between our department and their P&R Foundation Board. The agreement basically says that we will work together on the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway and their foundation will help us with routine maintenance costs associated with signage and any other amenities associated with this initiative. It is a great partnership and a great initiative that will benefit both of our communities tremendously once it is established. I mentioned in a previous email that this water trail is moving through the approval processes and hopefully will be recognized on a national level. Our park shelter reservations are off to a great start for 2025. We have a really solid reservation schedule already and it is looking like another very busy year for our park shelters. We are excited to once again be the host location for the Iron Bull Snowbound in the Underdown on February 22nd at the City Forest. This is a great and growing event that returns for another year to our beautiful silent sport destination up there and will again give us a chance to showcase our community to many visitors. I continue to have conversations with Iron Bull to work on bringing more events to our area and they are interested because of the uniqueness of having the City Forest and Underdown connected. This gives them almost unlimited opportunities to organize unique outdoor silent sport events.



City of Merrill

Parks & Recreation Department

1100 Marc Dr. | Merrill, WI | 54452

Phone: (715) 536-7313

parks@ci.merrill.wi.us

Forestry: I finished and submitted our 2024 Tree City USA application on time and it is currently under review by the Arbor Day Foundation (after approval from our State Forester). We should find out fairly soon if we achieved Tree City USA status again for this past year, we are pretty much assured to receive this honor again. With the snow once again being very infrequent, the Street Department has been able to keep working through our tree trimming and removal lists. I recently met with our Street Superintendent to look at trees on State Street (between Grand Ave and 10th St. to see which trees we can keep and which have to go due to the upcoming road construction along that stretch of State St. When we look at those we use a few criteria for removal (or not) and some of those variables include tree health and tree location in relation to impending utilities that will be installed as part of construction. Unfortunately there are times that we have to remove a tree that is in decent to good health because it is located directly in the path of a water or sewer lateral. We will plan on replanting that entire stretch of road after the project is completed. Depending on cost we might have to break the replanting into a few planting cycles because we did have some funding cut in the last budget cycle (for road construction trees). Hopefully our weather levels off and we return to average for the remainder of winter and early spring so I can begin our spring tree inspections to develop our list for pruning's and removals. To start the New Year we had some of our recently removed public tree logs milled into dimensional lumber. We stack those to dry and replenish our supply for picnic table repairs and other projects. It is great to have that option to recycle urban wood and to save funding on having to purchase dimensional lumber all of the time.

Recreation: Our Little Dribblers co-ed youth basketball program is off to a great start this year. Our registration/participation numbers again this year were fantastic and that is great to see more of our youth getting involved. We have been working on the arduous task of organizing our 2025 summer recreation programs. Dawn always does a phenomenal job setting things up and working hard on all of the details to make sure we are set up for a great season. Summer Playground takes the most time but Dawn has almost everything ready to go so we will most likely launch registration early this year online to give people extra time to register. We will continue to cap our registrations off at 60 per week again this year so we can control our staffing and supply costs for the season. We are working on a few bus trips again this year and are finding bus costs continuing to rise so we might do two trips instead of three. We will continue to evaluate our bus trips (like everything that we do) to see if it is sustainable to continue them. We do take a financial risk with our trips because we have to front the funding for them and we pass that along to our trip goers. We always hope that we can sell out our trips to cover our costs and make some revenue on top of that. But with our budgets becoming thinner the risk becomes bigger. We will see how it goes (at least with another Milwaukee Brewer trip) this year and deal with it after we experience it.

Smith Center: It has been an extremely busy few months in the Smith Center. Our ice times are up across the board which is a great thing. We have had a very nice boost in out of town ice purchases as well partially due to early ice issues at Marathon Park in Wausau and for over flow time with out of town teams. We have also had more weekend ice for tournaments and games which has brought in a great boost in visitors to our facility and community. We have picked up some new arena sponsors as well, which is a good way for yearly revenue increase. We get a yearly fee from our sponsors to hang banners, sign boards, or dasher boards. It isn't a huge amount but it is a great and steady revenue stream to help offset our operating costs each year. I will continue to work on more sponsors moving forward to see if we can grow this. We finally took delivery on our tables and chairs in mid-December for the Smith Center and Agra Pavilion that was part of our 2024 Capital projects. We still have a very busy ice schedule from now until we remove the ice in mid-March. We will be hosting more games and tournaments as well as the annual Merrill Ice Reflections figure skating show, which draws hundreds of people over the entire weekend in the arena. We have had early discussions with Merrill Youth Hockey already this year as they would like to do summer ice again this year. They filled up all of their ice time last summer and apparently have a lot of interest again this year so we will work with them on that request again. They have done a good job of helping us get things set up for summer ice and helping maintain it because that time of year it is very difficult for us simply because all of our staff members have their hands full with the Aquatic

An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.



City of Merrill
Parks & Recreation Department
1100 Marc Dr. | Merrill, WI | 54452
Phone: (715) 536-7313
parks@ci.merril.wi.us

Center, recreation programs, mowing, ball fields, park shelters, events, and everything else that we have to handle during the busy summer months. As time flies, it will not be long and we will be removing our ice and getting ready for the busy dry floor events in the Smith Center. So far we are looking at a good dry floor event season in the Smith Center and hoping for even more events to trickle in like we get each year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill