

**CITY OF MERRILL
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2025 MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS 4:15 PM**

I. Call to Order Roll Call:

Present: Gulke, Krueger, Tabor, Malm

Present Not Voting: Parks Director Dan Wendorf

Excused: Steve Osness, D8 Alderperson Rebecca Rutkowski

Absent:

Wendorf called the meeting to order at 4:15 and welcomed new Commissioner Trisha Kubichek. Wendorf thanked former Commissioner Dan Novitch for his many years of great work on the Parks & Recreation Commission and all of his contributions to not only the Parks & Recreation Department but to the community as well. Wendorf also welcomed NTC Sports & Recreation Student Jalissa LaBarge for being in attendance to observe. Wendorf stated that he has been working with her as part of a class assignment to learn more about municipal Parks & Recreation and how the department and city government works.

II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting

1. **April 2025 Minutes** - (Krueger/ Tabor) motion/second place minutes on file.
The motion Passed.

III. Approval of Claims

1. **April 2025 Bills** - (Gulke/ Krueger) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.

IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration

1. **Elect Chairperson** - Wendorf began the discussion by explaining the process for election of chairperson and vice-chair. He stated for each position he would open the floor for either nominations or volunteers for each position. With that being said Wendorf opened the discussion by asking if there were any nominations or volunteers for chairperson. Krueger said that he would volunteer. Wendorf asked if there were any other nominations or volunteers for chairperson. Hearing none, Wendorf asked for a motion and second to approve the nomination. Chad Krueger is elected new Chairperson for the Commission.
(Malm/ Tabor) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.
2. **Elect Vice-Chairperson** - Wendorf began the same discussion for Vice Chairperson stating that he would open up the floor for nominations or volunteers for the vice chair position. Wendorf then opened the discussion. Malm volunteered for vice chair. Wendorf asked if there was anyone else interested in nominating someone or anyone else interested in volunteering. Hearing none, Wendorf entertained a motion to approve. Eric Malm was approved as vice chair of the Parks & Recreation Commission. At the conclusion of the vice chair vote, Wendorf then turned the meeting over to

new Chairperson Krueger to run the meeting.
(Krueger/ Gulke) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.

- 3. Review & Approve 10 year and 2026 Capital Requests** - Wendorf began the discussion by stating that our Finance Director would like to get an earlier start this year on our 2026 budget process, especially the capital portion. She has asked for requests for 2026 as well as a tentative 10 year plan. Wendorf reviewed the 2026 capital request list that he provided in the packets with the commission asking first if there were any questions. Kubichek asked how Wendorf decided the priorities listed on each of the items. Wendorf stated that it is typically based on the condition of the item(s) and if they are breaking down, in need of repair, un-safe, and/or are starting to cost the city more money than it should, those items tend to make their way to the top of the list. Wendorf said that occasionally there are requests from citizens for amenities such as pickleball courts, disc golf, or trails that become popular and they would like things like that here in our community. Wendorf stated that there were 11 items on the 2026 list, and he explained that we will very likely not receive all of them but hopes to receive funding for as many of the top priority items as possible. He stated that there are 11 items on there, mostly because 7 of the 11 were either partially funded in previous years or unfunded and that those items still need to be addressed at some point. He said no matter what happens, the final decisions come down to approval from City Council. Wendorf then presented the 10-year capital plan to the commission and explained some of the logic behind what was on the list and also said that it is very difficult for our department to forecast beyond 2-3 years due to the amount of property, amenities, facilities, and equipment that we have. It is tough to predict when a heater will go out, a mower will fall into the "not worth repairing anymore" category, but it is important to try to list some of these items nonetheless. Wendorf also stated that prices beyond 2026 are rough estimates based on prices today and hopes that trends remain consistent, but he said in talking with most vendors, they won't give an actual price on what it will cost to replace a mower in 8 years because they can't even give prices for next year.

Krueger asked Wendorf to move the Legion building project up a few years on the 10-year list to see if we could consider fixing it out and renting it out sooner. The commission was good with both lists as presented and will wait for official/final approval towards the end of summer/early fall when budget discussions begin.
- 4. Review & potentially approve mobile food vendor application form and regulations** - After revisiting this item last month and reversing a previous decision to not allow mobile food vendors at the MARC for the fireworks, the commission asked Wendorf to come up with a mobile food vendor application and discuss some policies that would organize this better. Wendorf presented the application that was in the packet and explained that he talked with a number of other communities to come up with an application that he thinks will work for us. He stated that applications from other communities ranged from

very detailed to hardly any details requested, so the application brought forth covers what we are looking for information-wise as well as covering us from potential liabilities. The Commission liked the application and suggested no further edits. Wendorf stated that he would like to cap the mobile units to 5 total and would put them in the southwest corner of the MARC parking lot with labeled site numbers assigned to each unit that is selected after a successful application. He said that units will have to be set up by no later than 5:00 p.m. to avoid issues with traffic and parking. It was asked if we were going to charge a fee or if we should charge and Wendorf stated that he was indifferent but suggested seeing how this year goes because we are not providing vendors with power - they need to be self-contained. Wendorf stated that these are private businesses that are profiting off of a community event so most likely in the future we should charge a fee. There was additional discussion on even a nominal fee or deposit but it was decided to not charge a fee for this year.

(Tabor/ Gulke) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.

For the official record - Motion Tabor, seconded by Kubichek to approve the mobile food vendor application

5. **Review & Approve policy for Radio Controlled Model Airplanes at the M.A.R.C** - Wendorf stated that for many years there has been a very small group of 2-3 people that fly hobby RC airplanes at the MARC in the south field by the soccer parking lot with no issues. Recently, a new one brought in a gas-powered larger RC plane that prompted several complaints from Rock Ridge Apartments. Wendorf discussed with the Police Department as well as with a few of the RC plane enthusiasts to come up with a policy that works for them, the apartments, the department, and the thousands of people that use the MARC. Wendorf presented the items that were included in the packet, stating that the ordinance only allows for RC planes to be flown in a park in a designated area. He pointed out that the key to this policy was no gas-powered engines allowed, and no flying while organized activities were taking place. This will be safer for those playing baseball/softball/soccer, etc. The commission agreed. Wendorf stated that if approved, he would have a sign posted with this information at the location that it is approved for and inform the users.

(Gulke/ Tabor) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.

6. **Request to seek alternative funding/donations to replace the old scoreboard at Athletic Park** - Wendorf informed the commission that the scoreboard at Athletic Park started having issues last year and they were able to patch a few things together to keep it running off and on. He stated that very shortly after he began working for the Parks Department in the early 2000's he organized a group of people to raise funds for improvements at Athletic Park and the scoreboard was included on that list. The existing scoreboard is now over 20 years old and not functioning properly again. With the amount of people that visit Athletic Park (local historic landmark and one

of the "Seven Wonders of Merrill") the scoreboard is the most viewed amenity in the park for obvious reasons. Wendorf said that due to policy he needs permission from the commission and Personnel & Finance Committee to receive funding of any kind (grants and donations) that exceed \$5000. (Malm/ Gulke) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.

V. Monthly Reports

1. **May 2025 Parks & Recreation Director's Report** - Wendorf asked for any questions on his report. Hearing none he summarized the report for the commission.

VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting

1. **The next regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesday, June 4th, 2025 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall -**

VII. Public Comment There was no public comment.

VIII. Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.
(Tabor/ Gulke) motion/second adjourn. The motion Passed.