



CITY OF MERRILL
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
AGENDA • WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

Regular Meeting **City Hall Council Chambers** **4:15 PM**

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**
 - 1. August 2025 Minutes
- III. Approval of Claims**
 - 1. August 2025 Claims
- IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration**
 - 1. Consider and potentially approve 2026 Capital Budget request
 - 2. Recap of 2025 Summer Playground Program
- V. Monthly Reports**
 - 1. September 2025 Director's Report
- VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting**
 - 1. The next regularly scheduled meeting is October 1st, 4:15 p.m. 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, AUGUST 6, 2025 MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS 4:15 PM**

I. **Call to Order** Chairperson Krueger called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

II. **Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**

1. **June 2025 Minutes** - (Osness/D8 Alderperson Rutkowski) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.

III. **Approval of Claims**

1. **June 2025 Bills** -

2. **July 2025 Bills** - Krueger suggested going through both June and July claims and considering with one motion at the end. There were several questions for Wendorf, which he answered for the Commission.

(D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/ Kubichek) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.

IV. **General Agenda Items for Consideration**

1. **Consider potential shelter building at Lion's Park - donated by Merrill Baseball Association & Pinno Buildings** - Wendorf began discussion by summarizing the idea and explaining what is being proposed and why it will help with youth baseball at Lion's Park. Wendorf stated that this has been discussed for well over 10 years by the Merrill Baseball Association and earlier this summer the discussion advanced to Pinno Buildings as one of their employees is now helping coach youth baseball and is at the park frequently. The idea includes moving the existing concession (portable Baker Barn) 90 degrees to the east so it faces south and construct a shelter facility over the top extending to the south to provide shade and protection from foul balls to patrons. Wendorf stated this is a good thing for the park and for the patron experience at Lion's Park. This individual approached his employer asking if they would be interested in cost sharing the project with MBA and they agreed to cover 50% of the cost, and MBA will cover the remaining 50%. The City of Merrill will not have to cover any of the costs of this project. Wendorf stated that because of the assumed value of the project (even if donated) has to be approved by the Commission and Personnel and Finance Committee.

(D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/ Gulke) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.

2. **Consider potentially paving a trail through the MARC - potential donation from River District Development Foundation** - Wendorf began the discussion by providing background on the subject. He explained the Lincoln County ARPA funding that the River District Development Foundation

received for trail work that was initially intended for a potential extension near the Wastewater Treatment Plant that may not be able to be used because of flood plain issues. The RDDF pivoted recently to look at a better way to invest these funds in trail development and that led to the MARC. Wendorf said he met with reps from the RDDF, City Engineer, and Council Grounds State Park to brainstorm ways to provide a more complete trail through the MARC and connect to Council Grounds. Wendorf described the map that was provided with the different options that were discussed and the reasoning for each. Wendorf said the recommendation from the group was option A, which consists of creating a new trail between Rock Ridge Apartments and the soccer fields from Grand Ave. south to the existing trail, turning west over the drainage ditch towards the dog park and continuing behind softball diamonds 1 & 2 and eventually linking up directly with the trail that leads to Council Grounds. Option 1 includes a paved trail and allows pedestrians to access the park without having to contend with MARC drive or the parking lot if they don't want to. Krueger asked if this would include an approach cut out of the sidewalk at the location where the trail enters the MARC grounds by Rock Ridge. Wendorf said he would ask the City Engineer if that was possible but he did say that the actual River Bend Trail is the south sidewalk and if an approach is built there may have to be a crosswalk put in that location as well. He said he will discuss with City Engineer. Wendorf said he recommends Option 1 because it meets all of the criteria that has been discussed over the past 5+ years by the RDDF and many pedestrians who have provided feedback. Wendorf said this will have to follow the same process as the previous agenda item, as it is a donation to the City it will need P&R Commission and P&F approvals.

(D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/ Kubichek) motion/second approve. The motion Passed.

- 3. Begin discussion on 2026 Capital Equipment & Projects** - Wendorf began the discussion by reviewing the provided Capital Improvement list that was discussed for several months in late winter/early spring. Wendorf stated that this is introductory and wanted to begin discussion, so Commissioners have an opportunity to spend some time carefully considering which items they want to select for potential funding and which items they may wish to defer to future years. Wendorf stated that the first few items on the list were partially funded in 2025 and should definitely remain on the request list for 2026 so that we can finish those projects and not have to worry about them anymore. Wendorf also discussed the Streeter Square Basketball Courts and suggested removing them from the request list because they became a stumbling block during discussions last year. He said the courts are still in bad shape, but he would still like to have the surface replaced and will find a way to do it without asking City Council for funding. Wendorf also stated that he may add sand replacement in the pool filters to the list and has to evaluate that as soon as the pool closes (can't do it while in operation). Wendorf then continued by

mentioning each of the items that were listed and suggested moving a few of them to future years to give us a smaller list and a better chance at receiving funding. There were several questions that Wendorf answered and he invited the Commissioners to contact him at any time to discuss any items on the list or meet at any time if anyone needed any clarification or had thoughts to share. Wendorf then shared an idea involving asking City Council to provide a budgetary number/amount that they are comfortable borrowing for and having all departments work together to stay at or below that number. Wendorf stated it accomplishes the exact same objective but would potentially streamline the process and provide much clearer direction for departments, committees, and commissions. Ultimately, it is completely up to City Council and what they are most comfortable doing. Wendorf said this item will be on the next few agendas so we can continue to discuss and decide by no later than very early October.

V. Monthly Reports

- 1. August 2025 Director's Report** - Wendorf began discussion by fielding several questions from Commissioners regarding different park projects and events. Wendorf then summarized his report and wanted to thank sports organizations and event organizers for their tremendous successes this summer. Wendorf thanked Merrill Girls Softball Association for their unbelievable turnout for their traveling tourney with 49 teams and for hosting the American Legion Girls D1 & D2 State Tourney at the MARC the following weekend. Those two events, combined with Youth Hockey's Adult Hockey Tourney, Black Squirrel Scurry, Aquatic Center brought well over 10,000 people to the MARC grounds and to our community on those two weekends alone. Wendorf also thanked Merrill Baseball Association for their tourneys bringing in almost as many people for their tournaments as well as Youth Soccer for another banner year of youth soccer league! Wendorf mentioned that it seems as though overall park usage is increasing (organized sports, passive park visits, rentals, and trails and special use areas). This is a very positive trend for our community and one that we can hopefully continue to promote and provide.

VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- 1. The next regularly scheduled meeting would be for Wednesday, September 3rd, at 4:15 p.m. -**

VII. Public Comment Chad Krueger thanked the Parks Department, especially Buildings & Grounds Staff for their great job in prepping and maintaining the MARC Softball Fields and the grounds for their two tournaments. He said he heard a lot of great compliments from out of town visitors who were thoroughly impressed with our facilities.

VIII. Adjournment (Osness/D8 Alderperson Rutkowski) motion/second adjourn. The motion Passed. At 5:35 p.m.

8/1/2025

107 BAIT SHOP	SUMMER PLAYGROUND FIELD TRIP	8/21/2025	367	\$376.00	10-55300-03-41500
AMERICAN WELDING & GAS	CYLINDER RENTAL	7/31/2025	11028970	\$84.87	10-55300-03-41500
AMERICAN WELDING & GAS	CHEMICALS FOR AQUATIC CENTER	7/31/2025	11028651	\$62.36	10-55200-02-15000
ANN SCHOTZ	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/6/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
BLUEJAY 96.3	ADVERTISEMENT	7/31/2025	20222-5	\$259.00	10-55300-03-41500
BRANDT EXTINGUISHERS	REFILL EXTINGUISHERS	8/25/2025	14817	\$103.00	10-55400-03-50000
BRENDA BUSTERUD	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
BRUCE NOVOTNY	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/7/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	7/30/2025	4238446494	\$103.61	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	8/13/2025	4239911665	\$176.47	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MOPS/MATS	8/6/2025	4239187351	\$272.73	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	8/6/2025	4239187415	\$176.47	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	8/20/2025	4240644171	\$176.47	10-55200-03-46000
COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/24/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
COUNCIL GROUNDS	BUS TRIPS SUMMER PLAYGROUND	8/21/2025		\$48.00	10-55300-03-41500
DAVE'S COUNTY MARKET	FOOD FOR PROGRAMS	7/30/2025		\$22.34	10-55300-03-41500
DAVE'S COUNTY MARKET	AQUATIC FOOD	8/22/2025		\$13.98	10-55300-03-41500
DYLAN THOMAS	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/19/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
EMILY HECKENDORF	REFUND BREWERS TRIP	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$122.00	10-55300-03-41500
FERGUSON	PARTS FOR SHOP	7/24/2025	426793	\$199.98	10-55200-03-50000
HAENCO SUPPLY	HAND SOAP	8/8/2025	15751	\$291.76	10-55400-03-50000
HAWKINS	CHEMICALS FOR AQUATIC CENTER	8/5/2025	7157859	\$3,739.53	10-55420-03-40000
JACK KASPER	LIONS CAR SHOW/LABOR DAY	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$1,500.00	LABOR DAY
JACKIE ARSENEAU	OVERCHARGE ON BIRTHDAY PARTY	8/20/2025	VOUCHER	\$66.00	
JIM BROGAN	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/6/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
JONATHAN WAID	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/19/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
KATHY JANUSEVIC	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
KAY YOHE	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/24/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
KAY YOHE	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/24/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
KENDRA PETROWSKI	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/19/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
KENNETH RUNKEL	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
KIM SCHWARTZ	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/25/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
KIM WICHMAN	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/25/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
LAMERS BUS LINE	BREWER TRIP	7/31/2025	88139	\$2,135.00	10-55300-03-41500
MEGAN KAYA	SUPPLIES FOR BEYOND BOUNDARIES	7/31/2025	VOUCHER	\$203.00	SPECIAL NEEDS ACCOUNT
MELISSA SCHROEDER	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/24/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	TRASH BAGS	7/29/2025	245682	\$33.99	10-55400-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	TRASH BAGS	7/31/2025	245738	\$33.99	10-55400-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FASTENERS	7/30/2025	245718	\$5.78	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	STIHL 6 PACK	8/8/2025	245953	\$18.99	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FASTENERS	7/30/2025	245717	\$15.47	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FASTENERS	7/29/2025	245677	\$8.38	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	ROPE	7/29/2025	245680	\$55.30	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	SWIMMING SUMMER PLAYGROUND	8/5/2025	1813	\$80.00	10-55300-03-41500
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	FOOD AQUATIC CENTER	7/29/2025	1761780	\$759.88	10-55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	FOOD FOR AQUATIC CENTER	8/15/2025	1764501	\$56.86	10-55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	TISSUE TOILET	8/14/2025	1764194	\$101.52	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	FOOD FOR AQUATIC CENTER	8/7/2025	1763275	\$170.84	10-55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	FOOD FOR AQUATIC CENTER	8/5/2025	1762903	\$444.26	10-55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	AQUATIC FOOD	8/19/2025	1764808	\$27.00	10-55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	AQUATIC FOOD	8/19/2025	1764796	\$242.99	10-55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	AQUATIC FOOD	8/20/2025	1765070	\$66.79	10-55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	AQUATIC FOOD	8/21/2025	1765235	\$56.86	10-55420-03-40100
MERRILL FOTO NEWS	MINI BOOK	7/31/2025		\$279.00	10-55300-03-41500
MERRILL GO ROUND	RIDE TO COMMUNITY GARDENS	8/5/2025		\$153.50	10-55300-03-41500
MERRILL SOCIAL AND SICK	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/20/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-24	7/31/2025	27285	\$82.34	10-55200-03-51000

MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-18	7/31/2025	27279	\$136.54	10-55200-03-51000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-24	7/31/2025	27275	\$142.88	10-55200-03-51000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-4	7/31/2025	27273	\$222.49	10-55200-03-51000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-6	7/31/2025	27269	\$1,293.49	10-55200-03-51000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-23	7/31/2025	27263	\$195.13	10-55200-03-51000
MICHELLE MCMULLEN	REFUND SUMMER PLAYGROUND	8/14/2025	VOUCHER	\$69.00	10-55300-03-41500
NAPA	BRACKETS	7/17/2025	145513	\$57.57	10-55200-03-50000
NASSCO	SOAP FOR DISPENSER	8/4/2025	6586161	\$107.73	10-55200-03-40000
NASSCO	DISPENSER FOR SOAP	8/11/2025	6588875	\$12.01	10-55200-03-40000
NICHOLAS MALM	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
NORTHWOODS	SPARKLING GREEN	8/20/2025	423160	\$103.63	10-55200-03-40000
PATTI KITCHELL	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/6/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
PETERSON BROS SAND AND GRAVEL	CYDS GRANITE	8/5/2025	22518	\$43.00	10-55200-08-91000
PHYLLIS HUBERT	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/19/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
RHYME	COPY MACHINE	8/11/2025	858784	\$39.34	10-55300-03-13000
RIESTERER & SCHNELL	PARTS FOR SHOP	7/30/2025	9131672	\$58.55	10-55200-03-50000
RYAN GOLISCH	RENEWAL OF CDL LICENSE	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$75.48	10-55200-03-32000
SALVO'S PIZZA	SUMMER PLAYGROUND PIZZA PARTY	8/22/2025		\$156.17	10-55300-03-41500
SARAH SABATKE	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
SERVICE MOTOR COMPANY	PARTS INVOICE	8/14/2025	P48790	\$26.42	10-55200-03-50000
TAMI TRAVIS	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
TAMMY BURNETT	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/12/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
TAYLOR STINE WAID	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/20/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
TIM SCHMIDT	SECURITY DEPOSIT	8/6/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
ULINE	BUSINESS CARD LAMINATE CARDS	7/10/2025	195159847	\$145.00	10-55300-03-10000
WALMART	SUPPLIES FOR PROGRAMS	7/30/2025		\$28.92	10-55300-03-41500
WALMART	SUPPLIES FOR AQUATIC CENTER CENTER	7/30/2025		\$155.57	10-55420-03-40100
WALMART	SUPPLIES AQUATIC CENTER	8/1/2025		\$88.28	10-55420-03-40100
WALMART	PROGRAMS	8/6/2025		\$58.21	10-55300-03-41500
WALMART	FOOD FOR AQUATIC CENTER	8/6/2025		\$72.96	10-55420-03-40100
WALMART	FLAG FOOTBALL	8/11/2025		\$134.13	10-55300-03-41500
WALMART	PROGRAMS	8/12/2025		\$57.16	10-55300-03-41500
WALMART	SUPPLIES FOR COMMUNITY NIGHT OUT	8/14/2025		\$67.30	10-55300-03-41500
WALMART	SUPPLIES FOR PROGRAMS	8/15/2025		\$34.52	10-55300-03-41500
WALMART	AQUATIC FOOD	8/19/2025		\$92.61	10-55420-03-40100
WALMART	AQUATIC FOOD	8/21/2025		\$133.60	10-55420-03-40100
WALMART	AQUATIC FOOD	8/22/2025		\$56.12	10-55420-03-40100
WALMART	PROGRAMS	8/22/2025		\$75.27	10-55300-03-41500
WENDORF BUS SERVICE	BLACK SQUIRRELL TRANSPORTATION	7/29/2025	1011	\$250.00	26-55425-03-42777
WENDORF BUS SERVICE	SUMMER PLAYGROUND TRIPS	8/11/2025	1007	\$1,183.50	10-55300-03-41500



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

2026 Draft Capital Requests – Parks & Recreation Department

Park/Project	Priority Order	2026
*Replace Park Entrance Signs (continued)	1	\$25,000
*Finish concrete around park shelters (continued) Stange & Ott's	2	\$18,000
Refurbish decking and rails on Prairie Trails Bridge (repeat request)	3	\$20,000
*Aquatic Center pump replacement (continued)	4	\$30,000
*Replace rental skates at the Smith Center (continued)	5	\$5,000
Repave parking lot closest to the Smith Center	6	\$175,000
Replace sound system in Smith Center (share cost with Youth Hockey & Figure Skaters)	7	\$15,000

*The items above that have (continued) by them were partially funded for this year and we are requesting the balance for 2026. Items labeled (repeat request) are items that have been requested in previous years (and were not funded) and are asking again for 2026.

**Pool plaster continuation may be added (or switched in for an existing item) depending on what we discover with Badger Pool during winterization

*Please review this list and be prepared to have the discussion and a recommendation at our September Meeting. Ultimately it is up to you as a Commission which items you would like to see proceed through the funding process (and there can definitely be others included or removed if you wish).

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
 Parks & Recreation Director
 City of Merrill



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

September 2025 Parks & Recreation Director's Report

Parks: It is amazing how fast the summer season flies by. Just like that it has come and gone, along with all of our seasonal staff. So we have our usual month of September to get through with all of the park facilities still open, grass growing, events, and we are down to our 3 full time guys. Luckily we have the best three park guys in the country and they do an amazing job getting things done and doing them extremely well. WE had a very busy summer in our parks. Our baseball, softball, and soccer seasons and tournaments were all very successful this year. Our pickleball court usage has increased again from last season and that is a great trend to see (lights were fixed) as well as our park shelter reservations, and special events continuing to rise. This is a great trend to see for not only our department, but for the community overall. The increased interest and use in our facilities consistently generates thousands of visitors to Merrill and helps local businesses and showcases our city. With the increased usage in all of our facilities comes increased maintenance but that trade-off is more than worth it in my opinion because of the direct and in-direct revenue we help generate. As I am sure everyone that has a yard has noticed the grass has not stopped growing at all this year. This is the most (and consistently) we have had to mow in my entire 23+ years working here. On a positive, all of our grounds have looked very lush and beautiful all year long. On the other hand, this was a tough year to start and finish park projects because of the sheer amount of mowing and trimming required every week. We had some issues with the Pickleball Court lights that are now resolved. It was related to the two contactors in the power box that continued to fault when someone tried to turn the lights on at the pole. We found another solution that is a bit less complicated electronically. The Bierman Family Aquatic Center saw its last day on August 22nd, and it was another very good season. The day before that we hosted the MHS outdoor swim meet showcasing 187 swimmers and 600+ spectators. We finished the season with a dog swim on August 24th that was a poor weather day but had a good crowd brave the drizzle and 58 degrees for a few hours. The month of June was rough for the aquatic center simply due to the fact that it rained 4-5 days per week at some point and wasn't very warm until the very end of the month into early July. Despite that we rebounded very nicely and had a great finish for the remaining month and a half. We began draining the pool on August 25th so we were ready to have it winterized on August 28th by Badger Pool. We did notice as we were draining the pool that there is another spot where the plaster bubbled and broke that we will evaluate when Badger is here on 8/28. If it is a bigger area than we can see, we may have to adjust our capital request list to bump something off of it and include re-plastering this location. It is further down from the plaster we had replaced before this season and is a natural progression for an outdoor pool. I will have more info for you at our meeting. The MARC ballfield lighting project began on Monday, August 18th and they made tremendous progress in the first week. The main contractor started and finished the new combined electrical service on the south side of the concession stand that will provide power to all of the lights, scoreboards, concession stand, restrooms, and announcer's booth. The light installers were able to drill and set 8 of the 14 light poles in the first week. The hope is that light installation is finished right after Labor Day to allow Van Ert to return and run power to all poles and flip the switches to give us light by mid-September. Our park sign replacement project is coming along nicely with only a few signs to go. The new ones look really nice and make such a big difference as you enter the park. Hopefully we can get funding to finish this project so we have a uniform look in 2026. On August 16th we hosted the annual "Thunderdown in the Underdown" bike races at the City Forest and they had another record crowd there participating from all over the Midwest! The bridge project is still progressing and should be happening in September as they are a bit behind the original schedule. That will be really nice to finish up as they can add legs to their races and other riders and park patrons will be introduced to access and views that haven't been possible for a very long time. It is very beautiful back there by the dells and with access from both sides it is really going to make a difference in the positive user experience. Finally, we are hosting and organizing the Labor Day Parade and festivities on September 1st and have everything ready to go as I am writing this report. As always we hope for beautiful weather, a massive crowd, and a great day for everyone to enjoy before school begins and we head into the fall season. Our parade entries

An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.



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

are up from last year and I hope that the antique car show is up and the entire day sees a big turnout for our community.

Forestry: I have still been getting tree inspection calls pretty consistently and have been trying to keep up with them as best as I can for this time of year. As previously mentioned about the grass, the same applies to our trees with the consistency and amount of moisture we received this year. It has really helped our trees tremendously, from canopy growth to root growth; years like this really help our urban and rural forests. As soon as our crazy season winds down (typically after our parks close after 9/30) I will begin really setting up our fall tree planting. We will have to do a few less trees this year than previous years because we were given less funding in the budget for plantings this year. We will do the best we can to plant as many as we can purchase. I have been working with the WDNR Foresters to help Water Utility set up a timber sale on the old landfill site just south of the Town of Merrill Town Hall. Those bids were approved a week or so ago and the contractor will have three seasons to complete the logging. That stand had quite a few mature aspen trees that were at a point where they could either be harvested or they would have no value anymore.

Recreation: It was another great summer recreation season for us this year. As previously mentioned, we had good registration numbers for all of our programs and everyone really enjoyed their experience. Summer Playground went really well this year – we had very few issues for most of the summer (with the exception of a couple small but typical behavioral items). This was one of the better playground seasons overall that we have had in some time. I believe that it stems from staying the course and being consistent with our policies. People understand that we enforce consistently and they have to comply and our staff did a great job this summer making sure to set the tone early and often. We were down slightly from last year in overall numbers but equal in daily average attendance. We'll see how we will be impacted next summer with the Boys & Girls Club opening up (which in my opinion is a good thing because it is another great option for families). We may gain or lose some but we will collaborate and work with them to ensure our community continues to have the best possible experience(s). As always we will take some time to evaluate our programs to figure out what went right and wrong and adjust so that we are stronger next season.

Smith Center: We had another successful summer ice session and very quickly removed the ice because we had a very busy line up of dry floor events immediately afterwards. We hosted a number of very large events over the past few weeks: Movie in the Park (moved inside the Smith Center), annual Trinity Block Party, a new potential annual Back to School Bash (MAPS organized), and the High & Low Auto Show (Zelich Customs). We also have the annual Paper Cities Kennel Club Dog Show on September 5-7, a big craft fair, two auctions, and a few nerf birthday parties before we get ready to put the ice back in for the winter season at the end of October. This was one of the busiest dry floor seasons we have had in quite a while, we have been increasing each year since Covid. We have even exceeded pre-Covid rentals and events already which is a good sign. Hopefully we can continue to build on that and our relationships with organizers to continue this upward trend in building usage and events!!

Note: I would like to thank all of our full time and seasonal staff, volunteers, participants, visitors, sponsors, and citizens for helping make the summer of 2025 one of the best ever. It truly takes everyone to make these things happen and we are lucky to live where we live with the people in this community. We are already looking forward to the next season of building memories and having fun.

Respectfully Submitted – Dan Wendorf, Parks & Recreation Director, City of Merrill