



CITY OF MERRILL
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
AGENDA • WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026

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

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**
 - 1. December 2025 Minutes
- III. Approval of Claims**
 - 1. December 2025 Bills
 - 2. January 2026 Bills
- IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration**
 - 1. Revisit and reconsider the location of the River Bend Trail through the MARC (as discussed in 2025 and using Friends of the River Bend Trail Funding they acquired)
 - 2. Consider potential Smith Center Ice Rental & Cancellation Policy (non-user groups only)
 - 3. Consider proposals for Athletic Park Scoreboard replacement (100% donated funds)
- V. Monthly Reports**
 - 1. February 2026 Director's Report
- VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting**
 - 1. The next regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesday, March 4th, 2026 at 4:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the 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 3, 2025 MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS 4:15 PM**

I. Call to Order Roll Call:

Present: Krueger, Malm, Gulke, D8 Alderperson Rutkowski
Present Not Voting: Parks Director Dan Wendorf
Excused: Steve Osness, Trisha Kubichek, Kyle Hahn
Absent: Chairperson Krueger called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting

1. **November 2025 Minutes** - (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/ Gulke) motion/second to place minutes on file. The motion Passed.

III. Approval of Claims

1. **November 2025 Claims** - (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/ Malm) motion/second to approve. The motion Passed.

IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration

V. Monthly Reports

1. **December 2025 Director's Report** - After asking if there were any questions on his report, Wendorf summarized his report pointing out that 2025 was another tremendous year for the Department. Wendorf went on to say thank all of the sponsors, volunteers, staff members, Parks & Recreation Commission, participants, parents, user groups and organizations, and everyone who visited our parks and participated in our programs to help make it another successful year. Wendorf also informed the Commission that the 2026 Budget was adopted at the November City Council Meeting and there were no late/last minute adjustments, which is a good thing. Wendorf said he is finishing up the 2025 Tree City USA Application and will have that done in plenty of time before the December 31st deadline.

VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting

1. **The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, February 4th, 2026, at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall. -**

VII. Public Comment There was no public comment.

VIII. Adjournment (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/ Malm) motion/second to adjourn. The motion Passed.

12/1/2025

AA LOCK SERVICE	KEYS/DOOR HANDLE	12/1/2025		\$269.00	10-55400-03-50000
AMAZON	WINTER WONDERLAND	11/11/2025		\$35.47	26-55300-03-60022
AMERICAN WELDING	HELIUM	11/30/2025	11273819	\$1,345.55	10-55300-03-41500
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	11/30/2025	11292448	\$82.69	10-55300-03-41500
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	11/30/2025	11292135	\$60.91	10-55200-02-15000
ANDREA MALLUEGE	SECURITY DEPOSIT	12/5/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION	MEMBERSHIP	12/3/2025		\$35.00	10-55200-03-32000
ATCO INTERNATIONAL	FREE HAND PUMP	12/16/2025	10652984	\$149.65	10-55200-03-40000
BAJA'S	SHIRTS	12/8/2025	18796	\$521.80	10-55200-02-15000
BIG BLUE DESIGN	SENSORY SANTA	11/20/2025	1	\$237.38	26-55300-03-60022
BRANDT EXTINGUISHERS	6 V BATTERY FOR EXIT LIGHT	11/20/2025	14391	\$19.50	10-55400-02-16500
BRIANNA VANDENHEUVEL	SECURITY DEPOSIT MULTI PURPOSE ROOM	12/1/2025	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7100
BRICKNERS PARK CITY	SNOW PLOW BLADES	12/9/2025	139641	\$649.77	10-55200-03-50000
CARDIO PARTNERS	NEW AED FOR SMITH CENTER	12/18/2025	600210871	\$1,161.00	26-55200-08-92000
CENTRAL WISCONSIN WHOLESALE AUTO	CITROL CITURS DEGREASSER CONCETRATE	12/2/2025	31731	\$207.72	10-55200-03-50000
CINTAS	MATS/MOPS	11/13/2025	4249685975	\$82.68	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	11/13/2025	4249686042	\$99.11	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	11/19/2025	4250315837	\$99.11	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	11/25/2025	4251019592	\$188.54	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MATS/MOPS	11/25/2025	4251019461	\$231.38	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	12/4/2025	4251828607	\$186.54	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	12/11/2025	4252672883	\$99.11	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MOPS/MATS	12/11/2025	4252672758	\$82.68	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	12/18/2025	4253463967	\$99.11	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	12/14/2025	4254152893	\$99.11	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	12/31/2025	4254818951	\$99.11	10-55200-03-46000
DAVE'S COUNTY MARKET	WINTER WONDERLAND	12/5/2025		\$20.98	26-55300-03-60022
GREEN LAWN UNDERGROUND	WINTERERIZATION - MARC	11/20/2025	25-41232	\$225.00	10-55200-02-15000
GREEN LAWN UNDERGROUND	WINTERERIZATION - LIONS	11/20/2025	25-41231	\$300.00	10-55200-02-15000
GREEN LAWN UNDERGROUND	WINTERERIZATION - ATHLETIC PARK	11/20/2025	25-41230	\$195.00	10-55200-02-15000
HAENCO SUPPLY	HAND SOAP	11/24/2025	16752	\$305.32	10-55400-03-40000
INTEGRITY	ANNUAL FIRE SPRINKLER INSPECTION	12/17/2025	2127	\$453.00	10-55400-02-16500
J. WENNING GRINDING	ZAMBONI BLADES	12/16/2025	106298	\$86.00	10-55400-03-51500
JOY ANNIS	WINTER WONDERLAND	12/3/2025	VOUCHER	\$31.50	26-55300-03-60022
JOY ANNIS	STUFF FOR PROGRAM	12/5/2025	VOUCHER	\$36.79	10-55300-03-41500
KATHLEEN SHERIDAN	SECURITY DEPOSIT	12/29/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
KINGS EVERGREEN	GARLAND WINTER WONDERLAND	11/20/2025		\$31.25	26-55300-03-60022
KWIK TRIP	BIRTHDAY PARTY	12/19/2025		\$8.99	10-55300-03-41500
KWIK TRIP	BIRTHDAY PARTY	12/19/2025		\$8.99	10-55300-03-41500
MENARDS	LIGHTS FOR WINTER WONDERLAND	11/18/2025	72334	\$39.99	26-55300-03-60022
MENARDS	LIGHTS FOR WINTER WONDERLAND	11/21/2025	72521	\$39.99	26-55300-03-60022
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FASTENERS/COUPLING SET	11/19/2025	248347	\$55.00	10-55400-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	UTILITY KNIFE SET/CARWASH ARMOR	11/17/2025	248302	\$28.97	10-55200-08-90500
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	KEY KWIKSET	12/2/2025	248547	\$8.97	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	EXTIN. CORD	12/3/2025	248593	\$4.59	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FILTERS	12/9/2025	248735	\$23.14	10-55400-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	GLUE TRAPS	12/17/2025	248901	\$13.98	10-55200-03-40000
MERRILL AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	VISTOR GUIDE	12/3/2025	100104	\$450.00	10-55200-02-15000
MERRILL FOTO NEWS	ADVERTISING	12/3/2025		\$135.00	10-55400-03-41000
MYERS HEATING AND COOLING	AGRA HEATHER	12/30/2025	687	\$191.41	10-55200-03-15000
NAPA AUTO PARTS	BLOWER MOTOR	11/17/2025	164724	18.00 CR	CREDIT
NAPA AUTO PARTS	PRESTO PIN	12/1/2025	166444	\$4.29	10-55200-03-40000
NASSCO	HAND TOWELS	11/24/2025	6633369	\$592.24	10-55200-03-50000
NASSCO	BATH TISSUE	12/23/2025	3689164-000	\$233.65	10-55400-03-40000
NIENOW ELECTRIC, INC	OUTLET REPAIR BY BANKERS SQUARE	12/15/2025	4653	\$130.90	10-55200-02-15000
NORTHWOODS CHEMICAL	SPARKLING GREEN CLEANER	11/19/2025	429854	\$207.26	10-55400-03-44000
PREMIER	CUSTOM SIGNS	12/1/2025	25943A	\$1,260.00	PRAIRIE RIVER PATHWAY
PREMIER	SIGNS	12/1/2025	25942	\$13.80	10-55200-08-91000

PREMIER	SIGN FOR ARENA	12/22/2025	26104	\$313.00	10-55400-03-41022
RHYME	COPY MACHINE	12/11/2025	AR894395	\$16.08	10-55400-03-13000
RTL ELECTRIC	NORMAL PARK	12/30/2025	67200	\$148.35	10-55200-02-15000
RTL ELECTRIC	OTT'S PARK	12/30/2025	672002	\$669.44	PICKLEBALL NON-LASPE
RTL ELECTRIC	MARC - CONCESSION STAND	12/30/2025	67201	\$678.13	26-55200-08-92000
RTL ELECTRIC	NORMAL PARK	12/30/2025	67199	\$13,875.00	26-55200-08-91100
SAMS CLUB	OTAN. TOUR - DONATION	12/4/2025		\$139.51	10-55300-03-41500
SAMS CLUB	WINTER WONDERLAND	12/4/2025		\$347.84	26-55300-03-60022
STAINLESS SPECIALIST	MOTOR BLADE	11/12/2025	45073	\$3,579.30	10-55400-03-50000
STAINLESS SPECIALIST	FLOOR START UP	11/12/2025	45080	\$2,134.51	10-55400-02-16250
STAINLESS SPECIALIST	REPAIRS ON MOTOR AND BLADE IN MPR	11/12/2025	45073	\$3,579.30	10-55400-03-50000
SUNRISE BROADCASTING	ADVERTISING	12/2/2025		\$259.00	10-55300-03-41500
THERESA SMUKOWSKI	SECURITY DEPOSIT MULTI PURPOSE ROOM	11/25/2026	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7100
TRACEY SCHRODER	SECURITY DEPOSIT	12/29/2025	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
WALMART	WINTER WONDERLAND	11/25/2025		\$55.94	26-55300-03-60022
WALMART	WINTER WONDERLAND	12/1/2025		\$287.53	26-55300-03-60022
WALMART	BIRTHDAY PARTY	12/19/2025		\$25.70	10-55300-03-41500
ZIEBELLS	OVERHEAD DOOR	11/20/2025	188937067	\$425.00	10-55400-02-16800

1/1/2026

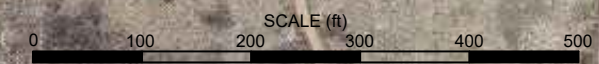
AMAZON	PLAY KITCHEN SET FOR TOT TIME	1/12/2026	112-6873922	\$126.98	10-55300-03-41500
AA LOCK SERVICE	KEYS	1/25/2025		\$269.00	10-55200-03-50000
AA LOCK SERVICE	KEYS	1/20/2026		\$260.00	10-55400-03-50000
AMERICAN WELDING & GAS	CYLINDER RENTAL	12/31/2025	11360734	\$124.27	10-55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING & GAS	CYLINDER RENTAL	12/31/2025	11361046	\$168.80	10-55300-03-41500
ATCO INTERNATIONAL	POP UP WIPES	1/8/2026	106953523	\$168.50	10-55200-03-40000
BAJAS	LITTLE DRIBBLER SHIRTS	1/16/2026	18810	\$409.15	10-55300-03-41500
BLOCK IRON	METAL LOUVER	1/12/2026	806701	\$196.00	10-55400-08-82000
BLOCK IRON	CLOSER/ADAPTER PLATE	1/12/2026	706702	\$674.00	10-55400-03-50000
BLUEJAY 96.3	ADVERTISING	12/31/2025	20222-10	\$259.00	10-55400-03-41000
BRICKNERS PARK CITY	BOLT KIT	12/9/2025	139641	\$649.77	10-55200-03-50000
CAYLIE BURNETT	SECURITY DEPOSIT	1/12/2026	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	12/4/2025	4251828607	\$186.54	10-55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MATS/MOPS	1/8/2026	4255646371	\$82.68	10-55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	1/8/2026	4255646445	\$99.11	10-55200-03-46000
CIVICPLUS	SOFTWARE LICENSING	1/25/2026	355269	\$3,993.81	10-55200-03-18500
GAYLE MALUEGGE	SECURITY DEPOSIT	1/5/2026	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
HAENCO SUPPLY	VACUUM BELT/VACUUM BAGS	1/9/2026	17129	\$25.54	10-55400-03-50000
HAENCO SUPPLY	VACUUM CLEANER PARTS	1/16/2026	17196	\$58.92	10-55400-03-50000
JERRY SCHOEPKE	SECURITY DEPOSIT	1/5/2026	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
MENARDS	CARRIAGE BOLTS	1/13/2026	30160496	\$6.32	10-55200-03-40000
MENARDS	CARRIAGE BOLTS	1/13/2026		\$6.32	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	PARTS FOR SHOP	1/14/2026		\$22.96	10-55400-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FILTERS	1/20/2026	249482	\$29.94	10-55200-03-50000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	FASTENERS	1/5/2026	249198	\$2.60	10-55200-03-40000
NAPA AUTO PARTS	BELTS	1/23/2026	173998	\$40.36	10-55200-03-50000
PREMIER	ETCHED PLAQUE	1/14/2026	26223A	\$13.80	10-55200-02-15000
SWIDERSKI	PARTS	1/13/2026	40606	\$112.62	10-55200-03-50000
ULINE	DOGGIE PORT BAGS	1/12/2026	45127917	\$577.94	10-55200-03-40000
VIP OFFICE SUPPLIES	ADDRESS LABELS	1/5/2026	0117832-001	\$24.99	10-55300-03-10000
WALMART	CLEANING SUPPLIES/WHISTLES	1/21/2026		\$105.22	10-55300-03-41500
WRISTCO	WRIST BANDS FOR AQUATIC CENTER	1/12/2026		\$319.41	10-55420-03-40000

MARC 2026



RIVER BEND TRAIL

SOCCER





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

2026 Smith Center Ice Rental & Cancellation Policy – Proposed Language

ICE RENTAL POLICY

Ice time is available in 50 minute increments to allow for ice resurfacing (50 minutes = one (1) hour).

Ice cost to outside agencies/groups is \$125 per hour in 2026.

Contact Parks Office at 715-536-7313 or parks@ci.merrill.wi.us for ice availability and booking
50% due upon booking ice time – remaining 50% due at least by the day of the rental

CANCELLATION POLICY – GENERAL

Individual bookings of ice time must be canceled at least seven (7) business days prior to the ice time to avoid being charged. Renters that cancel with less than seven (7) business days' notice will be responsible for the full cost of the rental. Please notify parks@ci.merrill.wi.us as soon as possible for any cancellations.

DRAFT



2026 Athletic Park Scoreboard Proposal Summary

Company	Date Submitted	Meet Specs (Y/N)	Base Bid	Base + Alternates	Warranty
Daktronics, Inc.	1/16/26	Yes	\$28,459.00	\$31,426.00	5 year (parts & labor)
Chippewa Valley Sporting Goods (All American Scoreboards)	1/21/26	Yes	\$21,770.00	\$27,959.00	5 year (repair & parts in warranty)
FairPlay Corporation	1/22/26	Yes (limited details provided)	\$26,170.00	\$31,865.00	5 year ("limited warranty")
Nevco Scoreboards	1/27/26	Yes	\$28,340.00	\$31,129.94	5 year complete

Outdoor Baseball Scoreboards: Brand Comparison

Summary Table

Brand	Pros	Cons
Nevco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad lineup for all levels, from Little League to college • Modular upgrades (pitch count, video, inning-by-inning) • Strong reputation for durability and long-term support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer ultra-large video display options compared to Daktronics • Customization can increase cost quickly • Some models rely heavily on add-ons for full baseball functionality • Video-centric systems may cost more than basic scoreboard buyers expect • Limited sport-specific baseball features compared to Nevco/Daktronics • Older controller series lack wireless capability • Typically the most expensive option • Lead times can be longer due to high demand and customization
Fair-Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide range of LED baseball/softball scoreboards for indoor/outdoor use • Strong focus on fan-experience features (video, entertainment content) • Good accessory ecosystem (controls, signage, indicators) 	
All American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple controller series (3000, 8000/9000) with wireless options on newer models • Known for rugged construction and long service life • Extremely broad product range with inning-by-inning, pitch displays, and custom colors 	
Daktronics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry-leading LED technology and large-format video integration • All Sport 1600 controller supports wireless and baseball-specific functions 	



▣ Brand-by-Brand Breakdown

▣ Nevco

- **Strengths**
 - Offers baseball-specific solutions with pitch count, inning-by-inning scoring, and video integration.
 - Designed for schools, parks, and recreation facilities—good fit for community fields.
 - Modular upgrade path helps stretch budgets over time.
- **Limitations**
 - Less emphasis on massive video boards compared to Daktronics.
 - Some advanced features require add-on modules.

▣ Fair-Play

- **Strengths**
 - LED displays designed for visibility in any environment and angle.
 - Strong entertainment and fan-engagement focus, including video content and sponsor integration.
 - Broad accessory lineup (controls, software, signage).
- **Limitations**
 - Baseball-specific features (pitch speed, at-bat indicators) often require configuration or upgrades.
 - Video-heavy systems may exceed the needs of smaller fields.

▣ All American

- **Strengths**
 - Durable construction and long-standing presence in the scoreboard market.
 - Newer 8000/9000 controller series support wireless ScoreLink.
- **Limitations**
 - Older 3000 series lacks wireless capability and is football-oriented.
 - Baseball-specific product depth is not as extensive as Nevco or Daktronics.

▣ Daktronics

- **Strengths**
 - One of the most comprehensive baseball scoreboard catalogs available.
 - Industry leader in LED quality, reliability, and large-format video displays.
 - All Sport 1600 controller supports wireless and baseball-specific functions.
- **Limitations**
 - Premium pricing.
 - Custom builds may extend delivery timelines.

▣ Choosing the Right Brand for Your Field

Best for Tight Budgets

Nevco or All American — strong durability and essential features without heavy video costs.

Best for Fan Experience & Video

Fair-Play or Daktronics — both excel in LED video integration, with Daktronics leading in large-format displays.

Best for High School / College Baseball

Nevco or Daktronics — both offer deep baseball-specific feature sets.

Best Wireless Ecosystem

Daktronics All Sport 1600 or All American 8000/9000 — both support wireless ScoreLink.



✂️ Outdoor Baseball Scoreboards — Warranty Comparison

📄 Side-by-Side Warranty Table

Manufacturer Standard Warranty Length		What's Covered	Notes
Nevco	5 years	Defects in materials & workmanship	Strongest published standard warranty; applies to scoreboards, message centers, and control systems.
Daktronics	Typically 5 years (parts + on-site labor)	Parts and on-site labor	Warranty terms vary by model, but competitive with Nevco; widely used in high-school athletics.
All American	Not clearly published online	Unknown	No detailed warranty documentation surfaced in public search results; may require direct inquiry.
Fair-Play	Warranty exists but length varies ; documentation available via support portal	LED display components, parts exchange	Warranty exchange process is documented, but standard term length is not clearly stated publicly.

📄 Manufacturer-by-Manufacturer Details

📄 Nevco (Strongest Published Warranty)

- **5-year warranty** on scoreboards, scoring tables, marquees, message centers, and video boards.
- Covers **defects in workmanship or materials**.
- Warranty begins on **invoice date**.

Why it matters:

For outdoor baseball scoreboards exposed to Wisconsin winters, a full 5-year guarantee is a major advantage.

📄 Daktronics (Comprehensive Service + 5 Years)

- Competitive warranty terms; one public bid example shows:
 - **5-year parts and on-site labor** included.
- Daktronics also has a robust support infrastructure, which is valuable for long-term maintenance.

Why it matters:

Daktronics' on-site labor coverage reduces unexpected service costs.

📄 All American Scoreboards (Warranty Not Publicly Detailed)

- No clear, official warranty documentation surfaced in search results.
- Many districts report typical warranties in the **2–5 year** range, but this is **not confirmed** by manufacturer sources.

Why it matters:

Lack of published warranty terms makes comparison difficult; you may need to request written warranty language before purchasing.

📄 Fair-Play (Warranty Exists, Length Varies)

- Fair-Play provides a warranty and an exchange process for defective parts.
- Documentation references LED display warranty and extended warranty options, but **does not clearly state a universal term**.

Why it matters:

Fair-Play's warranty may depend on model and contract; clarity is essential before purchase.

An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.



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🚩 Bottom Line for High-School Baseball Fields

- **Best Published Warranty: Nevco** (5 years standard).
- **Best Service Coverage: Daktronics** (5 years with on-site labor in many bids).
- **Most Unclear Warranty: All American and Fair-Play** (details vary or are not fully public).

For a school district prioritizing long-term reliability and predictable maintenance costs, **Nevco and Daktronics** offer the strongest warranty confidence.



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February 2026 Parks & Recreation Director's Report

Parks: Happy New Year to everyone! It's been a very interesting winter season thus far to say the least. We've experienced pretty much every end of the weather spectrum and our crew has done a great job adapting to all of them. The toughest one for everyone is the sleet/freezing rain that we have experienced a few times. Our ice rinks have also endured all of these weather swings. We had them set up and in great condition before Christmas this year with perfect weather then had the warm weather, rain, freezing rain that deteriorated them. The really cold snap over the past few weeks helped set them up for the remainder of the season. Of course when we get to this time of year, we will not put any further time or money into them simply because we don't know how much longer we will be able to keep them. This time of year the sun angle and longer days starts to become high enough to begin melting and creating boils in the ice even at 15-20 degrees. The crew has been working on picnic table repairs when they have time and are making great progress. They will have them finished up in plenty of time to distribute them back into the parks where they came from before the weather improves and people are out and about again in our parks. I have been spending a lot of time working on our 2026 projects. Some of those include pool pumps, MARC Trail paving, Prairie Trails Bridge re-decking, shelter surrounds, Athletic Park Scoreboard, and other smaller/non-capital items that we will do this year. All of these need to be organized and executed so it gets done. A group of volunteer parents were able to help raise \$30,000 to replace the scoreboard at Athletic Park so a big thank you to those involved, and a huge thanks to the businesses that sponsored. You will see the item on the agenda but the MARC Trail project that we discussed last year I would like to propose that we move that from the east boundary of the MARC to immediately east of, and along Marc Drive. Moving the trail closer to Marc Drive gets people closer to all of the park's amenities and also gives an opportunity for soccer to invest in some pedestrian access and safety measures for their participants. We will discuss at the meeting on Wednesday. We will make sure that we have the parking area and amenities at the City Forest ready to go for the IronBull – Snowbound in the Underdown event on February 21st. It is great to see them using that property more and their participants are increasing, bringing more visitors to our community. This is more evidence to continue to invest more in parks, especially in communities such as ours. We provide unique opportunities for visitors to come to Merrill and show off everything we have to offer. During the snow/wind storm we had on 12/29, we had a roof blow off of the third base dugout on diamond 1 at Lion's Park. I did report it to our insurance and they are going to send an inspector to look at it and see if we can just flip it back on and re-fasten it or if we need to replace it. There isn't much to the roof so it isn't a major project but I wanted to make sure we do it right and if the cost exceeds our deductible we have the process rolling and can finish up quickly. Our summer seasonal staff for buildings & grounds is all returning for the summer of 2026. It is always great to have an experienced crew come back so we can hit the ground running with no training this year. The MARC softball field lights will be fixed before we host games this spring (there were a few bulbs that were not operational when they commissioned the lights in the fall). Our 2026 shelter reservations are off to a great start. Over the past several years we have seen reservations steadily increase and we are hoping for that trend to continue. We are reaching that point in the winter season that we are starting to get ready for some spring tasks for spring sports that will be upon us before we know it so we need to always be a season ahead. Sticking with the being a season ahead theme, we are also preparing for the busy summer season within our parks and athletic fields. We will be hosting the American Legion Girls State Tourney again this August, the weekend after the Youth Fastpitch Tournament. The Girls Legion is also looking at hosting a Junior Legion tourney the weekend after the State Tourney at the MARC. So that is great to see all of these events utilize our athletic fields, parks, and amenities.



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Forestry: The Street Department has been working on catching up with tree trimming and removals when they are not removing snow or working on the roads. I have some trees to get caught up on inspecting before I hit it hard for spring inspections for the next cycle. Spring inspections I really focus on any potential winter damage and routine maintenance before the trees leaf out for the season. Our GIS Specialist is working to finish our Tree Maintenance “in house program” that will replace TreeKeeper Online from the Davey Resource Group. As previously mentioned, once that is done we will no longer need their services or have to spend a few thousand dollars per year for our subscription. We can spend those dollars on trees and beautification – which is a great thing for everyone. I will keep a close eye on our young trees that were planted within the past few years as the wide weather swings that we had this winter can be very tough on trees. I am also waiting on results of our Tree City USA Application for 2025; it was approved by our State Forester and is awaiting final approval through National Arbor Day Foundation. They will send approval and supporting materials once we are official.

Recreation: Our winter recreation has been going well so far. A special thank you to Dawn and Joy for their great work again with the Winter Wonderland event and Sensory Santa back in December. We had a great turnout for both events and it is something that is really growing and the public has been very supportive of! Our Little Dribblers Co-Ed Youth Basketball League got off to a great start (a week later due to freezing rain). We have really good participation numbers for this program again and it is always great to see these young boys and girls have fun and be active in the winter. We decided to move our Children’s Festival event to the Expo Center due to the timing of our ice removal and Easter. It left us very little/no time to remove ice and prepare for the event, and we didn’t want to push it to after Easter because we have combined our Easter Egg Hunt with the Children’s Festival so we had to make the switch. It will not be permanent and we will return to our own space when timing allows. Preparation is in full swing for the busy summer recreation season and we are making sure to get everything organized so we can have those programs ready by the end of March. We are also working on our staffing to see how many we will need, who is returning, and how many (if any) we will need to replace. Summer Playground is one main consideration with summer recreation employment and our numbers have been trending very slowly downward. *Declining enrollment affects our school district, our numbers, and other community organizers.

Smith Center: The very busy ice season is still in full swing, but we’ll be winding down in a little over a month. Things have been going well so far and our ice time has been very solid. The high school season is nearing the end but youth hockey and figure skaters is still going strong with several tournaments, games, and events yet to go inside the arena. Our ice will be wrapping up and coming out in the middle/end of March and we will transition into dry floor events after that. Youth Hockey will be doing their summer ice again this summer and it will be approximately the same times they have done it the past several years so we will make sure to handle any maintenance before putting ice down in July. We do have another good dry floor event season shaping up again this year, although a few of our regular ones are not returning (at least for this season). The Paper Cities Kennel Club (volunteer shortage & another event on same date) and Trinity Block Party (they are re-imagining their event) are two for sure. They both love our facility and hospitality and may very well return but it has nothing to do with us. We will continue to attract more events here as we do each and every year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill