

**CITY OF MERRILL  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026 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.

Roll Call:

Present: Krueger, Malm, Gulke, Osness, D8 Alderperson Rutkowski, Kubichek, Hahn

Present Not Voting: Parks Director Dan Wendorf

Excused:

Absent:

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

1. **December 2025 Minutes** - ( Gulke/ Kubichek) motion/second to place minutes on file. The motion Passed.

- III. **Approval of Claims**

1. **December 2025 Bills** - ( Osness/D8 Alderperson Rutkowski) motion/second to approve. The motion Passed.
2. **January 2026 Bills** - ( Osness/D8 Alderperson Rutkowski) motion/second to approve. The motion Passed.

- 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)** - Wendorf began the discussion by asking the Commission if they would reconsider the location of the proposed River Bend connector trail through the property from its formerly proposed location between the soccer fields and Rock Ridge to run along the east side of Marc Drive. Wendorf said by moving the trail it brings the trail closer to all the amenities within the park and will help with pedestrian safety for those who currently walk/bike/hike right down Marc Drive. Wendorf stated that he discussed this with the Friends of the River Bend Trail, as they are the ones who are providing the funding, and they approve of the location switch. Wendorf also informed the Commission that the blue segments of the proposed trail represent potential sidewalks/crosswalks from the parking lot areas to the soccer fields. Wendorf said that he reached out to Youth Soccer Association to see if they would be willing to invest in this project to help with pedestrian safety for their families that attend soccer games. He said he hasn't heard back from soccer yet, but it makes more sense to do this all now while we will already be ripping up ground and paving the trail, as well as a road construction project on Taylor Street in the very near vicinity. Commissioner Hahn said that he did discuss with a few soccer board members, and they are not sure if they have the funding to do all the

proposed soccer paths but will see what they can do. He said it may have to be done in phases and spread it out into future years. He asked Wendorf if he could break each of the three blue segments into individual costs so they could see if they could fund one or two with this project. Wendorf said that if bids come back over the amount of funding that the Friends of the River Bend Trail have they have a plan to remove the proposed portions that directly connect to the dog park and the path from the softball restrooms/playground area towards Council Grounds. This ensures that the main objective of connecting the River Bend Trail (with a paved path) to Council Grounds is accomplished.

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

2. **Consider potential Smith Center Ice Rental & Cancellation Policy (non-user groups only)** - Wendorf began the discussion by saying that he would like to see a policy for "non-user group" ice rental and cancellation. He said that a few times this year they have had a few groups reserve the ice but as it got closer to the date, they backed out, leaving us with open ice and not enough time to back fill it. Wendorf stated that this is simply a way to tighten up the process and protect the Smith Center from future potential cancellations. Wendorf said that he researched information from several other rinks to see what they were doing and used that information to tailor it to a potential policy that he feels best suits the Smith Center. Wendorf summarized the proposal stating that he would like 50% payment on ice time requests and any outside organization would need to cancel their ice request outside of 7 days to be able to get their payment back. Wendorf said this is common for other ice rinks and reminded everyone that it would only apply to outside organizations (does not include Merrill Youth Hockey, Merrill High School Hockey, and Merrill Ice Reflections Figure Skating Club).

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

3. **Consider proposals for Athletic Park Scoreboard replacement (100% donated funds)** - Wendorf began the discussion by stating that all funds for the replacement scoreboard were raised by Merrill Baseball supporters through the generosity of local businesses. Wendorf referenced the information he provided for the Commission with comparisons on each of the companies and their warranties. Wendorf stated that after extensive research he recommends the Nevco scoreboard. He said that we currently have a Nevco board at Athletic, 4 Nevco's at Lion's Park, and 4 Nevco's at the MARC. They have had a very good history of working well and lasting a long time and their customer service has been exemplary. Wendorf stated that the bids included removal of the old scoreboard, delivery, installation of the new one, and electrical work associated with it as well. Wendorf recommends the Nevco quote of \$31,129.94. He reminded everyone that funding for this

project was all donated.

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

**V. Monthly Reports**

1. **February 2026 Director's Report** - Wendorf summarized the monthly report and highlighted some of the events from the past few months as well as some of the events coming up.

**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** Kyle Gulke, 1504 Jackson St., summarized the recently released information and highlights from the Ice Age Trail Alliance's "Mammoth Challenge" that was held statewide in October. He highlighted the number of local visitors as well as some comments they shared praising the Merrill community and several businesses they enjoyed while they were visiting for their hikes. There were visitors that came from all over the state as well as the Midwest.

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

Meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m.