



GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

**Recreation and Park Department
IRA Civic Center
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Grand Rapids, MN 55744
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Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Dale Anderson, Director of Parks & Recreation
Date: June 23, 2025
Re: Department Head Report

The new conference rooms at the arena have been busy hosting many team functions, banquets, public meetings, trainings, voting, blood drives, wedding and baby showers. In September we will be holding our first wedding reception that will occupy the entire upper lobby. We will actually be hosting two wedding receptions on the same date, one in the MacDonald Venue and the aforementioned reception in the upper lobby.

Administrator Pagel and I have met with several groups in an effort to host a cannabis convention at Yanmar Arena next April. The plan is to have a vendor show in the MacDonald Venue, Concerts in the Kauppi Venue, food trucks, liquor, and sampling area in Miner's Pavilion, and meetings in the upper lobby. This would allow growers from across the state the opportunity to show dispensaries what products they have to offer. Our hope is to bring thousands of people to town during our slow shoulder season.

The first year of ice with a refrigerated floor in Miner's Pavilion was a huge success. GRAHA used over 400 hours from mid-November through the end of March...we had kids skating out there when it was 61 degrees! For the upcoming season we plan on holding tournament games out there in November and December. In fact, this is allowing us to expand one of our tournaments from an 8-team to a 12-team bracket, bringing more visitors to town. With the exception of Christmas, GRAHA is hosting tournaments every weekend from November 14th through March 8th.

We will be putting ice back in the West Rink to begin summer programming on July 7th. Local hockey camps and figure skating will fill most of the weekday icetimes. A girls high school festival, a goalie camp, a Minnesota Hockey HP tryout, and a girls high school summer league will help fill weekends.

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The Hairball concert put on by the Reif Center in the Kauppi Venue was a huge success. They figured approximately 2500 people attended. I've spoken with several people who were there and they were pleased with the venue and sound quality. I had a post-event meeting with Reif Center staff and for future concerts they plan to make improvements to the bar and porta-potty situations.

If approved later in this meeting, I will be working with John Connely to submit a Minnesota DNR Regional grant for major improvements at Blandin Beach. I submitted a request back in 2017 but was unsuccessful. The grant request will include a new restroom facility, a splash pad, a large pavilion, and connecting sidewalks making the entire park accessible. The goal is to gather all of the necessary information this fall and early winter, submit the grant for the review process on February 1, 2026 and then submit the final draft before March 30, 2026.

The Grand Rapids Sports Complex is seeing another busy season. In late May we hosted the 7A girl's fastpitch section playoffs. Currently we have men's slowpitch softball, association girl's fastpitch, association soccer, and YMCA youth soccer and t-ball programs.

Feel free to contact me with any questions.