

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION

Monday, July 20, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

The Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission met on the above date and time. The following members were present: Kerry Kneser, Rick Schultz, Dana Davis, Julie Chapman, Jennifer Clayton (virtual), as well as Hunter Karnitz, Andrea Draeger, Ryan Schmidt, and several members of the public.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

Rick Schultz moved to approve the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission minutes from June 15, 2026, and the Senior Center Advisory Board minutes from June 16, 2026, as presented, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

3. Review and Approval of Financial Reports

Dana Davis asked questions regarding revenue tracking for the Watertown Aquatic Center. Staff noted revenue tracking will continue to be monitored. Discussion also occurred regarding repairs needed at the Riverside Bandshell. Ryan Schmidt stated funding had been identified with assistance from the Mayor and Ryan Thurow after the repair needs were brought to staff's attention. Kerry Kneser asked about administrative supply expenses and the Watertown Aquatic Center phone charges. Staff noted administrative supply costs are expected to be offset through a City grant.

Dana Davis moved to approve the financial reports as presented, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

4. Citizens to be Heard

None.

5. Business

A. Review and take action: Elect Parks, Recreation, and Forestry commission president

Julie Chapman nominated Kerry Kneser to serve as Commission President. Dana Davis seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, Kerry Kneser was elected President by unanimous voice vote.

B. Review and take action: Future Brandt-Quirk Pickleball Complex

Ryan Schmidt presented a conceptual site plan for a future dedicated pickleball complex at Brandt-Quirk Park and reviewed the proposed location with the Commission.

Bill Oswald discussed the grassroots fundraising effort for the project, noting approximately \$260,000 has been committed toward the estimated \$400,000 cost. He also reviewed discussions held with staff and City Engineering regarding the proposed site.

The map presented would be the smallest size that the eight pickleball courts would be. A modest sized pickleball court with adequate buffer space between the boundary lines and the fencing is 60' x 30'. If completed these courts would take up a relatively small footprint in the current soccer Field #4 area

During preliminary discussions with Engineering and DPW this site has gained their stamp of approval as suitable to build pickleball courts on. It is anticipated, once all approvals are obtained, the engineering and DPW would assist this project with any excavating, filling, and possibly paving that they are able to build into their schedule. Once the pickleball courts would be completed the facility as a whole would be donated to the PRF Department to maintain for the future.

Ryan Schmidt discussed future maintenance responsibilities, potential expansion opportunities, and utilizing Department of Public Works staff to assist with surfacing and construction expertise.

Dana Davis moved to forward the proposed site to the Plan Commission for site selection review, seconded by Kerry Kneser, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

C. Review and take action: Outlawz June Tournament Waiver of Fees

The Outlawz softball group is requesting consideration for waiving field rental fees for a camp that was scheduled for Thursday July 11th. There was heavy rain and strong winds that moved through the Watertown area making it impossible to conduct any portion of the camp that afternoon. After the rain ended in the evening several Outlawz group members returned to the Brandt-Quirk diamonds from 9:30pm to 1:00am and spent this time pushing standing water off of fields and clearing flooded areas behind the backstops. The work done by the Outlawz group significantly reduced the amount of work that PRF Department staff needed to complete the next day. Though our policy states rain or shine, I believe that an exception should be considered due to the scale of the weather conditions and the restoration efforts of the Outlawz group to help make BQ playable the following day for the softball tournament.

Staff recommended waiving one-half of the rental fee in recognition of the organization's assistance with field maintenance and partnership with the Department.

Julie Chapman moved to waive 50% of the rental fee, seconded by Rick Schultz, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

D. Review and take action: Watertown Tennis Association Tournament Waiver of Fees

The Watertown Tennis Association is looking to hold their annual tennis tournament and would like to have this at the Brandt Quirk courts provided they are ready by then. This tournament used to be in conjunction with Riverfest. They have also incorporated a fundraiser for this tournament for their league president, Dan Leija who lost his youngest son in January. A previous Park & Rec commission meeting already waived court rental fees for the rest of the 2026 season.

The Commission discussed maintaining the current fee waiver structure until updated fees and Memorandums of Understanding are established for 2027.

Kerry Kneser moved to approve the waiver under the existing structure, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

E. Review and take action: Removal of Lincoln and Riverside Volleyball Standards; Removal of Union Park Ball Diamond Infield and Relocation of Gaga Pit

Currently, at Lincoln and Riverside Park there are volleyball standards that do not have nets on them and have not for many years. At present, these courts are on grass and are reported to have no use as residents would need to provide their own net. What we currently have is two timbers at each park sticking out of the ground with a ratcheting winch on them. The removal of these volleyball standards is expected to have no impact on the community. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department is seeking approval to replace both sets of volleyball standards.

The backstop at the Union Park ball diamond was removed last fall. The infield of the ball diamond remains in the park but does not have any purpose as it is not maintained by our department nor is it rented. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department is seeking approval to removal the infield mix and fill with topsoil and seed in fall 2026.

Currently there is a Gaga Ball pit on the infield mix. This Gaga Ball pit was done as an Eagle Scout project. Our Department is seeking approval to relocate the Gaga Ball Pit to a location closer to the playground that will be more beneficial to park users.

Dana Davis moved to approve the proposed improvements, seconded by Rick Schultz, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

F. Review and take action: Updated Fees and Schedule Policy

Ryan Schmidt reported the updated fee schedule and scheduling policy are still being developed as part of the 2027 Fees & Charges review and requested the item be postponed until a future meeting.

No action was taken.

G. Review and take action: Accept donation from the Greater Watertown Community Health

Foundation for fees associated with developing a master plan for Rock River Ridge Park

Ryan Schmidt presented a donation from the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation to fund approximately \$20,000 toward the development of a master plan for approximately three acres at Rock River Ridge Park.

Julie Chapman moved to accept the donation, seconded by Dana Davis, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

6. Director's Report

A. Parks and Forestry Program and Maintenance Updates

- Staff are working on an Urban Forestry DNR matching grant for \$25,000, to be presented at a future Finance Committee meeting.

- Improvements continue at the Parks Shop, including HVAC, electrical, paint, etc.
- Both lift station pumps at Brandt-Quirk Park recently failed and are expected to be replaced within the coming week.
- Replacement parts are being sourced for the Riverside Park tennis court lights.
- Poor air quality impacted several outdoor programs and Aquatic Center operations, as well as an electrical issue requiring replacement parts.
- Staff continue preparations for Riverfest, including restroom operations and parking logistics, as well as other public and special events.
- The Brandt-Quirk tennis court resurfacing project remains underway, with discussion regarding potential charges if the contractor exceeds the completion deadline due to delays with the surfacing company.

B. Recreation Program Updates

- Weather-related cancellations have impacted several recreation programs, though staff have worked to reschedule activities whenever possible.
- Day Camp concludes next week.
- Summer gymnastics has ended, and registration for fall programs is now open.

C. Senior Center and Enrichment Program and Building Project Updates

- Elevator modernization and front entrance door replacement projects continue, with no start dates set at this time.
- The Senior Center Cookout Fundraiser held on June 26 was successful and sold out.
- KidsFest was held on July 12 with approximately 350 attendees and sponsorship from Bank of Lake Mills.
- The Lake Geneva Day Trip on July 10 was successful with 26 participants.
- Planning continues for National Senior Citizen Day on August 19 with sponsorship from Pizza Ranch, Culver's and Watertown Regional Medical Center.

7. Adjournment

Julie Chapman moved to adjourn at 5:23 p.m., seconded by Rick Schultz, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Next meeting date: August 17, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Draeger

Senior Center, Enrichment, and Office Manager

Note: These minutes are uncorrected, and any corrections made thereto will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.