

DRAFT
CITY OF WAUSAU – PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: August 5, 2024 at 5:15 p.m. Location: Council Chambers, City Hall
Parks and Recreation Committee Members Present: Lou Larson (c), Carol Lukens, Tom Neal, Lisa Rasmussen, Sarah Watson
Others Present: Jamie Polley-Parks Director, Doug Diny-Mayor, Tegan Troutner-Assistant City Attorney, Eric Lindman – Public Works Director, MaryAnne Groat – Finance Director

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. A quorum was present and the meeting was called to order at 5:15pm.

1. Approve Minutes – June 3, 2024 – **Motion** by Watson, second by Neal to approve the Park and Recreation Committee draft May 6, 2024 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

2. Discussion and Possible Action Allowing Temporary Usage of Yawkey Park by the YMCA for a Childcare Play Area – The YMCA will be improving their downtown location by increasing the square footage of the Landing and adding a walkway across 3rd Street. To do this work their current outdoor childcare play area will be impacted requiring them to find another location. The YMCA is required to have an outdoor play area as a licensed childcare facility. The YMCA is requesting the temporary use of a portion of Yawkey Park for the childcare play area. The space needed is 1,890 sq. ft. so they can meet the licensing code. Their request is to begin using it in late August through the conclusion of the project in the spring of 2025. They are flexible on the location. **Motion** by Rasmussen, second by Watson to allow temporary usage of Yawkey Park. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

3. Discussion and Possible Action and Update on the Riverlife Wharf Water – Staff has been asked to look into why the water has never been connected to the drinking fountain and shower at the Riverlife Wharf. A summary of what staff knows is that Miron constructed the Wharf and was responsible for the water to the shower and water fountain. Miron ran a water lateral and a sewer lateral to the wharf to serve it. Nearing the completion of the project Miron was not able to get a pressure test on the water line that was underneath the concrete poured for the wharf. Miron attempted to fix the leak over the next year but could not isolate the leak and the issue was ongoing but under the warranty and Miron was responsible for the fix. Then entered the developer who came onto the vacant lot and began to dig the basement. They hit the water and sewer line and actually pulled out the water line from under the concrete. Miron then said it was no longer their responsibility since the developer broke the line somewhere under the wharf concrete. We were attempting to work with the developer to fix the line with Miron. The developer pulled off the site and the City was left with a fountain and shower with no water and an undetermined sewer lateral. Parks, Engineering and Water Department staff met at the Wharf this past week and determined that there are multiple breaks in the water line and the condition of the unconnected sewer lateral is unknown. The amount of work could be extensive to find all the breaks and also to determine what, if anything, is remaining of each line. It is the plan that when the vacant site adjacent to the wharf is developed that the city work with the developer to connect a new water and sewer line if desired. In the meantime, staff is recommending we relocate the fountain to a location north along the trail and remove the shower tower. Questions were answered and discussion followed. **Motion** by Rasmussen, second by Lukens to direct staff to move water fountain and wait and leave shower facility for later. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

4. Discussion and Possible Action Setting the September Meeting Date Due to Labor Day – The next regular meeting falls on Labor Day and will need to be rescheduled. Discussion followed. **Consensus** by members is to schedule the next regular meeting to be held on Tuesday, September 3 at 4:15pm.

5. Discussion on Intergovernmental Agreement to Provide Park and Recreational Services for the City of Wausau – Mayor Diny had laid out a proposal looking to reduce costs overall by separating the joint city and county parks department and potentially bringing some of the work into the City possibly putting it under the city's Department of Public Works. He mentioned the proposal was a starting point and would go through all the proper committees. It would require a year notice to the County. Committee members felt they should have had some background information before this was released to the news media and the public started to call them. They raised concerns that it wasn't a vetted proposal and much more data was needed. They had questions in general about splitting up the joint department that had been integrated for the last fifty years. Questions were raised about the savings number on the proposal. They were concerned about putting more work on current city staff and room for storing equipment.

Lindman felt it was worth taking a look at. Polley explained how the department uses a job costing system to track whether the work being done was for the City or County. She discussed how the department has been currently running the parks and discussed how the urban park system is a lot more specialized. Staff consists of certified pool operators and playground safety inspectors, there are turf maintenance specialists and others with skilled trades. MaryAnne Groat felt the Mayor's proposal was to look at a different service delivery method and in this situation they would be looking at economies of scale. They are getting economies of scale by having a joint department and whether there would be more economies of scale is the question. She urged members to consider hiring and independent company that has the time to do a proper study. The cost would be anywhere from \$40,000 to \$90,000. She felt the difference would be very fine. Some members questioned the need for all of this. Rasmussen felt the arrangement has been working and the facilities are well run. More money is spent on parks today but that is because a lot of expensive amenities that people enjoy have been added. Diny felt there are savings and his proposal should be explored. He thought some staff work could be done to see if it was worth looking at the next step.

6. Educational Items

A. Park Updates – Airport Sports Park – Completed parking lot upgrade. Athletic Park – The smaller scoreboard was hit by a fly ball and was malfunctioning, it is currently operating correctly however we do have parts on order. Barker Stewart Island – The goats were introduced again this year from July 8 through July 20. This completed another round of vegetation management. Residents were allowed to meet the goats on July 16th. We had a great turnout Forest Park – The shelter roof was repaired and re-shingled. The storm related tree damage work has been completed. Oak Island Park – The restroom lot was paved by DPW and relandscaping is underway. Riverlife Park – The compressor has been replaced at Briq's building and leaper fountains are running. Paff Woods – The boardwalk repairs needed due to storm damage are ongoing. Tenth Street Park – The rock wall tuckpoint work is ongoing. A discussion on more permanent repairs will be presented to the Commission at a future meeting. Woodson Park – We are working on getting more jets to work on the kayak fountain. It appears that only two of the 5 have been working for quite some time. Park Maintenance – Woodchips were added to some playgrounds that were low. Big Eau Pleine Park – Storm damage work that has been ongoing is completed. Conservation Planning and Zoning received a grant to begin testing the water at the beach in Big Eau Pleine. We will be working with them on this three-year program. DC Everest Park – We now have one restroom open, the other restroom is waiting for the paper product dispensers. We will need to then complete the restoration work. Marathon Park – Fair prep is fully underway, with the assistance of the fair board the sanitary lines from the new cattle wash station were repaired and improved. We also completed a power line project in the horse arena. Mission Lake Park – The open shelter roof was re-shingled. Events – Nine Mile: Wausau 24 race July 27-28, Peoples Sports Complex: Hmong Festival event was 7/26 through 7/28, Wisconsin Valley Fair in Marathon Park July 30 – August 4.

7. Future Agenda Items – Committee Structure/Responsibilities, Park Ordinance Updates, 2025-2026 Fee Schedule, 10th Street Park Wall

8. Adjournment – **Motion** by Watson, second by Lukens to adjourn at 6:35pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.