

Wells Parks & Recreation

Commission Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2026

Attendees: Tom Post, Katie St. Pierre, Veronika Cryer, Nicole Thurston, Stuart Wolf, Kip Libby, and Tina LeBlanc

Called to Order: 6PM

Minutes: The minutes from November were read and approved unanimously.

Budget Report: \$87,278.72

Old Business:

Christmas Trees: A summary of the Christmas tree sales was given to the board in a spreadsheet. We sold out the first week of sales. We only received 146 trees of the 150 that we ordered. We were credited for the missing trees and were able to sell all the trees in one week. We brought in almost the same profit as last year as we went up \$5 in price. Next year we will get 200 trees again along with 25 small tabletops. Nicole Thurston mentioned that she could sell trees starting on the Friday after Thanksgiving to get a better jump in sales. A couple of other commission members will see if they can join her as that is a holiday for the Recreation staff and they will not be able to work that day.

Before & After School Supervisor Position Status: Tina explained that there was a candidate that accepted the job and signed paperwork but declined at the last minute as she took on another position that better met her needs. The position is still vacant, and Tina and the staff are revising the position to see if any changes can be made to obtain stronger candidates. The department is currently utilizing both Natalie and Samantha from the FT staff to cover both ends of the program. It is working out but we do need additional adult help on both ends to ensure coverage when one of them is sick or out for some reason.

New Business:

Scholarships: High School Scholarship awards were given out to both Owen Ham and Rowen Shafer after they produced their academic transcript showing they completed a semester at college. We are still waiting for Alex for his transcript. Owen received \$1,000 in a gift card to Amazon and Rowen received a \$500 gift card to Amazon. Both were very appreciative of their award and wanted to extend their gratitude to the board and department!

Projects Status: Tina explained that the floors in the office basement and throughout the pavilion were redone and now has vinyl laminate. Walls are also painted and

refurbished. A water bottle filling station and baseboard heat in the mudroom has been installed at the Activity Center for the Before and Afterschool program and other functions.

Nicole Thurston asked about the status of the field renovations. Tina informed the board that she met with the Engineer who provided a new estimate of work that we proposed to do to remedy the drainage issues, but it came up double what we anticipated. Last year we moved forward with a request of \$300K to complete the project which the budget board passed by utilizing program fees (enterprise account) to pay for the project in a 6 year loan plan from the town's finances.

This year Tina is asking for an additional \$300K from taxation to move forward. After meeting with the Town Manager and Finance Director it was decided to cut back on some of the CIP requests and revisit the project to see if we could cut back on costs. Tina met with Engineer again and discussed where the proposal could be adjusted. It was agreed upon that we would forgo the underground drainage pipes and mat and just excavate the top and grade the bulk of the field to drain toward the woods. By doing this \$100K was shaved off the top of the estimate.

It was also discussed whether to SOD or seed the top to save more money. It was evident with all our programs and the demand for the field space that applying SOD is the best option to get back on the fields more quickly. Another point that was brought up was the unknown outcome of seeding and watering as other projects in the past came in with sparsity and weeds which needed more care to bring them up to standard. This type of application takes so much longer to obtain the growth and stability needed in the fields to play on.

Tina has submitted a request to keep \$200K in the budget request to help with the increased cost estimate. The project is scheduled to go out to bid in February and we can see where the estimates come in.

Girls Basketball Tournament: The Rec Dept is holding its annual Girls 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade basketball tournament on February 13-15<sup>th</sup>. Tina asked the board if they would be able to help at the tournament. Marilyn Wallace will be sending a sign-up sheet by email for the board to fill in times they can help in the next week or so.

Family Feud Night: The Rec Dept is planning a "Family Feud Night" event on March 20<sup>th</sup> with a makeup date of March 27<sup>th</sup>. Tina asked the board to help with concessions and raffle ticket sales for the event. Samantha D'Amico will be emailing a sign-up sheet to the board to sign up if they can help.

We are looking for donations for our raffle drawings during the event. If any of the board members can get donations of gifts or gift cards from local businesses that would be a great help.

Freezer for the Concession Stand: The board voted on purchasing a new freezer for the concession stand that will act as a counter as well. The board voted on a cap of \$3,000 for the purchase of a freezer. Tina will search for the best deal and buy one soon.

Skat Night: The ice pond was freezing nicely and had about 8 inches of ice. The Rec Dept is considering holding a "Skate Night" on January 21<sup>st</sup> if the weather allows it in the next few days. There is a January thaw taking place in the next day or so, but predictions say the temperatures will drop below freezing at the end of this week and throughout the weekend. Unfortunately, there are snow showers predicted which may have accumulation. The maintenance personnel are away this weekend due to the holiday on Monday so we may not be able to get the ice cleaned off in time beforehand. We will assess the pond on Friday to see if it will be viable to offer an event next week. If it is not, then we will try another date later in the month or in February.

Chairperson's Comments: Veronika did not have any further comments at the end of the meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM