

**PARK RIVER PARK DISTRICT, PARK RIVER, NORTH DAKOTA, REGULAR MEETING,
MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026 AT 5:30 PM.**

President Ashley Seim called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM confirming the presence of Commissioners: Josh Stromberg, Dante Irvine and Joseph Fietek (by phone. Absent: None. A quorum was established. Others present: Duane Berg and Ann Berg.

Additions or Changes to Agenda – Approve Agenda: The board discussed adding Park Director Misty Praska’s review to the agenda under the Hillcrest section. This addition was accepted and the agenda was approved as modified.

Approval of Minutes: The February 17, 2026 regular meeting minutes were reviewed. Fietek moved and Irvine seconded to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Upon vote all voted aye, M/C.

Approval of Payments & Financial Reports: A. Berg presented the financial statements and bills sent on Friday and were reviewed by the Board. The financial report showed two bills totaling \$438.99 for payments to Polar and the Light and Water Department. The cash balance report indicated \$109,779.61 in the regular Park District checking account, \$38,007.43 in the community complex account, and \$12,432.79 was received in February sales tax revenue. A separate department for Park District sales tax will be added to better track these funds. The bank statement reconciliation showed several deposits including a \$2,000 deposit from the American Legion for the baseball program, Walsh County levy taxes of \$42,006.42, state revenue sharing of \$10,474.53, and Walsh County levy of \$3,047.54. Expenditures included North Dakota tax payments, Scheels gift cards, FICA taxes, and purchases for the fishing derby totaling \$820.24. There was discussion about a \$45 balance on a Shields gift card where a receipt could not be located. The matter will be resolved by providing a list of prizes given away. Irvine moved and Fietek seconded to approve the financials. Upon vote all voted aye, M/C.

Old Business

Community Building Committee Update: Seim reported that the committee hasn't met recently as they were allowing basketball and hockey seasons to wind down before moving forward. She noted that Praska had applied for a destination development grant worth \$4 million, with the park district applying for \$3 million to match with pledges. The grant deadline was March 10, with winners to be announced at the end of April. This grant opportunity became available because another town had turned it down. There was discussion about the grant being a match grant requiring expenditure of funds before reimbursement. First United Bank has indicated they would work with the district on a line of credit until pledge money comes in. Formal pledges were submitted as documentation for the grant application.

Fietek expressed concern that the grant opportunity should have been discussed with the board before submission, emphasizing that when submitting applications on behalf of Parks and Recreation, the board should be informed. He clarified he wasn't questioning the decision but requesting better communication going forward. The board discussed the balance between allowing staff to pursue time-sensitive opportunities and ensuring proper board oversight.

Splash Pad: Seim reported that Jeremy Samdahl was attempting to get a call back from My Aquatics to schedule opening of the splash pad. The winterization cost was approximately \$1,200-1,400, and opening costs are expected to be similar. Fietek moved and Irvine seconded to approve up to a \$1,500 expenditure for My Aquatics to open the splash pad. Upon vote all voted aye, M/C.

Lease Agreements on Land: The board reviewed lease agreements sent from the city, including a survey map attachment. The agreements include provisions for snow placement in Lot 2 by the baseball diamonds near the Legion Coliseum. The city will clean up any debris or rocks as they have done in the past. Section 15 regarding assignment or subletting was discussed, particularly regarding potential additional parking space at the Legion Coliseum. It was clarified that a separate licensure agreement between all three parties would be appropriate for such arrangements without affecting the main lease. The lease does not include the bike path or certain other areas, which are specifically listed in section 5 of the agreement. Fietek moved and Irvine seconded to approve the lease agreements as presented. Upon vote all voted aye, M/C.

Seim noted that the City Contracts and Policies committee will meet April 8 to discuss the bike path. There had been comments at the city council meeting suggesting the park district should handle bike path maintenance without compensation due to work the city does for the park district. She followed up with PWD Johnson, who indicated the working relationship between city and park staff has been positive and should continue. Seim felt a written list of services provided by the city is not needed as there are too many variables from year to year.

Swimming Pool: Fietek provided a preliminary quote from Kilichowski Trucking Inc for approximately \$36,000 to fill in the pool, contingent on whether the local landfill will accept the liner and concrete. If not accepted locally, costs would increase. This represents a 50/50 cost share with the city as previously agreed, significantly less than the \$100,000 figure that had been mentioned previously. Irvine mentioned the board should brainstorm and come up with ideas for a future use of the area.

Fishing Derby: The fishing derby was reported as successful despite freezing weather, with 46 children participating plus their adults. Many fish were caught, and a 3-year-old girl won with a 15-inch walleye that was nearly as big as she was. The event required bringing the scale indoors due to cold weather affecting equipment functionality.

Vacant Park District Seat: Two people submitted letters of interest: Bob Lundquist and Ron Beneta. The board decided to conduct interviews rather than make an immediate appointment. A special meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 24 at 5:30 PM to interview both candidates. Board members will submit questions to Praska in advance for compilation.

East Meadow Campground Reservation Platform: Praska presented a quote from a reservation system company that would provide online booking, Wi-Fi, and phone service. The system would include QR codes at each site and link to the website for availability checking. The Wi-Fi portion costs \$300 monthly, which several board members felt was expensive. There was discussion about potentially using Polar Communications for Wi-Fi service instead.

The system would ease the reservation process, as current manual methods create confusion and require extensive communication. People often panic about availability despite the campground rarely filling up. The system would allow site selection and online payment, improving the current cash/check lock box system that often results in wet envelopes due to weather.

Board members expressed interest in exploring alternatives and getting additional quotes before making a decision. Fietek moved and Stromberg seconded to table the item until the April meeting. Upon vote all voted aye, M/C.

New Business

501©3 Foundation: Seim presented the concept of creating a separate 501(c)(3) organization to run parallel with the park board, potentially called the Park River Parks and Recreation Foundation. This separate entity would be eligible for gaming, raffles, and grants that government entities cannot access, such as special allocation tags. The foundation would have its own board that wouldn't include current park board members, but would serve as an additional fundraising arm.

The discussion included comparisons to existing organizations like hockey boosters and baseball boosters, with concerns about competing for the same dollars. Seim noted that baseball boosters aren't a full 501(c)(3) and have gaming limitations. The concept would provide additional volunteers focused specifically on fundraising, as current board members have limited capacity for major fundraising efforts.

Questions were raised about legality, oversight, and what would happen if the foundation disagreed with park board spending priorities. The board agreed this concept needed more research and potentially legal consultation before moving forward, but expressed general interest in exploring the idea further.

Permanent Change to Meetings: Fietek raised the possibility of changing meeting dates to address concerns about bills being paid late, suggesting moving to the Tuesday after city council meetings. Discussion revealed that most bills aren't late, as they typically have grace periods. Some board members noted scheduling conflicts with Tuesday meetings due to sports activities. The board decided to monitor the situation and keep current meeting dates while being aware of due dates.

Hillcrest Mower Details: This item was clarified to be related to Hillcrest's fiscal sponsorship request. The board reviewed a fiscal sponsorship request from Hillcrest Golf Course for mower equipment purchase. This follows a similar arrangement from the previous year that worked smoothly. Fietek moved and Irvine seconded to allow Hillcrest Golf Club to use the Park District and a financial sponsor for the purchase of a new mower. Upon vote all voted aye, M/C.

Park District Employee Handbook: The discussion moved to Praska's review and the employee handbook. Fietek and Stromberg, who conducted the review, explained that the most challenging aspect was the lack of formal job descriptions and clear expectations. They emphasized this wasn't a reflection on Praska's performance, but rather a need to better define roles and seasonal expectations.

The board discussed the difficulty of evaluating performance without clear job descriptions, particularly regarding winter versus summer responsibilities, remote work expectations, and specific duties. They agreed that job descriptions need to be developed before finalizing an employee handbook. Stromberg moved and Irvine seconded to approve a \$1.00 per hour raise for Praska, retroactive to the beginning of January 1, 2026. Upon vote all voted aye, M/C.

Irvine moved and Stromberg seconded that Irvine and Seim work with Praska to develop a job description for the park board director position. Upon vote all voted aye, M/C.

Open Discussion: Praska asked about receiving approved meeting minutes for posting on the website. It was clarified that she could use the same documents, simply changing the title from "unapproved" to "approved" once the board approves them.

Adjournment: Fietek moved and Irvine seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 PM.

ATTEST:

Ann Berg, City of Park River
Assessor/Deputy Auditor

Ashley Seim, Park District President