



**VALPARAISO/CENTER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF PARKS & RECREATION**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**February 25, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Valparaiso Park/Center Township Board was called to order at 6:10 p.m. on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at the Forest Park Golf Course Welter Room. President Tim Warner presided.

Members present: Kevin Cornett, Mark Hardwick, Tim Warner, Martin Sonnenberg, Don Clark and Kay Magnetti. Also present were Park Director Kevin Nuppenau, Assistant Director Tristan Leonhard, Director of Events & Venues Dan McGuire, Recreation Superintendent Madison Bell, Administrative Assistant Tracy Betustak, Councilwoman Diana Reed and Paul Reed. Public guests included Jessica Kroenke, Tayshi Thompson, Wayne Crosswy, Scott Holmen, Ambica Macalka, Sandy Belancin and Katelyn Markovich.

**MINUTES:**

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the January 28, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented. Kevin Cornett seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve the January 28, 2025, Executive Session meeting minutes as presented. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Sandy Belancin of 2300 Allison Circle, spoke on behalf of a small group of pickleballers in attendance. She stated that the Team Reach App they use to gather together has 937 players on the Kirchoff app. The Team Reach app at the Valpo Y has 201. Additionally, the upcoming pickleball class through the Parks Department is full with a wait list of at least 10 people. She asked that the Board consider this as they obtain bids and decide how many courts to install at Valplayso. They recently raised \$2500 through a memorial for a player that just passed away for pickleball and asked that the Board let them know how else they can help. Several members of the Board assured the guests that much consideration is given to pickleball when planning. Discussion ensued and the guests shared their passion for pickleball and desire for multiple courts in one location and with lights.

Scott Holmen questioned why the Golf punch card is no longer an option and if there could be consideration for bringing it back. Tristan Leonhard replied that it is being looked at with the new system, we are just not able to commit to it just yet.

Tim Warner stated that they needed to ratify the appointments to the Planning Commission and to the Valpo Parks Foundation.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve Tim Warner as appointee to the Planning Commission. Kay Magnetti seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve reappointing Don Clark and Kevin Cornett as liaisons to the Valpo Parks Foundation board. Kay Magnetti seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

**Valpo Parks Update** - Kevin Nuppau – Kevin announced it was Tracy Betustak’s birthday (despite her efforts to keep it low key) and he and the board extended well wishes to her with their beautiful voices.

Next, Kevin announced the soft opening of Bender Golf Teehouse at Creekside Golf Course and Training Center on Friday of last week. The official ribbon-cutting opening will be in spring when all the finishing touches are complete.

**Valpo Parks Foundation Update** - Kevin Cornett – The Kids Loop project at Creekside is still ongoing, Foundation committee work is underway and lastly, the NWI Times has voting open for Best Park, Best Golf Course, etc and Valpo Parks facilities are in multiple categories. Please vote.

### **FINANCIALS:**

Tristan Leonhard reported that the General Fund Balance as of January 31, 2025, is \$726,517. The NRO Balance was \$819,356. The total balance of the two funds is \$1,545,874. Overall it tracks pretty well compared to the year before. Our expenses were slightly up for January as a whole but with the addition of Memorial Opera House, our monthly expenses will be ticked up for the entire year. Looking at the Financial Overview, overall, the appropriations are tracking through the month of January with our largest payments of the month in Payroll, as we added three new full-time staff and Insurance was another large payment.

Q. Martin Sonnenberg asked if it was timing or did the bill go up for the year? A. Tristan explained that we added on a few pieces of property and the hitting shed.

In reviewing the Fund Report, we had one large expenditure out of the Joint Park Fund. That was the final payment for the new greenhouse we’ll be constructing at Horticulture.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the financials as presented. Martin Sonnenberg seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

**CLAIMS:** Tristan Leonhard advised that claims documents were provided to members in advance of tonight’s meeting. You’ll see some of the Memorial Opera House coming online in the claims report. We also had a lot of safety claims but overall it’s fairly static.

Q. Martin asked what the safety claims are. A. Tristan explained those are new safety equipment for staff, such as boots, gloves, and such. Tristan informed the Board that we will be purchasing a new trailer to store the ice rink, in the next week or two.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve all presented monthly claims subject to appropriations balances. Kevin Cornett seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

### **DIVISION REPORT:**

The Division Report was provided to the Members in advance of tonight’s meeting for their review. Tristan shared a new format for the NRO sheet as well as the Division Report.

Q. Kay asked when the ice rink closed. A. Dan McGuire replied, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, to the public. Then there will be youth hockey makeups for the week after.

### **BOARD ACTION:**

**Food Waste Compost Site Lease Agreement** – Tristan Leonhard – Last year was our first year having an MOU with the Recycling and Waste Reduction District of Porter County for the food compost site. They were able to collect 2,420 pounds of food waste at the Market. It worked so well we were able to set up a site at Banta after the Market. Since then, they have been able to collect another 5,700 pounds. This past year they collected over 8,000 pounds of food waste. The site we provided them had perfect

temperature, sunlight, aeration and they were able to turn the soil over within that time as well. They would like an agreement to continue this for two years.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to accept the MOU with the Recycling and Waste Reduction District of Porter County. Kay Magnetti seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

**Part-time Wage List Update** – Tristan Leonhard asked to add a few more positions into our 2025 Part-time Pay Scale: 1. Event and Venue Attendant with a range of \$12-15. 2. Sports Instructor with a range of \$13-16. 3. Pre-School Lead Position with a \$13-16 range. 4. Sports Assistant with a range of \$15-18.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the updated Part-time Wage List. Don Clark seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

**NRO Transfer** – Tristan Leonhard asked approval to transfer \$350,000 from the NRO to the General Fund to support staffing.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve the \$350,000 transfer from the NRO to the General Fund. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

**Special Events NRO Additional Appropriation (4<sup>th</sup> of July)** – Tristan Leonhard is looking to add an additional \$62,000 to the Special Events appropriation. In years past, when it came to 4<sup>th</sup> of July specifically, we would collect bills and then send them to city hall to have them processed through city funds. This year, we are looking to pay them out of our own to help with timely payments to our vendors.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the NRO additional appropriation of \$62,000 for Special Events. Kay Magnetti seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

**Berglund CM Agreement** – Kevin Nuppau – We've engaged with Berglund Construction to help us prepare the \$10 million rePLAY plan. The next step is a construction management agreement for them to now manage the actual work. We request approval of an agreement between Valpo Parks and Berglund for a total of \$506,086. They will manage \$7 million worth of that \$10 million work.

Motion: Don Clark made a motion to accept the agreement with Berglund Construction. Kevin Cornett seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

**Forest Park Concrete** – We have a proposal out for a project under \$150,000 for concrete at the Fairgrounds Park for the dugout pads, the common space and a couple footers for monument signs. The bids we received are as follows:

Engineers \$81,108

H3 Concrete \$59,770

Walker Construction Co \$63,725

CNS Concrete \$140,000

Based off price, fulfilling requirements and we know the company, we recommend moving forward with H3 Concrete for \$59,770.

Motion – Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to accept the bid from H3 Concrete. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

### **OPEN TOPICS:**

**Rogers Lakewood Invasive Species Removal** – Kevin Nuppau – We partnered with US Fish and Wildlife Services. They came out to Rogers Lakewood free of charge to us for about 3 days to clear out invasive species, using forestry mowers and covered roughly 40 acres. Our team then went out after that and cleaned up to open the trails and make it presentable.

**Neighborhood Grants** – Kevin Nuppnau – The Redevelopment Commission does a Neighborhood Grant Program. There are 5 neighborhoods that would like to participate by supporting the parks. Kevin shared each neighborhood’s wish list. The budget is \$20,000 per project.

**Property Tax Topic** – Kevin Nuppnau informed the Board that we are monitoring Governor Braun’s property tax Senate bill 1 plan as to how that might affect Parks. It seems we will be negatively affected on funding. We are just trying to stay on top of things and plan accordingly.

**Golf Irrigation Project** – Tristan Leonhard – We are working with Hydra Designs on Forest Park Irrigation System. The design is complete. We meet tomorrow to begin putting final touches on bid documents. We hope to go out to bid next month and are aiming for a winter, end of year install.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

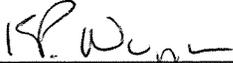
There being no further business the February 25, 2025, Park Board meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.



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Tim Warner, President

Mark Hardwick, Vice-President

ATTEST:



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Kevin Nuppnau, Director