



VALPARAISO/CENTER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF PARKS & RECREATION
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2025

The regular meeting of the Valparaiso Park/Center Township Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at the Forest Park Golf Course Welter Room. President Tim Warner presided.

Members present: Tim Warner, Kevin Cornett, Mark Hardwick, Martin Sonnenberg, Don Clark and Kay Magnetti. Also present were Park Director Kevin Nuppnau, Assistant Director Tristan Leonhard, Recreation Superintendent Madison Bell, Event & Venue Director Dan McGuire, Administrative Assistant Tracy Betustak and Paul Reed. Councilwoman Diana Reed arrived at 6:48 p.m.

MINUTES:

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve September 30, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented. Kevin Cornett seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None in advance. None present.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Valpo Parks Update - Kevin Nuppnau gave the update. The annual IPRA Conference is coming up, November 11-13 in Muncie, Indiana. Six staff members will be attending. Three for one day and three for the entire conference. Kevin is presenting at the conference with Skillman Corporation, the team that renovated the Memorial Opera House to discuss County/City collaboration.

The city has added 1.2 miles of new pathways. We will maintain those pathways in the winter.

We are officially dedicating the Bender Golf Teehouse at Creekside Golf on Friday, November 14 at 4 p.m. The signage is all completed and we are really excited to celebrate with Nancy and the other donors that participated in that project.

Valpo Parks Foundation Update - Kevin Cornett – Kevin gave a recap of Friends and Legends. The Veterans Day service is Friday, November 11 at 9am at the Service Memorial at Foundation Meadows. Josh Koch is the guest veteran speaker and Justine Olson from VU will be performing. Toys for Tots will begin November 3rd. The Foundation is making a competition of bringing in the most toys. December 7 is the Santa and Sirens event at Butterfield Family Pavilion.

FINANCIALS:

Tristan Leonhard – The General Fund budget stood at \$544,682, the NRO stood at \$1,059,743, for a total of \$1,604,426. The main takeaway is that we stayed on track the entire year and started the year with slightly less funds.

Looking at the Department Financial Overview, much like last month, everything has still stayed on track to budget through the month. Tristan referenced the Software and I.T. line, explaining the rise. The one area that has seen quite an increase is Capital Outlays. Last year's General Fund Appropriation for our facility improvements was \$25,000. We worked really hard with City Hall to get that extended to \$250,000 for facility improvements and we've used it this year. A couple of projects soon to be coming out of that \$250,000 is the maintenance drain and the paving of Horticulture's parking lot. Looking at the fund report, no real outliers outside of funds spent in the General Fund or the NRO's.

The NRO Comparison report. A couple of notes; Rogers Lakewood this year looked like it outspent last year quite a bit, but that was because two of the delete pond treatments came out of last month due to late invoicing on their part. Secondly, this year was the change in Special Events for the 4th of July. Last year, some of those funds came from downtown; this year, downtown gave us the money to then pay out of our account.

Martin asked about Rogers Lakewood revenue since we installed the gate. Tristan replied that cost recovery at Lakewood used to be about 40-50%. We are looking at about 70-80% cost recovery now. The additional revenue goes back into Rogers Lakewood Park.

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

CLAIMS: Tim Warner advised that claims documents were provided to members in advance of tonight's meeting. There were no questions.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve all presented monthly claims subject to appropriations balances. Mark Hardwick 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. Madison Bell noted that women's volleyball is on the rise and is doing well.

BOARD ACTION:

2026 Golf Pro Contract – Tristan explained that we operated in 2025 under the 2024 contract. The only change for 2026 is that the simulator cost for her lessons is changing from \$5 to \$10. Looking for approval of her contract.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the 2026 Golf Pro contract. Kay Magnetti seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

2026 Pricing Proposal – Tristan reviewed the 2026 Pricing Grid Proposal in detail and answered questions.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the 2026 Pricing Grid Proposal. Kevin Cornett seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Part-Time Pay Scale – Tristan Leonhard presented the 2026 part-time pay scale, which essentially mirrors the 2025 pay scale. The one thing we added was a new senior-level part-time position to the director-level area. We felt a Market Director down at Central Park Plaza would be a valuable position to develop.

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

NRO Cash Transfer to General Fund – Tristan Leonhard stated we are still on target with the number of transfers we've had this year. We are anticipating a transfer this month and one more next month to get to the tax draw in December. We are asking for a \$500,000 transfer from the NRO to the General Fund.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve the \$500,000 transfer. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Rogers Lakewood Additional Appropriations – Tristan Leonhard – Rogers Lakewood has run into multiple issues that have cropped up outside a normal budget. We are asking for an additional appropriation of \$30,000. Last year, we did the IEAP (emergency action plan) for Rogers Lakewood. Due to late invoicing, it was paid in 2025. That was over \$10,000. We've also partnered with the Friends of Fishing club this year and have taken on their events. Those expenses now come out of the Lakewood NRO. Earlier in the year, we had an issue with our gate infrastructure and replaced the main gate frame for \$6,000. We have also had a myriad of electrical issues due to storms or water damage.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve an additional \$30,000.00 appropriation for Rogers Lakewood Park. Don Clark seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Banta Center Additional Appropriations – Tristan Leonhard – We are working with Abonmarche for boundary and topographic surveys, replat and easement exhibits. Their contract is \$12,300.00. We are asking for an additional appropriation to the Banta Center NRO to work with Abonmarche on the sale of the Banta property.

Motion: Don Clark made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for the Banta Center NRO for \$12,300.00. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Winter Decorations Contract – Tristan Leonhard – We are still working on this contract. In the meantime, the Fourth of July Fireworks contract came in, so we'll swap those agenda items.

Fireworks Contract – Tristan Leonhard – We've been working with Ace Pyro the past few years. We are looking to do another 3-year contract with them. The contract is for \$45,000 for year one, \$39,000 in year two and \$39,000 for year three. From last contract to this one, tariffs have gone up almost 50%. The increase in the contract for year one is due to tariffs plus a bigger event since this will be the 250th birthday of America. The city is going a little bit bigger for year one. The subsequent two years will go back to the normal show but still affected by the tariff increase. Discussion ensued about tariffs and the possibility of a clause should the tariff situation change within those three years. Kevin Nuppnau said he can follow up with Ace Pyro on that question.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the Ace Pyro 3-year contract. Kay Magnetti seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Park Rules – Kevin Nuppnau – We ask approval for the Park Rules, which we've been working on for some time. We appreciate everyone's input and patience. We do need to still put together an appeals process, in the near future.

Motion – Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the Park Rules as presented. Kay Magnetti seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

OPEN TOPICS:

Golf Irrigation Project Update – Tristan Leonhard gave an update. Everything is still on track. Looking at mid to late-March start time. We will only close one hole at a time. Target completion date is June 1.

Banta Center Update – Kevin Nuppnau – Abonmarche has completed their field work, now they have the reports to provide. We'll be back at the Plan Commission on November 4th for the 2nd and final reading of the rezone. We met with the Welters and our legal team to begin the first draft of the contract. We discussed Parks retaining ownership of the property until the time we vacate. They would still have access to the building to do some work. We plan to propose an agreement with the Welters for approval at the November 18 Park Board meeting.

rePLAY Project Update – Kevin Nuppnau gave an update on current park projects.

- Tower Park – We had a very nice ribbon-cutting event on October 10th with tasty ice cream, nice crowds and a beautiful park. The response from the community and neighborhood has been fantastic. The basketball court is finished except for the stencils. The weather window has closed to finish those until next spring. One last note, aside from rePlay, is that the turf at the pitcher's mound and home plate on the ballfield will be replaced due to wear and tear.
- Kirchhoff Park – Significant work is happening. All the buildings and structures have been demo'd. The pathway along Roosevelt Street is nearly complete. Geogh and company are working hard to catch us up. It is looking like an early January completion for the Parks side of things. Institute Street and the parking will be most likely completed between Spring Break and beginning of summer. Early spring is when we would do the official opening. The Schroeder memorial items will remain. Other shelters are available for naming rights.

Valpo REC Update - Kevin Nuppnau – Going forward, every Board of Works meeting, every other City Council meeting, and every Park Board meeting, we will give a Valpo REC update for the public just to keep everyone aware of what is going on. We met with Tonn & Blank and their team, after the recommendation was made to Board of Works, to kick things off and begin the contract negotiation period. We have now moved into the draft of that agreement. Both parties are reviewing the first draft of the design-build agreement. We hope to have that at the November 14 Board of Works meeting for the Mayor to approve. From there, we'll go full bore on that project and have an official kickoff meeting with the team. We'll work on various public-engagement opportunities.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the October 28, 2025, Park Board meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Tim Warner, President

ATTEST:

Kevin Nuppnau, Director