



VALPARAISO/CENTER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF PARKS & RECREATION
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2026

The regular meeting of the Valparaiso Park/Center Township Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 27, at the Forest Park Golf Course Welter Room. President Kevin Cornett presided.

Members present: Kevin Cornett, Tim Warner, Mark Hardwick, Martin Sonnenberg, Kay Magnetti, and Don Clark. Also present were Park Director Kevin Nuppau, Assistant Director Tristan Leonhard, Recreation Superintendent Madison Bell, Event & Venue Coordinator Bo Thorgren, Maintenance & Facilities staff Jessica Kroenke, Special Projects Director Chuck Gleason, and Administrative Assistant Tracy Betustak. Also in attendance were Councilwoman Diana Reed and Paul Reed.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Kevin Cornett.

MINUTES:

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the December 16, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented. Martin Sonnenberg seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None in advance. Diana Reed presented a **small** token of congratulations to Kevin Cornett on his appointment as Park Board President.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Valpo Parks Update - Kevin Nuppau thanked Tim Warner and Mark Hardwick for their leadership as President and Vice President of the Park Board for the past several years. He then welcomed Kevin Cornett and Don Clark into their respective roles.

Kevin Nuppau gave praise to the Maintenance team for doing a fantastic job battling this cold weather and keeping pathways clean for our park patrons. He also explained how the closures of the rink and schools where we have some of our sports programs have affected our programs and the financials.

Valpo Parks Foundation Update – Martin Sonnenberg – The Strategic Planning Task Force has met once and will meet again this week. Kevin Cornett is on the task force, and he explained the process. He complimented the group involved and how well they work together. Martin then announced that a grant was received from First Things First toward the Tot Spot playground. Lastly, Martin shared that Foundation board member, Josh Schoon, is participating in the Delta Dudes Pageant fundraiser. He will be raising funds for the Foundation. We encourage everyone to attend, donate, or share the link.

FINANCIALS:

Tristan Leonhard – As of December 31, 2025, the General Fund balance sat at \$1,876,541, the NRO was \$443,015, for a total of \$2,319,557. From a cash flow perspective, we are in a much better place heading into 2026 than we were heading into 2025.

From the Departmental General Fund side, the biggest thing overall is that everything went to budget. Internally, the hope is always to spend around 90% or a little above. You can see on the report that we spend 91% of the total budget. Some things of note, from our salaries and wages from a full-time perspective, we spent that down to almost the last penny. One of the other notes in salaries, was the

part-time wages. This year, we had a really aggressive part-time wage number. We probably spent the most on part-time wages, maybe ever. We did almost a million dollars in part-time wages. It was to plan, and it paid off, and we stayed under budget. There were slight increases in insurance. Insurance raised again, especially with the Legacy Parks projects and all the new amenities we've added. Software and IT continue to grow as our staff grows.

Looking at the Fund Report, it was a fairly normal month when it comes to revenues and expenditures. The NRO Comparison report: Two things to point out. Looking at Central Park Plaza and Special Events from a year-over-year perspective, it looks pretty drastic. But those are two specific areas that were heavily impacted by sponsorship dollars. When you take sponsorship dollars out of 2024, CPP overlays pretty well, year-over-year. Special Events sponsorship dollars were included in 2024. In 2025, we actually paid for all of the 4th of July. CPP and Special Events were pretty comparable year-over-year it just doesn't show that on the actual dashboard.

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

CLAIMS: Kevin Cornett advised that claims documents were provided to members in advance of tonight's meeting.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve all presented monthly claims subject to appropriations balances. Don Clark 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 pointed out that we had over 62,000 rounds of golf in 2025. There were no questions.

BOARD ACTION:

Zamboni Proposal – Tristan has been working with the Zamboni company to find what we thought was a previous Zamboni order. It turns out the employee who was handling it left without filing the paperwork. They have no record of the order now. Some of the CPP staff have worked together to figure out what we need in a Zamboni now. We are asking for approval of a purchase order to purchase a Zamboni. If approved, it would arrive around September or October, in time for the next rink season. The total purchase price is \$116,927.62. We'll finance it over a 5-year period.

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

Printer Financing – Tristan Leonhard – This year, as part of our Capital Leasing line in our General Fund, a lot of our financing has fallen off. So we are talking about new pieces of equipment and fleet. We are looking at financing as we start over again. The first item is a copier/printer for the Admin office. We've been leasing an older copier/printer, which is \$1800 month, and it is end-of-term. We worked with Gateway to own a new copier/printer. We are hoping for a 3-year term to pay on it, then own it outright. We sent out for financing quotes from 1st Source Bank, Everwise Credit Union, and Centier Bank. We ask for approval on the quote from 1st Source Bank with a 4.48% rate over three years. The printer is \$49,329.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve the financing quote from 1st Source Bank. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Banta Additional Appropriation – Last fall, we got approval from the board for additional appropriation for the sale of the Banta Center. This was for working with Abonmarche on the boundary and topographic survey, and some of the replatting process. That was not fully paid out in 2025. We are asking now for an additional \$5,200 to add to the Banta Appropriation to finalize the payments to Abonmarche.

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

Mechanic Tool Policy – Tristan Leonhard – We would like to offer a \$500 stipend to our mechanics annually. Mechanics are required to bring their own tools on site to perform work. We provide specialty tools and PPE items. We have two mechanics, currently.

Motion: Tim Warner made a motion to approve the \$500 annual stipend for mechanics. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Fencing Policy – Kevin Nuppau – We would like to have a policy in place to address Valpo Parks fences that border Valpo residences, which are in disrepair.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the new Fencing Policy. Kay Magnetti seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Sustainability Policy – Kevin Nuppau – We wanted to memorialize the steps we've taken to be more environmentally friendly and implement sustainability practices. We also wanted to document the things we still want to achieve. This is a 10-year plan, but a working document that will adjust and change over the years.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the sustainability document. Tim Warner seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Central Park Plaza Amphitheater Naming Rights – Kevin Nuppau – The contract is not yet ready to present to the board tonight.

OPEN TOPICS:

rePlay Project Update – Kevin Nuppau – Kirchhoff Park is delayed due to the weather. But once the weather breaks, it should be wrapped up pretty quickly.

Valpo REC Update – Kevin Nuppau – We have 5 live surveys on our Facebook page and website. We have received 1500 responses in a week, so far. Beginning February 4, we will have some user group meetings.

Banta Center Update – Kevin Nuppau – Next Tuesday, we will seek approval before the Plan Commission on the replat and alley vacation of the Banta property.

Salt Creek Cleanup Project – Kevin Nuppau – There is a creek that runs through the Creekside Trails property. This creek eventually leads to Lake Michigan. We have engaged the NW Indiana Paddling Association, which is a volunteer group that helps clean up waterways. They've engaged IN Dunes Tourism. They have gotten other communities on board to work toward cleaning up Salt Creek all the way to Lake Michigan. We have gotten approval from DNR, and Stormwater Management and Drainage Board to remove several blockages by mechanical means. We have also received a \$10,000 grant from the Peter G. Horton Trust to help support the cause. Spaulding's Tree Service has been hired to help remove the blockages.

Farewell Message – Each member of the Park Board delivered a warm farewell message to Kevin Nuppau, wishing him well in his next chapter. Kevin then extended his thanks and delivered a heartfelt message in return.

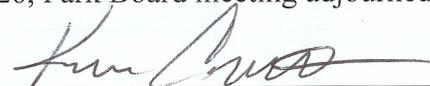
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the January 27, 2026, Park Board meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

ATTEST:



Tristan Leonhard, Acting Director



Kevin Cornett, President