

**MINUTES**  
**SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD**  
**Park Board Administrative Offices, 1923 N. Weller Ave., Springfield, Missouri**  
**And via Microsoft Teams for Park Board Members**  
**Friday, February 13, 2026**

**1. ROLL CALL**

Ms. Susie Turner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Park Board Members Present:** Don Chenevert, Jr. (via-Teams), Cody Danastasio, Curtis Jared (via-Teams), Mark McNay, Dr. Dale Moore, Dr. Dianna Parker, Susie Turner

**Park Board Members Absent:** Leslie Carrier, Royce Reding

**Park Board Staff Members Present:** Matt Coats, Jenny Edwards, Jim Fisher, Amy Francka, Benjamin Kellner, Joseph Lane, Leigha May, Tim McCrea, Jerry Mitchell, Ron Schneider, Jill Simmons, Jeff Smith, Jackson Thompson, Justin Wilson, Lana Woolsey

**Guests:** None

**2. READING & APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

2.1. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the minutes from January 9, 2026, Park Board Meeting, seconded by Don Chenevert, Jr. The motion was approved unanimously

**3. REPORT OF THE OFFICERS**

3.1. None was provided

**4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

4.1. There was no unfinished business

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

5.1. **Review and discuss park entrance and identification sign concepts** Public Information Office Administrator, Jenny Edwards, and Senior Parks Planner, Jeff Smith, presented an overall view of the various park sign entrances currently on display throughout our Parks system. The presentation addressed the design rationale, selected materials, cost estimates, and the overall implementation plan for the proposed signage within Parks. Park Board members engaged in discussion and provided feedback, offering valuable insight into opportunities to enhance community connectivity and ensure appropriate long-term maintenance of the project

5.2. **Accept a donation to fund archery program enhancements** Archery Coordinator, Amy Francka, presented a generous donation totaling \$25,000, consisting of \$12,500 contributed by the Hatch Foundation and \$12,500 from the Danastasio Family Fund, to support enhancements to programming and equipment at the Archery Complex. Amy Francka provided the Board with an itemized summary outlining the proposed allocation of funds and the anticipated benefits to the program. Vice Chair Cody Danastasio recused himself from the vote, due to his position on the Board of Directors for the Hatch Foundation and his affiliation with the Danastasio Family. Dr. Dale Moore made a motion for the Park Board to accept the separate \$12,500 donation from both the Hatch Foundation and the Danastasio Family Fund, for a total donation of \$25,000; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker, the motion passed unanimously.

- 5.3. **Accept a donation that will fund the purchase of a utility cart to be used at the Botanical Gardens** Assistant Director Matt Coats presented a donation from a part-time employee of Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park, Ann Ratliff, in the amount of \$5,000 to fund the purchase of a utility cart for Botanical Gardens. Dr. Dianna Parker made the motion that the Park Board accept the donation of \$5,000 to be used to reimburse the Board for the cost of one utility cart, seconded by Dr. Dale Moore and the motion passed unanimously
- 5.4. **Accept a donation of a used tractor for use at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park** Assistant Director, Matt Coats presented a donation of a 1949 tractor by Brett Baker, to be used at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park and serve as a unique display and educational piece for programs. Cody Danastasio made the motion for the Park Board to accept Brett Baker's donation of a 1949 Tractor, seconded by Dr. Dale Moore and the motion passed unanimously.
- 5.5. **Approval of a joint use agreement with Springfield Public Schools for Lafayette Park** Director Schneider presented this to the Board, advising that the Springfield Public School Board approved this joint use agreement at their meeting on Tuesday, February 10, 2026. After discussion, the Board expressed concerns about new walkways being ADA compliant and public access to the park outside of school hours via new fence and gate proposals. Mark McNay made the motion for the Park Board to enter into an agreement with Springfield R-12 School District for the construction of improvements on, and the mutual use of, District's and Park Board's Property at and adjacent to a portion Lafayette Park, with the understanding that the public will have access to these improvements outside school hours and with the authority for the Director to provide final approval of the plans with ADA access. Don Chenevert, Jr., seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- 5.6. **Review and discussion of the draft budget for FY 2026-27** Director Schneider provided a general overview of finances, following the Fees & Charges Committee Meeting held on January 16, 2026.

Superintendent of Business Operations, Jerry Mitchell, provided a brief overview of the pay improvement plan over the course of the next 3 years as well as the Park Board Reserve Budget.

Assistant Director, Jill Simmons, presented the budget for Recreation, sharing that staff began implementing the newly adopted Cost Recovery Program in November and already seeing overall improvements across all sections. Park Board expressed their appreciation for staff utilizing the program to review current programs.

Assistant Director, Jim Fisher, presented the Golf Fund Enterprise Budget, citing overall increases will trend across each golf course comparatively.

Assistant Director, Matt Coats, presented the Special Facilities Budget having previously been involved in that preparation during his time as the Superintendent of Special Facilities. Mr. Coats shared that staff has made necessary adjustments at each facility to offset costs of minimum wage increase and reviewing current fee increases to help continue that trend. Mr. Coats also presented the budget for Park Operations citing some recent restructuring of staff to enhance maintenance of the Parks upkeep with the Ozark Greenways.

Assistant Director Jackson Thompson presented an overview of the Dickerson Park Zoo budget. His report included comparative data supporting the recommendation not to increase admission fees for the upcoming fiscal year. He noted that recent improvements at the Zoo are expected to help increase attendance. He also referenced the partnership with Friends of the Zoo, explaining that maintaining current admission rates aligns with comparable costs and avoids increasing both fees at this time.

Director Schneider closed the discussion, sharing the budget overview includes a net deficit of \$655,667, advising that conversations were being had with the City to potentially help with this. The Board commended staff for their hard work on budget presentations and the attention to detail required for that to be presented.

- 5.7. **Review and discussion of the proposed fees and charges for FY 2026-27** Director Schneider provided a brief overview as staff included these proposed changes in their presentations of the overall budget.
- 5.8. **Strategic Plan Objectives and Key Results Quarterly Update** Director Schneider provided and update, sharing a near 100% completion from the Board. The areas still needing attention are being looked at and worked on by staff to fill vacancies.
- 5.9. **Superintendent of Park Business Operations Report** Superintendent of Business Operations, Jerry Mitchell, presented an overview of the January financial report advising salary costs were down from one year ago. Mr. Mitchell projected the Golf Fund to exceed \$6,000,000 in revenue for FY 2025-2026 based on current trends. Mr. Mitchell also briefly reviewed the current capital projects funds, thanking staff for managing those large projects.
- 5.10 **Director of Parks Report** Director Schneider referred the Board to review the written comprehensive reports submitted by staff included in their packet. Mr. Schneider attended the January 22, 2026, Citizens Advisory Board meeting, where they approved eight park, trail and corridor projects totaling \$10,800,726. The projects include McDaniel Park improvements, Meador Park pickleball complex construction, Chadwick Flyer Trail construction from Kissick to Trail of Honor, Dickerson Park Zoo enhancements and master plan development, Lafayette Park improvements, Ungap the Map trail planning, Grant Avenue Parkway corridor planning, and Frisco Highline trail connector feasibility study. The Advisory Board's project funding recommendation will go to City Council for consideration on February 23, 2026.

Director Schneider announced the hiring of Ben Kellner as the Superintendent of Park Operations for the Springfield-Greene County Park Board. Ben will oversee daily park operations, coordinating staff, and resolving operational issues to maintain efficient and safe parks. Director Schneider also announced the hiring of Joe Lane as the Superintendent of Recreation for the Springfield-Greene County Park Board. Joe previously served as Community Recreation Coordinator for the Fieldhouse and brings a proven record of leadership, operational oversight, and strategic program development.

Director Schneider acknowledged Ronald Braden who celebrated a 15-year anniversary as a valued Parks employee on February 13, 2026.

A retreat for Park Board members is scheduled for 9 am on Monday, March 2, 2026, at the Lake Springfield Boathouse. Habitat Communication & Culture was hired to facilitate discussion at the retreat. Director Schneider reminded the Board to complete the pre-retreat survey by Friday, February 20, 2026.

Director Schneider shared that City Council approved \$500,000 in funding for the development of five park master plans at the January 12, 2026, meeting. With funding secured for the planning projects, staff developed a request for qualifications that was advertised and sent to prospective planning consultants on January 30, 2026. Interested planning firms must submit their statement of qualifications by 3 pm on Friday, February 20, 2026. A team is being formed to review submittals and select the most qualified consultant to perform this work.

## **6. CALENDAR**

- 6.1. Park Board Meeting: Friday, March 13, 2026, at 8:30 a.m., at the Park Board Administrative Office, 1923 N. Weller Ave., Springfield, Missouri.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

- 7.1. Dr. Dale Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 10:19 a.m.