

CITY OF SPARTA
PARK BOARD MINUTES
November 6, 2023

PRESENT: Jim Church, Bob Halverson, Brian Harrie, Matthew Hoffland, Josh Lydon

ABSENT: Cory Bowser, Marcus Novak

ALSO PRESENT: Brad Gilbertson, Mark Sund, Todd Fahning, Kevin Riley, Julie Geier, Bryan Davis, Andy Kuen, Robert Arnold, Brian Overturf

Jim Church called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Josh Lydon and seconded by Matthew Hoffland to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of minutes of the regular meeting on October 2, 2023 and monthly bills for October. Motion carried 5-0.

Brad Gilbertson presented the Parks and Recreation Director's report for November. He added the tackle football program that is run through the Boys & Girls Club of La Crosse will most likely continue, but they will potentially have to combine fifth and sixth grades for teams. There is also an issue of helmet supply, as many helmets are set to be decommissioned. He will know more moving forward.

Brad presented the Maintenance Supervisor Report for November. He added once the fence on Diamond #2 is installed most likely next Spring and windscreen will be installed. The windscreen material has been donated and will include signage for the donation. They also received an anonymous donation of \$1,000 that will be used to install yellow tubing at the top of the fence.

At this time, the playground design at Memorial Park was discussed. Brad stated they requested a change to the proposal to do a hybrid of poured-in-place surfacing and engineered wood fiber chips to cut down on the cost of the surfacing. He stated both surfaces are ADA compliant and this would allow them to allot money elsewhere in the design. They also changed from larger canopies in the areas for shade to smaller, triangle-shaped canopies. He noted the canopies they have at the Aquatic Center have had tears in them, causing them to replace the entire shade. Smaller shades would be a more cost-effective option for the future. They added an additional swing bay and picnic tables around the exterior of the playground for seating options

The current playground option is quoted at \$595,312 with an order deadline by the end of 2023. Ordering after January 1, 2024 would incur an approximate 5% increase. They currently have \$300,000 in ARA designated funds, approximately \$40,000 to be donated by the Sparta Rotary Club/NASA, and approximately \$40,000 from the Sparta Lions Club. Brad stated if they ordered by the end of the year, a majority of the total would be invoiced and payable in March, with the balance due upon completion. Brad stated that although they have approximately \$380,000 in funding, he is concerned about the amount that would need to be fundraised in a short amount of time.

He suggests leaving the playground footprint, but eliminate a few items to bring the costs down. The city could add these features as funding allowed or as donations were received. Pica Grove is designing a fundraising sign that depicts a child climbing a playground ladder toward monetary goals. He states the sign is generic so they are able to use later on when fundraising for playgrounds in other parks.

The committee agreed with the idea of eliminating some items from the original proposal to lower costs and using the hybrid surfacing option.

A motion was made by Brian Harrie and seconded by Bob Halverson to reconfigure the playground equipment and secure new pricing for the December Park Board meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

The family of Randy Berz contacted Brad, asking if they could donate a bench in his memory and have it located in Blyton Veteran's Park. Brad stated the bench that was there was severely damaged and was removed. Brad stated they would have had to replace it anyway. There is a concrete pad already there, so adding the bench could easily be done. City staff would assemble and install the bench.

A motion was made by Josh Lydon and seconded by Matthew Hoffland to approve the memorial bench donation for Randy Berz to be located in Blyton Veteran's Park. Motion carried 5-0.

Brad showed the current rates for 18 holes and nine holes for comparison. All options were per person fees. He presented three options for changes/increases in fees – a 10% increase, a proposal by Jim Church, Brian Harrie, and Chris Larsen, and a hybrid proposal. Using the new Club Caddy program, Brad pulled pricing and statistics. He stated there are a lot of unnecessary line items for charges that could be cleaned up, combined, or even eliminated.

There was extensive discussion on what items to increase and the definition and timeframes that dictate them. A few options were to change weekend rates to Friday through Sunday and holidays, leaving weekday rates on Monday through Thursday. They suggested allowing the Limited Play option to Monday through Thursday mornings, with weekend play being after 5:00 p.m. Off-peak season (before Memorial Day and after Labor Day) the weekend play could be after 3:00 p.m. Other options were no standing tee times on weekends (Friday through Sunday) and holidays, charging a few for a rider in a private cart, and eliminating all private carts.

Jim Church stated they need to simplify the fee schedule so as to produce better reports that will assist in addressing what rates to increase or leave the same. Committee members agreed that the fee schedule should be addressed and the rates be reworked and fine tuned for next month's meeting. It was also suggested to look at some of the invoicing issues that happened this year with the new program.

A motion was made by Josh Lydon and seconded by Matthew Hoffland to rework the golf course costs and clean up the rate sheet for the December Park Board meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

Jim Church requested a work chart of the Park and Recreation Department to see who is in charge of whom, who makes certain decisions, and what tasks each position performs. He was specifically addressing the early golf course closure this season and who made that decision.

Mark Sund stated that there is a work chart in place based on this committee's recommendation, but that he will have it available at next month's meeting.

A motion was made by Matthew Hoffland and seconded by Josh Lydon to adjourn at 7:24 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Lydon
City Clerk