

## SUMMARIZATION OF MINUTES FOR THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

On **Thursday, March 13, 2025**, the Fort Wayne Parks and the Recreation Department and the Board of Park Commissioners held their monthly Board meeting, in the Citizens Square, the City of Fort Wayne/Allen County City Council Discussion Chambers, Suite 30, 200 East Berry Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46802

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. Justin Shurley, President, Mr. Cory Miller, Vice President, Mr. Richard Briley, Commissioner, and Mrs. Jenna Jauch, Commissioner.

**PARKS STAFF PRESENT:** Steve McDaniel, Chuck Reddinger, Harlean Falls, Rhonda Berg, Mike Gore, Chuck Reddinger, Travis Roth, Stacy Haviland, Chad W. Shaw, David Weadock, April McCampbell, and Rob Hines.

***Others in attendance were:*** Rick Schuiteman – Director of Fort Wayne Zoo, Allen Donnelly, representing Genesis Forms, and Pat Stelte of the Allen County Public Library.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** After the Annual Organizational meeting, Board President Justin Shurley called the monthly Board meeting to order at 10:03 am.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Board President Shurley called for approval of the minutes from the Thursday, February 13, 2025 meeting. VP Cory Miller moved and Commissioner Richard Briley seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The motion was duly carried. On file are the monthly Board minutes.
3. **FORT WAYNE ZOO** - Richard Schuiteman, Director of Fort Wayne Zoo, came before, two weeks before the opening date of Friday, March 27, 2025 (for members only), and Noon to 5 pm on March 28. Director Schuiteman continued with a PowerPoint presentation on the attendance history, sighting the 3rd best year ever, revenue generated, the Mission, Vision and Key Commitments. The name change was positive, to highlight and welcome everyone, with or without children; with a goal to improve visitation beyond 30 miles, attract visitors of all ages, attract future Zoo Staff, and to emphasize the Zoo is for EVERYONE. Other highlights included preparation for the new season, a hiring fair, with another hiring fair planned for mid-May. New animal, entry look, along with the new name, new pathways and boardwalk with funding from AWS, guest experience, improved visual and quality experience, a (expanded) Nature play area, a Milking Cow with recycled water, Swan paddle boats

(suggested by Mayor Henry) will be added, and a new consumer event has been planed for the 2025 season.

4. **PAYROLL & COMMERCIAL VOUCHERS:** Deputy Director Rhonda Berg requested the Board's approval of payroll and commercial vouchers. Included in the report is the number of full-time and part-time employees, for pay periods ending 1/03/25, 1/17/25, and 1/31/25, account payables payment vouchers #1 to #10, with a Payroll Sub-Total of \$1,416,896.16. **NOTED** were various Parks Capital projects. The totals are in the Park General Fund, Park Trust Fund, Park Non-Reverting Operating Fund, Park Non-Reverting Capital Fund, Park Cumulative Building Fund, and Other City Funds, for Account Payables Total of \$1,290,549.35 and a total of \$2,707,445.51 Commissioner Jenna Jauch moved and Commissioner Richard Briley seconded the motion. The motion was duly carried. On file is signed recorded document, and the **January 2025** report.
5. **TRUST FUND DONATIONS:** Deputy Director Berg navigated the Board members through a listing of the donors, amounts, and purpose, along with donations, endowments, and grants for Spy Run Creek-LARE (Federal Grant received in November), from the AWS Foundation, for Inclusivity Upgrades, from PHP for the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory/Botanical Brew, from Melissa Koeneman/Nathaniel Cardelli/Michael Plebanski, for the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical -General Trust, Fort Wayne Park Foundation/Sharon Eisbart/Liz Melendez for the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory-Showcase Trust, Indiana Donor Network, for the 233W Main Street Community Center-Santa's Workshop Sponsor, Fort Wayne/Allen County Community Center Foundation, Inc./Patti Davis/JS Exteriors LLC, for 233 W Main Street Community Center-Winterval, Absolute Angels, to 233 W Main St., Community Center, Optimist Club of Fort Wayne, to the Albert L. Jennings Center/Weisser Park Youth Center-Christmas Gifts, Monica & Russell Jehl/George & Sandra Kirby, to the LSA, Registration/Web Donations/Shakia Causey/Rebecca Young to the Pavilions, and Thomas Solosky, to the 233 W Main Street Community Center; all received as of **January 2025, \$196,025. 77.** the Board unanimously approved the Trust Fund Donations report by acclamation. On file is the January 2025 Trust Fund Donations report.
6. **PARK PRIORITIES:** Deputy Director of Planning and Landscape, Chad Shaw updated the Board on several more significant projects, including construction and design, for the following; Riverfront Phase II, with machines on site, moving soil, in contact with Hagerman, coordination efforts continue with all areas involved. The Treeline District design team incorporated comments received through Public Input into three conceptual designs, working through design development. Based on Public Input and Open-House meetings on the Foster Park Entrance Project, the design team is progressing with suggested changes and the project timeline. The Indian Village restoration and the floodwall work continue with City Utilities in Foster Park. Construction continues in the Packard Park project with concrete work. Brewer Park project continues with paths, layouts, the splashpad during the good weather, and paving.
7. **AGREEMENTS / FEES/ RESOLUTIONS / POLICY APPROVALS:**

A. *Annual Mother's Day Plant Sale Fee Recommendations - Haviland* VP Miller moved and Commissioner Jauch seconded the motion to accept the fee recommendation for the only annual Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory Mother's Day 2025 Plant Sale. The motion was duly carried. On file are the unique price points, a list of the items, prices, and fee recommendations.

B. *Fee Recommendations for the Summer 20205 Youth Camp Program - Reddinger* Commissioner Briley moved and Commissioner Jauch seconded the motion to approve the Summer – June through August 2025 Youth Camp programs, services, highlighting Franke Park Day Camp, Salomon Farm Farmin Fun Day Camp, PODS (Positive Outdoor Days of Summer) and the Fort Wayne Zoo Camp, along with the authority to approve unforeseen circumstances such as health emergencies, severe weather etc. The motion was duly carried. On file are the fee recommendations and projected results/outcomes for the Summer 2025 Youth Camp Programs.

**8. BIDS / CONTRACT / CHANGE ORDER APPROVALS:**

*2025 Vehicle and Equipment Purchase Lease– Roth* Commissioner Jauch moved and Commissioner Briley seconded the motion to approve the purchase of equipment, unique tools for Forestry, Riparian, and Salomon Farm Park, an attachment to speed up the mulching process in the Landscape area, the last of the 3-year purchase for Motorola Radio replacement, and vehicle purchase lease. The motion was duly carried. On file are the photo and listing from the Fleet Department, and the signed approval form.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no Public Comments during this meeting.

**DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:** Director McDaniel and the Deputy Directors reported the following:

- ✚ The 2025 Department Goals were sent electronically, to each Commissioner, with hard copies distributed
- ✚ The Annual All Employee held in the McMillen Family Pavilion highlights and a photo was shared with all of the Commissioners
- ✚ Mr. **Rene Franco Ayala**, maintenance work in the McMillen Park Community Center, is the receipt of the Employee of the Year award for 2024
- ✚ Our Golf Course Staff are in training and will open March 22, weather permitting
- ✚ We have started the removable of the playground, with the installation of the Waynedale Park playground, as featured on the front page of the Journal Gazette newspaper today
- ✚ Wrapping up annual cleaning of pavilions and facilities
- ✚ The Marketing Team is working on the 2024 Annual Report and continues with flyers and participating in Job Fairs

- ✚ Working closely with the HR Department's Recruitment Specialist
- ✚ The Headwaters Park (HWP) Ice Skating program is winding down, with the dismantling of equipment and storing of ice skates
- ✚ Preparing for festivals in HWP
- ✚ Youth Centers are preparing for activities and programming during Spring Break
- ✚ The Community Center (233 W Main) will host a Youth Book Swap
- ✚ Promoting the Spring Travel Program
- ✚ The Foellinger Outdoor Theatre Concert season is in the planning and scheduling process
- ✚ Joyce Enterline has filed the Office Manager position
- ✚ In February, the Greenhouse has sown 26,000 seeds for the Annual Plant Sale and Showcase, and 706 plants were provided for the Annual Home & Garden Show in the Memorial Coliseum
- ✚ All teams in the Landscape division are involved in clean-ups and preparing for Spring
- ✚ One new Gardner has been hired, along with a new employee in the Riparian division, and two full-time positions have been filed in the Forestry division
- ✚ The Floor is Lava exhibit visitation is up this year. The Color In Motion Live Butterfly Exhibit will open on April 15<sup>th</sup>
- ✚ The Forestry division has completed the Street inventory, under the direction of Derek Veit, with 621 trees in the Downtown area that have tree grates
- ✚ The Botanical Conservatory will host the popular Great Train Connection March 14-15
- ✚ We are still hiring, and many job opportunities for those aged 16 years and older, are listed at [www.fortwayneparks.org](http://www.fortwayneparks.org)
- ✚ The next scheduled meeting for the Board of Park Commissioners will be on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 10:00 am – **McMillen Family Pavilion**, in Franke Park, near the bridge, off Goshen Road.

**COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS:** Board President Shurley inquired about the remote-control Lawnmower, purchased in 2024, allowing the Riparian division to use it where a ride-on mower would be unsafe. Commissioner Jauch shared comments on her visits to the Indoor Playground in the McMillen Park Community Center, the amazing smile of Mr. Rene Ayala, and pleasant encounters.

No further business was to come before the Board of Park Commissioners, on Thursday, March 13, 2025, in the Citizens Square Building, City of Fort Wayne/Allen County, City Council Discussion Room (garden level) Suite 30, 200 East Berry Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46802. At 10:58 am, the meeting was adjourned.

**CITY OF FORT WAYNE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**

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**Justin Shurley, President**

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**Cory Miller, Vice-President**

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**Richard Briley, Commissioner**

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**Jenna Jauch, Commissioner**

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**Steve McDaniel, Director/Board Secretary**

All documentation, correspondence, and prints/site plans presented at this meeting are on file in the office of the Parks and Recreation Department. This meeting was recorded by the Park staff and videotaped by Pat Stelte, Government Access Coordinator, in Television Services of the Allen County Public Library.

**Here is the link to the Thursday, March 13, 2025 meeting online:**

<https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=0NWbJzotoepRVtvh>