



**TWO
RIVERS**
WISCONSIN

ADVISORY RECREATION BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Koska Room - Community House
1520 17th Street, Two Rivers, WI 54241

MINUTES

1. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Council Rep Scott Stechmesser, Daniel Cortte, Chris Eggert-Rosenthal, Tom Lawler, Jennifer Watry, Doug Brandt-Council Rep, Jennifer Watry ABSENT: Erin Lamal, Jason Scharping, Travis Kadow, Erin Lamal

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Dan Cortte, Seconded by Tom Lawler.

3. CORRESPONDENCE - None

4. COMMENTS FOR THE PUBLIC (Limited to 3 minutes each)

Marilee Hirvela congratulated the Parks & Recreation Department on a job well done during the recent storm cleanup efforts. She also expressed appreciation that the geraniums were planted in the cemetery.

Marilee commented on the perennial pilot program in Central Park, noting she hopes the plants will be placed in areas that receive more sunlight. She stated that perennials can be sensitive to sun versus shade conditions and expressed concern regarding who is selecting the plants and the level of maintenance and care that will be required. She also shared that she believes the pilot program should continue for more than one year.

Marilee also asked questions regarding the Lakeshore Community Foundation and whether the City would become involved with the organization for the Perpetual Care Flower Program. Her questions included whether participation could be discontinued in the future and what fees would be associated with the program.

Rusty Walesh stated that he had heard the perpetual care flower program may be discontinued and was interested in hearing more discussion about it during the meeting. Later in the meeting, Rusty shared how successful their volleyball tournament has been and noted that part of that success is due to the Community House facilities.

Paige Gerroll provided the Recreation Director with a list of deer-resistant perennials and recommendations on which plants would perform best in the cemetery setting.

Shawntel Hoffman voiced concerns that perennials may have a shorter bloom period. She commented that geraniums are very hardy plants and bloom for an extended period of time.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of 2027 Adventure Tri-Athlon Idea

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of creating a fun race event that would fit within the scope of the department, promote the City of Two Rivers, and serve as a fundraiser for department operations. The event would be fee-based to help reduce the need for sponsorships.

A proposed multi-sport race concept was discussed, including biking, trail running, and kayaking segments. Board members asked questions regarding staffing needs. It was noted that NEWP would assist with the water safety portion for the kayak segment, and staff hope to partner with an additional volunteer group as well. Due to the nature of the race, staffing needs are expected to be minimal.

It was also noted that similar races have become very popular in the Sheboygan area because they focus more on fun and participation rather than competition, making them a good introduction for first-time triathlon participants.

General board support was expressed for exploring an event of this nature further.

B. Discussion of Cemetery Perennial Flower Trial

- a. There are no ordinance changes being suggested at this time.
- b. The 2026 perpetual flower program will continue as planned.
- c. City Council has made no decisions regarding working with the Lakeshore Community Foundation.

Clarification was made that the department has a very motivated and knowledgeable volunteer assisting with additional perennial plantings in Central Park due to budget cutbacks affecting landscaping services this year.

It was also explained that a small section in Cemetery Section G, where no graves are currently located, has been marked off to test perennial plantings in a sunny area. The pilot area will allow cemetery staff to evaluate how the plants grow and practice mowing and maintenance around them during the trial program.

C. Discussion of cemetery tree planting and turf grass reduction idea

The Parks & Recreation Department is considering applying for a grant opportunity that would not require a financial match from the City. The grant would allow the department to explore long-term planning concepts for the cemetery aimed at reducing operating costs, increasing community benefit, and supporting sustainability efforts.

Concepts discussed included reducing some turf grass areas and replacing them with well-maintained and curated native plant zones, along with additional trees and walking paths to promote the area as a quiet recreational space.

Board discussion included questions regarding whether the concept could potentially add costs rather than reduce them, as well as concerns about where current mulch, tree, and snow piles would be relocated if changes were made to existing turf areas. Other board members expressed interest in exploring the idea further since the planning effort would come at no cost to the City through the grant opportunity.

7. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

a. Program and Event Updates

Senior Center: See attached presentation for detailed April registration numbers and dates. May Events: Holland Tulip Time Trip, Senior Center Rummage Sale, Tie Blanket Work session, Rock Painting class, and Chatting with the Chiefs.

Programs:

- **Softball:** 63 participants across 5 teams (Ponytail, Single A, Double A); games begin this week.
- **Baseball:** 60 participants across 5 teams (Peanut, Peewee, PONY); games begin next week.
- **T-Ball:** 39 participants (5/6 program) and 30 participants (4K program).
- **Youth Nights:** Held at TRHS varsity games (Softball 5/12, Baseball 5/14).
- **Registration:** Open for summer soccer camps, 4-week sports camps, and adult yoga.
- **Equipment:** Two new pitching machines purchased for baseball and softball programs.
- **Farmers Market:** 33 vendors, highest participation to date.
- **Youth Track:** 50 participants; program concluded this week.
- **Summer School Swimming:** 136 participants.
- **Summer Dance:** Registration is open.

Special Events:

New this year: Battle of the Bars event to help raise funds for the 4th of July fireworks, 50-Year Time Capsule Opening scheduled for July 4, Bites on the Beach food truck rally planned for August 22 at the beach.

b. Parks and Facilities Updates

Storm (5/17/26) Damage Update: A conservative estimate indicates the loss of over 200 trees throughout Parks & Recreation parks and properties. Additional damage was reported to facilities including the Vietnam Ballfield dugout, the Magee green space storage building, and several fences. Total damages are estimated to exceed \$100,000.

c. Planning and Grants Updates

Save the dates were shared for upcoming planning and grant-related opportunities:

8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE ADVISORY RECREATION BOARD MEETINGS

None

9. NEXT MEETING - June 10, 2026

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Dan Cortte, Seconded by Jennifer Watry.

Respectfully submitted, Laura Hooper, Parks & Recreation Office Manager



**TWO
RIVERS**
WISCONSIN

Advisory Recreation Board Meeting
5/20/26



Mike Mathis, Director of Parks and Recreation

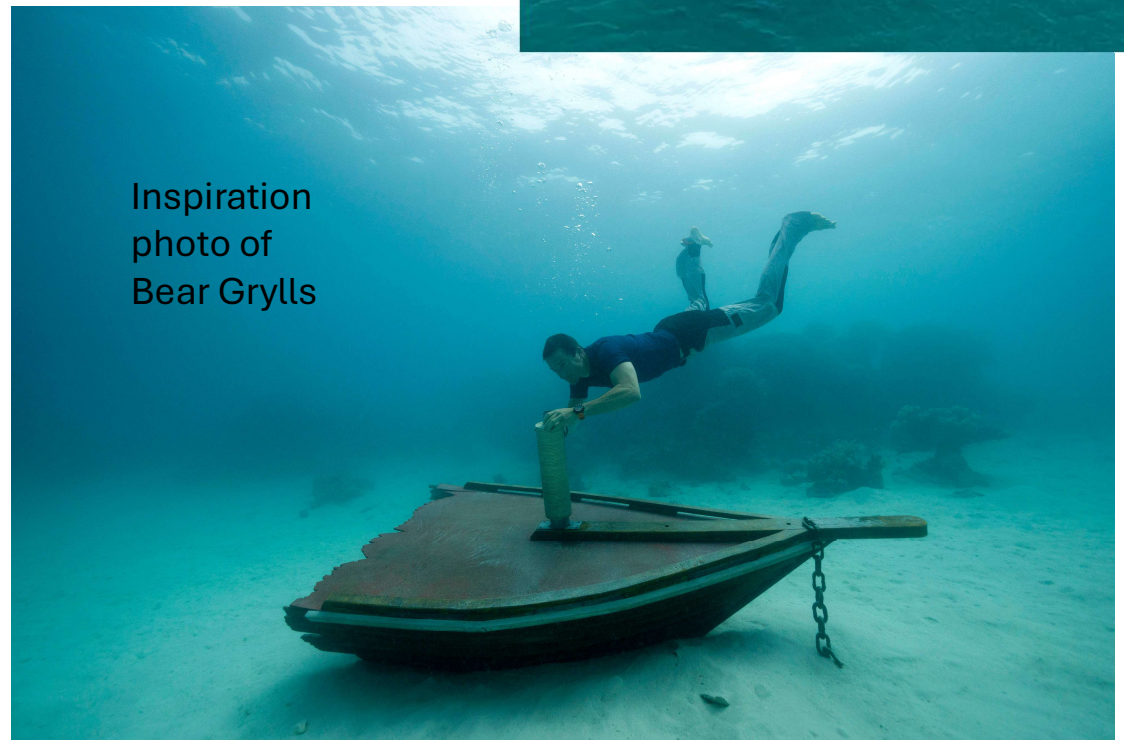
Adventure Tri-Athlon Idea

- Can we create a fun race, that fits within the scope of our department, promotes Two Rivers, and raise funds for our operations?
- Bike ~20 miles - Trail Run ~4-5 miles - Paddle ~ 2-3 miles
 - Start at Neshotah Beach
 - Bike to Point Beach State Park Concession Stand
 - Run ~1 mile on the beach to the Continental Shipwreck
 - 1 team member paddles ¼ mile to shipwreck
 - Run back to State Park
 - Bike back to Neshotah
 - Run to Veteran's Park Boat Launch
 - Canoe or kayak 2-3 miles
 - Run back to Neshotah Beach for finish



Two Rivers Adventure Race

- Teams must gather checkpoint medallions from the Continental Shipwreck, Roger St. Lighthouse, State Park woods, south pier, etc.
- Maybe early June 2027?
- Open to individuals and teams
- Examples
 - <https://maumeetriadventure.com/race.net/>
 - <https://www.wisconsinadventureracingseries.com/>
 - <https://miadventureracing.com/>





Cemetery Perennial Flower Trial

Perennial Flower Trial

- Plots are laid out
- Species are selected
- Planting will take place in late May or early June

Other Perpetual Care Flower Notes

- Perpetual care flowers are full funded and being planted as planned for 2026.
- No ordinance changes are being suggested at this time.
- City Council decided to wait until budget season to discuss a partnership with the Lakeshore Community Foundation, 2027 funding for flowers, and any potential fundraising.

Plants:

- Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) Ht: 1-2' Spread: 1' Part-full shade Clumping shape, Color: purple-pink Blooms: May-June
- White Woodland Aster (*Aster divaricates*) Ht: 2-4' Spread: 1' Part-full shade Upright habit, Color: purple-blue Blooms: August-September
- Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*) Ht: 1-3' Spread: 1-3' Sun/part-shade, Color: white Blooms: June - September Mounding-Spreading habit
- Sky Blue Aster (*Aster aureus*) Ht: 2-3' Spread: 3' Sun/part-shade Spreading clumps, Color: blue-purple Blooms: August - October
- Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) Ht: 1-3' Spread: 1' Sun/part-shade Clumping habit, Color: yellow-orange Blooms: May - June
- Wild Stonecrop (*Sedum ternatum*) Ht: 6" - 1' Spread: 1' Part-shade Spreading ground cover, Color: white Blooms: May-June

Shrubs:

- Bush Cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruitcosa*) Ht: 3 - 4' Spread: 3-5' Sun/part-shade low spreading, Color: yellow Blooms: June - September
- New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus Americans*) Ht: 2-3" Spread: 3-4' Sun/part-shade low mounding, Color: white Blooms: July - August
- Dwarf Bush Honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*) Ht: 2-4' Spread: 4-5' Sun/part-shade, Color: yellow-orange Blooms: June - July Low mounding
- Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) Ht: 6-12" low spreading nature Sun, Color: white-pink Blooms: April - June

Grasses:

- Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) Ht: 2-4' Spread: 18" Sun Mounding shape, Color: green Blooms: August - September
- Purple Lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*) Ht: 2' Spread: 2' Sun/part-shade

Clumping shape, Color: purple-pink Blooms: July - September

Groundcover:

- Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*) Ht: 6-12", Part-shade, low spreading, Color: green with small white flowers Blooms: April - May
- Big Leaf Aster (*Eurybia marcophylla*) Ht: 12-36" Spread: 18-24" Part-Shade Low Spreading, Color: white/purple Blooms: August - September
- Meadow Anemone (*Anemone canadensis*) Ht: 12-24" low spreading nature Sun/part-shade, Color: white Bloom: May - June
- Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*) Ht: 12-16" clumping spreading nature Sun/part-shade, Color: pink Bloom: April - June
- Alpine Violet (*Viola labradorica*) Ht: 2-4" clumping spreading nature Sun/part-shade, Color: violet Bloom: June - August
- Wild Petunia (*Ruella humilis*) Ht: 1-2 ft spreading mounding nature Sun/part-shade, Color: pink Bloom: June - September
- Wine Cups (*Callirhoe involucrata*) Ht: 6-12" spreading nature Sun, Color: magenta Blooms: May - September
- Mist Flower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) Ht: 1-3 Ft. spreading mounding nature Sun/part-shade Color: purple Blooms: June - October
- Pearly Everlasting

New Cemetery 37 acres – 15 acres of turf grass without graves or trees

Old Cemetery 10 acres

Cemetery Initiative

P&R is considering leading long-term planning for the cemetery that will reduce operating costs, increase community benefit, support sustainability, and preserve heritage.

Ideas

- Reduce turf grass areas with a variety of well **maintained and curated** native zones
- Plant groves of trees
- Reconfigure paths and drives
- Walking path
- Promote **quiet** recreation such as walking, birding, and dog walking



<https://www.chicagobotanic.org/blog/plant-science-conservation/how-scientists-are-rethinking-lawns>

RETHINKING LAWNS

Testing Options for Alternatives to the Standard Mowed Grass

Adding up the mowing, watering & weeding lawn takes, it's a lot for people & the environment. Lawns are the largest irrigated crop in America at 63,000 square miles. This experiment is testing out some options for imagining what lawns could become.



Low-Growing Fescue Grass

Fine fescue grass may not be native, but it looks "normal" In theory, it grows slower & shorter, meaning less mowing.

Non-Native Plants

Less Mowing

White Clover Mixes

Of our region's weeds, white clover is considered a happy medium between something people AND bees can like. Clover also helps soil by pulling nutrients into the soil.

Non-Native Plants

Pollinator Friendly

Native Lawn

Our sedge lawn mix combines three species native to our region. In theory, they have deeper roots, need less water, and supports native species.

Native Plants

Less Mowing

Native Mini Meadow

Our custom mix of native grasses & wildflowers that our local pollinators love. Plants were selected because they tend to be short, almost like a tall lawn.

Native Plants

Less Mowing

Pollinator Friendly

Short Prairie

We know prairie is great for pollinators and soils. The problem is people don't want tall plants for their yards! We have prairie here to compare with our other plots.

Native Plants

Less Mowing

Pollinator Friendly





















Dotted line = walking path

Next Steps

- Identify funding to bring in a landscape architect with experience in cemeteries and sustainable landscaping
 - Facilitate community feedback to inform design
- Set-up a bus trip for staff and stakeholders to view other example sites and learn more
- Other needs/things to consider...
 - Learn how to install and maintain these areas
 - Train staff on these methods
 - Develop long-term cost savings estimates
 - Find potential funding sources

Desired Outcomes

- Reduce operating costs
- Increase community recreational benefit
- Support environmental sustainability
- Preserve heritage
- Become a model for how other communities can manage parks and cemeteries

Parks and Recreation Storm Damage Report

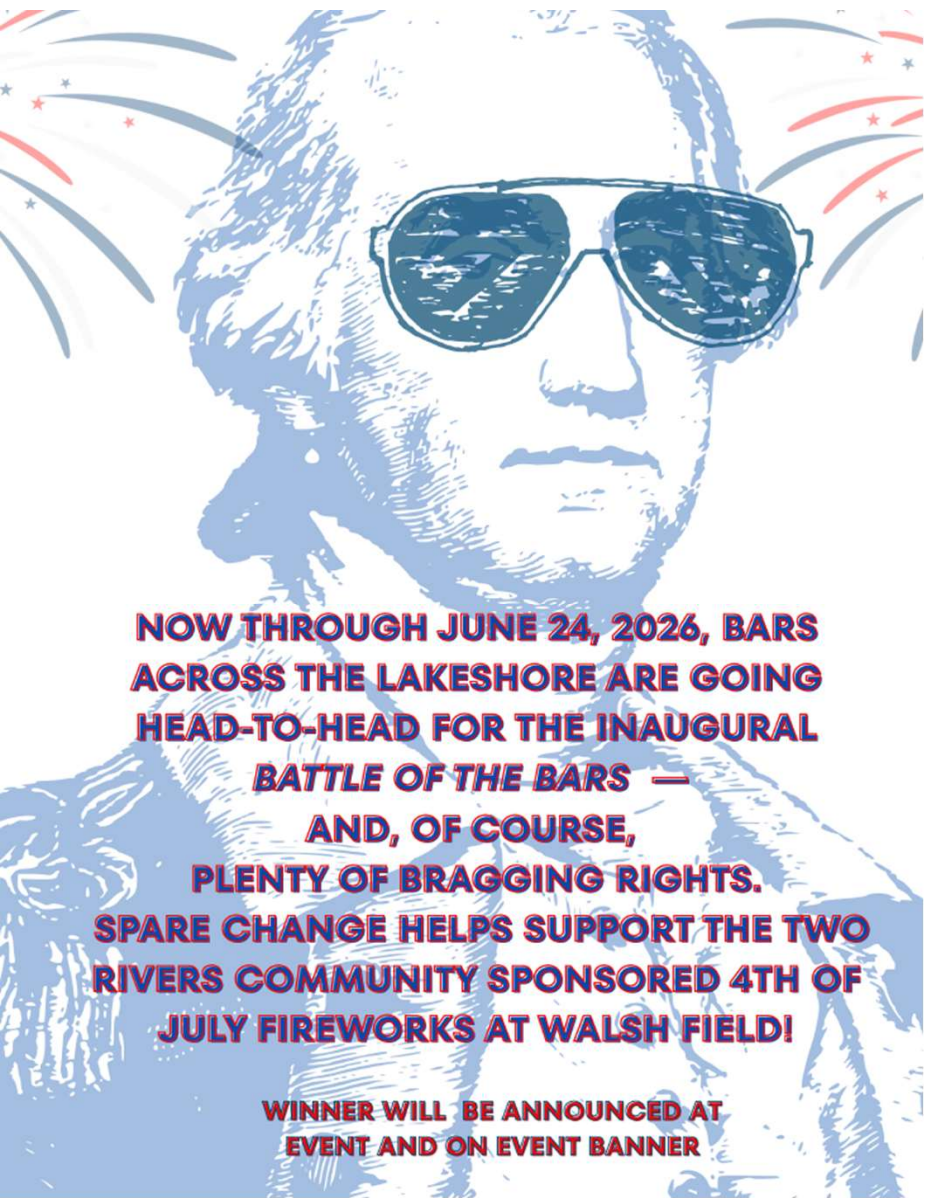
Tree Losses

Parks & Cemeteries = 78 trees			
Terrace Trees = TBD, ~ 30-40			
Picnic Hill Woods = TB, ~40-50			
Facility Damage			Repair Estimate
Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Ballfields			\$75,000 - \$100,000 +
Magee Elementary Sports Fields, Storage Building			\$5,000 +
Neshotah Park Horseshoe Pits, Fence Damage			\$750
Pioneer Rest Cemetery, Fence Damage			\$750
Zander Park Dog Park, Fence Damage			\$500
Cemeteries, Headstones			TBD









**NOW THROUGH JUNE 24, 2026, BARS
ACROSS THE LAKESHORE ARE GOING
HEAD-TO-HEAD FOR THE INAUGURAL
BATTLE OF THE BARS —**

AND, OF COURSE,

PLENTY OF BRAGGING RIGHTS.

**SPARE CHANGE HELPS SUPPORT THE TWO
RIVERS COMMUNITY SPONSORED 4TH OF
JULY FIREWORKS AT WALSH FIELD!**

**WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT
EVENT AND ON EVENT BANNER**

- The Farmer's Market kicked off this past Saturday with 33 vendors/members.
- Youth Track wraps up today (5/20/26) after 8 sessions with 50 participants at Magee Elementary School.
- Summer School Swim begins in June, with 136 participants registered for 2 sessions totaling 5-weeks.
- We are currently working with Dan Shambeau to organize a Youth Golf Clinic this July at Eastwin Valley Golf Course. The planned 3-day camp will be open to grades 5–8.
- Registration is now open for the 8-week All Stars Summer Dance Program for grades 4K–8.

4TH *Of* JULY

TIME CAPSULE
OPENING

1976-2026

1:00-2:00PM

Date: Saturday, July 4

*Rain Date Sunday, July 5

Location: Central Park West
1700 Washington St, Two Rivers, WI



BITES ON THE BEACH

SAVE THE DATE

AUGUST 22, 2026 **TIME 12-6PM** **NESHOTAH BEACH**

THE SHORELINE SOCIAL: FOOD TRUCKS-MUSIC-FUN
Contact Rebeccah for more information at rebhan@two-rivers.org

@treconnect.com

TWO RIVERS PARKS & RECREATION

The poster features a vibrant beach scene with a red and green food truck, a beach chair, a sandcastle, and a seagull. The background is a light blue sky with clouds and a green sea. The text is in bold, sans-serif fonts, and the overall design is colorful and festive.

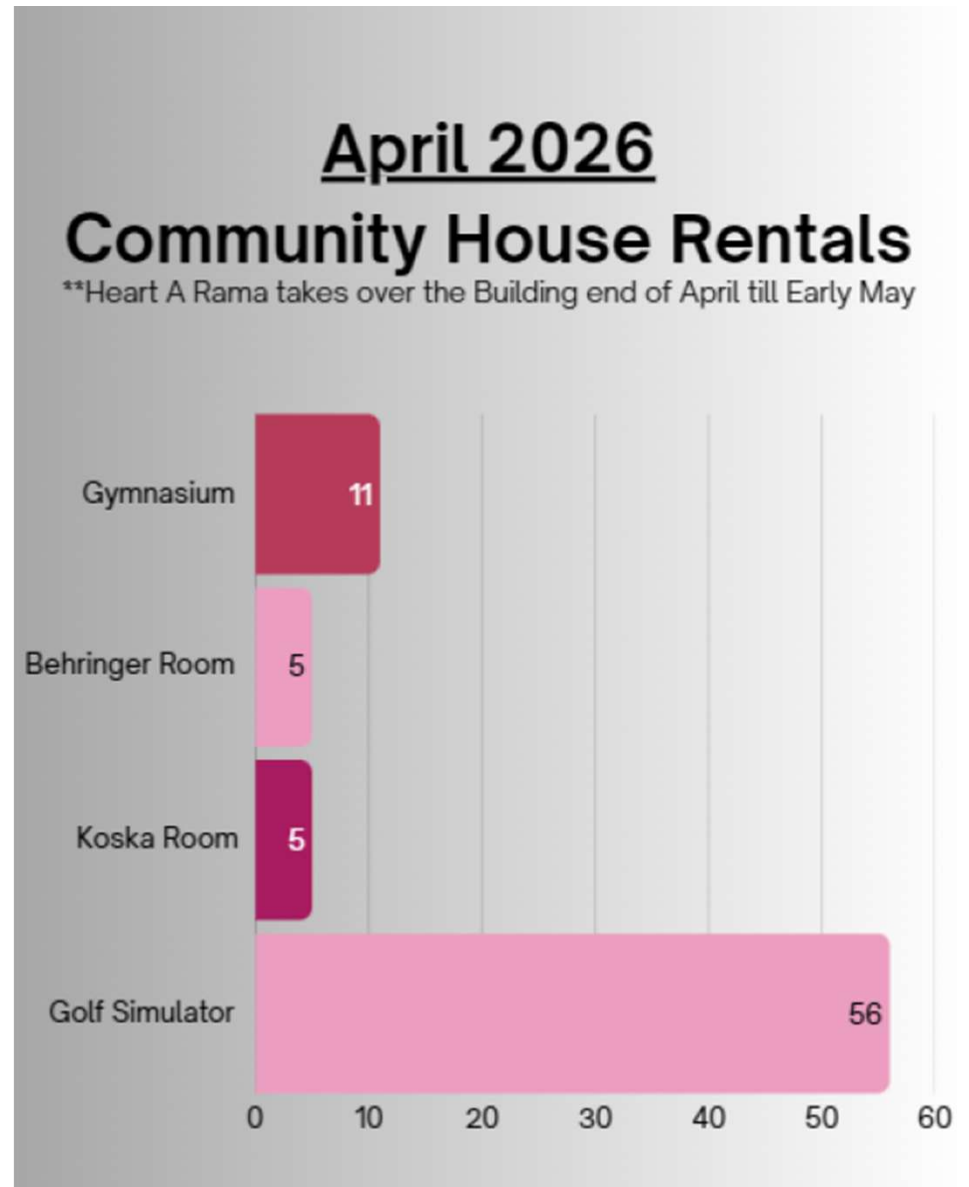
April Surveys

- 6 Customer Service Survey
- 0 Post Rental Survey – Shelters
- 2 Post Rental Survey – Facilities
- 3 Post Rental Survey - Golf Simulator

April Financial Aid - 1 new application (summer swim), 4 Total Received so far

Boat Launch Passes - 2026
Sales have begun - 47 sold

Shelter - 2026 Sales have begun



Youth Recreation

- Softball: We have 63 girls participating across five teams (one Ponytail, two Single A, and two Double A) competing in the Manitowoc MYBA league. Games begin this week.
- Baseball: We have 60 boys participating across five teams (two Peanut, two Peewee, and one PONY) competing in the Manitowoc County Baseball League. Games begin next week.
- T-Ball: Our 5/6-year-old program has 39 participants, and our 4K program has 30 participants.
- Youth Nights: We successfully hosted youth nights at the Two Rivers High School varsity games on May 12th for softball and May 14th for baseball.
- Registration: Enrollment remains open for our summer soccer camps, four-week sports camps, and adult yoga classes.
- Equipment: We have purchased two new pitching machines for our baseball and softball teams to utilize.





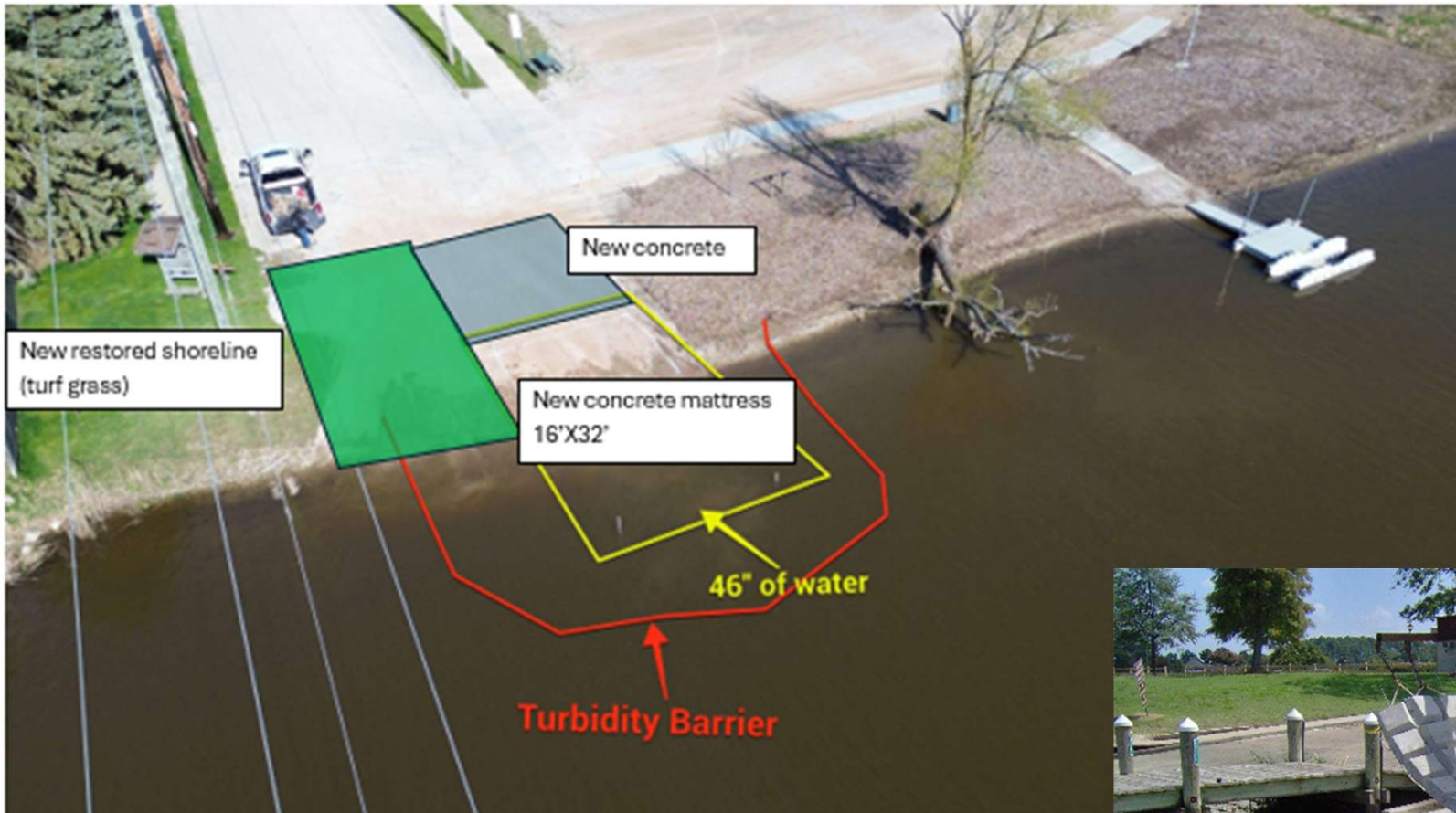
Senior Center – April 2026

- Hello I am Here: 1,291
- Fitness: 481
 - Decrease in numbers due to 2 weeks of HAR in the building so 8+ classes were cancelled.
 - Yoga Retreat: went well, 14 Senior attended for 3 days.
 - Golf Simulator: 18: All Slots filled and a hole in one!
- Congregate Lunch: 132
- Recreational Programming: 369
- TRUST: 266
- Home Delivered Meals: 1480
- Notable events:
 - The first Hole-in -one for the Senior Center
 - Stepping On Workshop has finished
 - Door County Yoga Retreat is a success!
- Upcoming Events
 - Holland Tulip Time Trip 5.9.26
 - Senior Center Rummage Sale 5.20-5.21
 - Tiny Free Pantry Collection
 - Tie Blanket work session 5.13
 - Rock Painting Class
 - Chatting with the Chiefs 5.6.25





Ramp extension coming soon.





Save the Dates

- Recreation Economy for Rural Communities
 - September 1st & 2nd
- Youth Sports Summit
 - November 4th – 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm