

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION

Monday, June 15, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

The Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission met on the above date and time. The following members were present: Jennifer Clayton, Julie Chapman, Emily Lessner, Brad Clark, as well as Andrea Draeger, Ryan Thurow, Ryan Schmidt, and several members of the public.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

Jennifer Clayton moved to approve the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry minutes from June 1, 2026 as presented, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

3. Review and Approval of Financial Reports

Updated percentage breakdowns will be included at the next meeting. Emily Lessner moved to approve the financial reports as presented, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

4. Citizens to be Heard

Dave Wetzel, Mary Knoll Lane, current member of the Watertown Tennis Association, requested consideration of waiving or reducing facility fees. He highlighted the association's nominal membership structure and prior contributions toward tennis facilities and improvements at BQ courts, including windscreens, walkway improvements, overhead sunscreen installation, and court repairs.

Laura Nechkash, Watertown Tennis Association, expressed concern regarding declining membership and overall participation levels. She requested full waiver or reduction of fees in consideration of prior fundraising efforts and current financial strain on the organization.

Gary, President of Bread and Roses community meal program, requested waiver of facility fees for upcoming programming this summer.

5. Business

A. Review and take action: elect president

Ryan Schmidt recommended tabling the item due to timing. Brad Clark moved to table, seconded by Jennifer Clayton, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

B. Review and take action: updated fees and schedule policy

Ryan Schmidt noted insufficient time to complete updates to the fee schedule and recommended tabling. Commission reiterated prior direction to revisit for consistency and policy clarity, particularly regarding nonprofit use. Emily Lessner moved to table to the next meeting, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

C. Review and take action: 2026 YMCA facility use agreement and waiver of fees

Ryan Schmidt recommended applying the 2025 fee structure due to the absence of an updated schedule and inconsistent communication. Emily Lessner moved to approve payment of 30% of fees for 2026, seconded by Brad Clark, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

D. Review and take action: acceptance of mosquito spray donation

Ryan Schmidt recommended accepting the donated service due to its operational benefit to park use and court maintenance. Discussion included environmental concerns raised by Julie regarding chemicals and pollinators, and Meredith Degner noted the spraying schedule and necessity for maintaining playable courts. Jennifer Clayton moved to accept the donation, seconded by Emily Lessner and carried by unanimous voice vote.

E. Review and take action: Webster elementary school donation

The Commission reviewed a letter for a \$500 donation from Webster Elementary School to support department programming. Brad Clark moved to approve the donation, seconded by Emily Lessner, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

F. Review and take action: facility use agreement - volleyball association

Ryan Schmidt recommended waiving facility fees for the 2026 season due to the organization's valued partnership, with an MOU to be developed for future use next year. Emily Lessner moved to approve the waiver for 2026, seconded by Brad Clark, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

G. Review and take action: facility use agreement - tennis association

Ryan Schmidt recommended waiving fees for 2026 due to the organization's long-standing partnership, with an MOU to be developed for future use next year. Julie Chapman moved to approve the waiver for 2026, seconded by Jennifer Clayton, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

H. Review and take action: facility use agreement - can you hear me now

Agreement for ear wax removal service from Can You Hear Me Now is pending completion of city contract review process. Brad Clark moved to approve pending contract completion, seconded by Emily Lessner, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

I. Review and take action: 2026 park rental application and waiver of fees - Watertown municipal band

Ryan Schmidt reviewed the request and recommended waiver of fees for the current year, with future inclusion under a standardized rental/MOU structure. Julie Chapman moved to approve, seconded by Jennifer Clayton, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

J. Review and take action: 2026 park rental application and waiver of fees - Bread & Roses community meal program

Request reviewed for three dates for community meal programming. Clarification noted this use differs from “Sandwiches in the Park” programming. Brad Clark moved to approve waiver of rental fees for 2026, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

K. Review and take action: 2026 park rental application and waiver of fees - Watertown Family Connections

Request for free playgroup programming in the park through Watertown Family Connections. Julie Chapman moved to waive fees for 2026, seconded by Brad Clark, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

L. Review and take action: 2026 park rental application and waiver of fees - Sandwiches in the park

Request for free summer meals in the park, park rental waiver. Brad Clark moved to waive fees for 2026, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

M. Review and take action: 2026 waiver of fees for Bentzin town square rental - August 9, 2026

Request to hold service at Bentzin Family Town Square with waiver of rental fee; applicant would still be responsible for amplified sound permit and other applicable fees. Discussion included clarification regarding Meridian barrier requirements and timing of reservation relative to policy updates. Ryan Schmidt recommended waiving the rental fee and honoring pricing at the time of reservation, with all other fees applicable. Jennifer Clayton moved to approve the recommendation, seconded by Emily Lessner, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

N. Review and take action: 2026 summer hangout special event & waiver of fees

Public Safety Committee reviewed and approved the event with stipulation that barriers be utilized during their meeting the evening before the event. Staff recommended not waiving fees due to the private business nature of the event and associated operational costs. Brad Clark moved to deny waiver of fees, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

O. Review and take action: Fannie P. Lewis Park Improvements from Watertown Leadership Class of 2026

Nathan from Watertown Leadership (Chamber of Commerce) presented a project funded through community donations and volunteer fundraising efforts. Proposed improvements include gazebo cleaning and staining, landscaping enhancements, and installation of a water fountain. Staff noted coordination will be required with shoreline improvement work and overall project timing. Placement of the water fountain remains under review. Brad Clark moved to approve acceptance of the donation under city guidance, seconded by Jennifer Clayton, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

6. Director's Report

A. Parks and forestry program and maintenance updates

- Parks: Poblocki has begun work at Brandt-Quirk tennis courts with anticipated completion around July 15.
- Forestry: Ongoing tree planting; minor storm-related tree and limb damage reported.
- Aquatics: Pool opened June 13; staffing is stable and trained; credit card payments now accepted.

B. Recreation program updates

- Recreation programming includes youth baseball beginning and continuing through July; RRDC relocated temporarily due to weather impacts. Yoga in the Square has begun for the season, and fitness classes remain strong. Fall program registration opens June 29.

C. Senior Center and enrichment program and building project updates

- Senior & Community Center: Elevator and front door projects are ongoing. Upcoming events include the Senior Center cookout fundraiser (6/26), Kids Fest @ Bentzin Family Town Square (7/12), and Senior Citizen Day (8/19).
- Senior and enrichment programming continues with strong participation, including upcoming trips and previous events such as Senior Care Fair (May 13), Spring Fling volunteer recognition (April 29), family programming (Ties & Tiaras Night), and seasonal fundraisers.

7. Adjournment

Julie Chapman moved to adjourn at 5:18 p.m., seconded by Emily Lessner, and carried by unanimous voice vote. Next meeting date: July 20, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Draeger

Senior Center, Enrichment, and Office Manager

Note: These minutes are uncorrected, and any corrections made thereto will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.