Mecosta County Park Commission
Commission Meeting

The April 21, 2026, Commission Meeting of the Mecosta County Park Commission was called to order at the Mecosta County Services Building at 5:00 p.m. by the Commission Chairman, Mr. Stanek.

1. **Roll Call**
   Members Present: Mrs. Bradstrom, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Hatkowski, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lambrix, Ms. Miller, Mr. Vogel, Mr. Zimmerman, and Mr. Stanek
   Members Absent: Mrs. Strong
   Others Present: Jeff Abel – Superintendent, Taylor Jutila – Operations Director, Jamie McConnell – Operations Manager, Brenda Goldammer – HR, Marketing and Events, and Kimberly Erickson – Administrative Office Clerk

2. **Approval of Agenda**
   Addition to agenda 6. C – Paris Park fire and approvals. The agenda was approved with the addition to section 6. C.

3. **Approval of Minutes**
   Mrs. Bradstrom motion, supported by Mr. Vogel to approve the minutes of the March 17th, 2026 Park Commission meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Public Comment**
   None

5. **Reports and Updates**
   a. **Superintendent's Update**
   - **Davis Bridge Project –** The timeline was sent out last week related to the completion of this project.
   - **Consumers Dam Sales Updates –** As I have received updates, I have been e-mailing them out to the Commission members.
   - **Merrill Gorrel Docks –** Maintenance has installed skid pier launch docks on both the Merrill and Gorrel sides of the park and we are hopeful they will be considered an improvement to the park visitors. Additional floats have been added to the fishing platform as well.
   - **Merrill Pavilion Concrete Floor –** Was completed and looks great!
   - **Electric Outlets FGC –** Half of the cabins at the Family Group Camp have had electric outlets installed. The contractor will be returning to install outlets on the remaining 3 cabins.
   - **School Section Cabin –** Was moved to the concrete pad within the park. The electricians have completed the electric hook-up. Furniture, mattresses, mini-fridge, and microwave are at the park and ready for installation into the cabin.

- **Pontoon Boat –** We had the engine tuned up with a new fuel pump installed. We stripped all of the old furniture off the deck to get it out of the way.
- **Paris Fish Pond –** We have relocated all of the fish from the front pond and are in process of cleaning out the pond, so we can move the fish back in prior to the park opening for this season.
- **Brower Manager Trailer –** We completed some light painting, replaced a toilet and did some additional touch-up work. The trailer needs some additional bathroom work and to have the carpeting replaced soon. We do not have anyone residing in the trailer this season currently, so we may be able to work on this periodically throughout the year.
- **Starlink Install at MG –** We have installed Starlink at Merrill-Gorrel in an attempt to get much better internet signal to that location. So far it is working great. We are now working to install a VOIP Phone at that location that will work in conjunction with the phones at all of our other park and administration locations. We will be saving money on the monthly fees and having a better service by using Starlink.
- **Staff Training –** The first session was on April 15. There are three additional training sessions coming up over the coming weeks with CPR/AED trainings also scheduled.
- **Maintenance Work Orders –** We have created a new work order process for this season, which we are rolling out during staff training. We hope that this will provide for better communication and efficiency in maintaining park grounds and facilities.
- **Security Fence Install –** Was completed at Paris Administration Complex. This was a much needed improvement and will be a great asset to both the DNR and us in having a secure area for storage and vehicles.
- **Tree Service at MG –** Due to extensive ice storm damage at Merrill-Gorrel we required the assistance of a tree service to get the park safe and cleaned up for the season.
- **Employee Physicals –** We have been working with the County Administrator to try to cut down on the expense of our employee physicals by waiving the requirement for positions that do not drive vehicles outside of the parks or require frequent and heavy lifting. We have determined that around 20 positions will no longer be required to have a physical at the start of their employment.
- **Electronic Timecards –** We received news that the county hopes to have an electronic timecard system in place by the 2027 season. This would be a huge improvement for our operations, and we fully support the county trying to implement this much needed process.
- **Brower Lot Markers –** We have finished converting the last of the campsites at Brower Park to the on-the-ground campsite markers. This was a 3-year phase in with the last 108 campsites finished this Spring.
- **Seasonal Camper Spring Letters –** Were sent to seasonal campers of all 4 modern campgrounds, which remind them of the procedures for arriving to the parks this spring, payment deadlines, highlights of rules we will be prioritizing, park news, and project updates.
- **Tubb's Island and Mainland Open –** We opened these 2 campgrounds on April 8th as an early season camping option.

- **Conservation District Tree Sale –** Is being held in the Paris Hatchery building the 22nd-24th. They have been onsite prepping all week this week.
- **Buckhorn Creek Project –** The project is expected to begin by mid-May.
- **Little River Schoolhouse at School Section Lake** - Linda Howard stopped in and let Mr. Abel know that they received a grant in the amount of $8,000 to replace the windows at the Little River Schoolhouse. She also advised that they will be hosting an event on September 19 to celebrate America's 250th anniversary and to celebrate the upgrade (windows) at the schoolhouse.
- **Save The Ponds –** Phase 1, 2, & 3 bid packet has been posted. We have received a few additional quotes for stone repair work on the Raceway between Northland Drive and the White Pine Trail.

b. YTD Revenue Report

The report was reviewed and discussed.

c. Save The Ponds – Organization Update

Mr. Hatkowski stated that he and the Superintendent have been working with the engineer to get the bid specifications ready. On April 20 they met with six contractors who are interested in bidding on the project. We will meet on May 8 to open the sealed bids at the Administration building. We are excited to get this project started.

6. Committee Actions Finance

a. Finance

i. **Big Rapids Chamber Membership**

Mr. Abel commented that he and Ms. Jutila were impressed by the attendance at the Chamber breakfast earlier this month. He asked the Commissioners to consider moving forward with a membership at the $200 level to allow the parks to gain more visibility within the county.

Motion by Mr. Lambrix, supported by Mrs. Bradstrom to purchase a Chamber membership at the $200 level. Motion carried unanimously.

ii. **Park Radio Additions Personnel**

Mr. Abel stated that he would like to set aside the quote previously sent to the Commission members and requested that the Commissioners consider a new proposal. He asked for approval to purchase 7 handheld radios and an office radio to replace the units which were lost in the fire at Paris Park.

Mr. Abel will get a quote from Crouch Communications and added that he thought it would be approximately $3,500 for the equipment.

Motion by Mr. Lambrix, supported by Mr. Vogel to purchase the radios and hardware from Crouch Communications to re-equip the Paris Park office. Eight yes votes and one no vote (Zimmerman). Motion carried.

b. **Personnel**
   i. **2026 Seasonal Staff Update**
      We are nearly fully staffed with only two positions left to fill.

c. **Paris Park Office Fire**
   The Paris Park office is a complete loss due to the fire that occurred on Monday morning. We lost cameras, hard drives, computers, printers, pin pads, radios, etc. All of the basic office and maintenance supplies were stored in the office as we prepared to start the season. The Superintendent contacted the insurance company and we have a deductible of $1,500. The insurance adjuster asked that we reach out to local contractors to get bids on bringing the building back to working conditions. We will also need to get formal estimates for repair and rebuilding of the structure. Mr. Abel would like to rent a mobile office to put on site for six months if insurance covers that expense. He would also like to consider rebuilding a bigger office to include space for retail, tubing operations, and multiple staff. Mr. Abel asked the Commissioners for authorization to have the Building and Grounds Committee meet and make decisions related the structure before the next full Commission meeting. Due to the time constraints created by the fire, it was requested to authorize the opening date for the park from May 1 to May 8. This will give park staff an additional week to clean everything up, allow us to get a temporary office set up, and be ready to welcome campers.
   Motion by Griffith, supported by Bradstrom to postpone the opening of Paris Park by 1-week to May 8th. Motion carried unanimously.
   Motion by Mrs. Bradstrom, supported by Mr. Vogel to authorize the Building and Grounds committee to make decisions regarding the temporary office and any necessary insurance items at Paris Park. Motion carried unanimously.

7. **Financial**
   a. **Financial Report – Rev & Expenses, Year-to-Year, Cash Spreadsheet**
      Reports were reviewed and discussed.

   b. **Approval of Bills**
      Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, supported by Mr. Vogel, to approve the bills listed and submitted in the amounts of $3,028.68, $39,157.79, $70,032.08, $12,140.56, $11,892.09. Motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote.

8. **Public Comment**
   None

9. **Other Business**
   Next Meeting is May 19th at the County Services Building in Big Rapids.

Adjourned at 5:48 PM