

Mecosta County Park Commission Commission Meeting

The January 20th, 2026, Commission Meeting of the Mecosta County Park Commission was called to order at the Mecosta County Services Building at 5:00 PM by the Commission Chairman, Mr. Stanek.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Mr. Griffith, Mr. Hatkowski, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lambrix, Ms. Miller, Mrs. Strong, Mr. Vogel, Mr. Zimmerman, Mr. Stanek, and Mrs. Bradstrom who arrived at 5:22 pm.

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Jeff Abel – Superintendent and Taylor Jutila – Operations Director.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Lambrix requested to add discussion of Big Prairie Township Parks to section 7.b. Agenda stood approved as amended.

3. Minutes of December 16th Park Commission Meeting

Mrs. Strong motioned, second by Mr. Griffith, to approve the minutes of December 16th Park Commission Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Election of Officers

a. Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Secretary

- Mr. Johnson motioned, supported by Mr. Vogel, to re-appoint the slate of the most recent officers who served in the positions of Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Secretary. Mr. Hatkowski provided a statement that he would like consideration taken for some of the committee appointments to be re-arranged to allow for Commissioners to experience new opportunities if the current slate of officers is re-elected. Motion passed with a roll call vote. 8 Yes, 1 No (Zimmerman)

b. Rules of Order/Chair to Vote

- Mr. Vogel motioned, second by Mr. Lambrix, to follow Roberts Rules of Order as the guidelines for the Commission with the amendment of allowing the Chairperson the ability to vote. Motion passed unanimously.

c. 2026 Committee Assignments

- Chairperson, Mr. Stanek, asked Commission members to email him their preference of committee assignments. Once received, committee appointments will be distributed via email.

5. Public Comment* (comments regarding current agenda items)

None

6. Reports and Updates

a. Superintendent's Updates

- **Grand Rapids RV Show** – Was this past weekend. Thursday was fairly steady with traffic and comparable to previous years. Friday seemed very slow, likely due to weather. Saturday there was very good traffic throughout most of the day, which faded quickly into the late afternoon. Sunday seemed slightly busier than past years. We had plenty of brochures and fliers to hand out. We didn't have any takers on the MG RV

Show special during the show, but we offered to honor the deal until the following Friday if attendees from the show desired to review the information we distributed and call our office to place a reservation.

- **Ground Water Discharge Permit SS** – Information was sent out to everyone last week regarding the need for engineering assistance with meeting the new requirements of this permit. We are reviewing all of our blueprints and files to try to find as much information as possible to distribute to the engineer to save on overall cost. We have an upcoming onsite meeting to review some of the distribution systems and to work toward completion of the permit requirements.
- **Administration Printer** – Our main printer at Administration Office has been giving us quite a few issues lately. It is the same printer that we have had for at least 11+ years and likely much longer than that. Applied Imaging is our service provider for the printer and has noted that they are no longer able to update the printer software due to its age, which is causing some of the problems. We have asked Applied Imaging to provide a few options for leasing or purchasing a new unit.
- **Park Maps** – New maps have been created for the 4 modern parks/campgrounds and uploaded to the website. These were available and handed out during the RV Show.
- **5-Year Masterplan** - has been submitted to the DNR for review.

b. Save The Ponds – Organization Updates

Mr. Hatkowski updated the Commission members on recent events with the Committee, highlighting that a public notice went out on January 19th with hopes to receive EGLE permits within 20-30 days. A list of doners who qualify for laser cut fish was given to Mr. Lambrix to begin production.

c. 2026 Opening of Reservations Report

A report was reviewed comparing the opening day revenue of reservations for 2026 to previous years. Numbers were noted as slightly down, but with the understanding that we are a month or more ahead of when reservations opened during those seasons.

7. Correspondence

a. WPVRA Volunteer Report

Volunteers who maintain the White Pine Valley Recreation Area submitted their annual report. The information highlighting the positive Google ratings the trails have received, the 130 regular trips they have made through the park, weather related situations, and thanked the Park Commission for their support.

(Mrs. Bradstrom arrived - 5:22 pm)

b. Big Prairie Township

Mr. Lambrix expressed interest in adding Big Prairie Township Parks to the Regional Recreation Permit in conjunction with Newago County Parks or to create a secondary regional permit between just BPT and Mecosta County Parks. After further discussion, no action was taken.

8. Committee Actions

a. Masterplan

i. School Section Project Status

Due to the projected timeline of bidding and construction, the board unanimously agreed to hold off construction of the SS Beach Pavilion and Bathhouse until after Labor Day weekend to not interfere with peak season usage of the buildings. The construction timeline of the Beach Playground is yet to be finalized.

ii. Davis Bridge Project Status

One quarter of the park is still closed due to construction and is expected to be completed as soon as weather permits in the spring. Contractors and engineers are looking into design or construction flaws that resulted in the new vault toilet tank filling with runoff water after a recent snow thaw.

b. Personnel

i. Full-Time Position Vacancy Update

- Operations Manager position has been vacant since August. Job posting has received 30 Indeed applications and 11 formal applications, two of which are existing MCPC staff members, with 6 in person-interviews scheduled.
- HR, Events, and Marketing Manager position is now open as Jaydin has accepted a new position and has relocated. This position has received 16 Indeed applications and 7 formal applications, with 2 in-person interviews scheduled.
- The Administrative Clerk position has recently opened and so far, has received 68 Indeed applications and 20 formal applications, with 4 in-person interviews scheduled. The application window is scheduled to close on Friday, January 23rd.
- Preliminary phone interviews have taken place for all vacant positions before the scheduling of in-person interviews as an effort to conduct more efficient in-person interviews.

ii. Pay Rate Review – Operations Manager/HR, Events, and Marketing/Admin. Clerk

The Personnel Committee met just prior to the January 2026 MCPC Commission meeting to discuss the starting wages for the three vacant full-time positions and starting wage proposals. Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, second by Mrs. Strong, to approve the starting wages as listed on the job posting in the amounts of \$18.50 hourly for the Administrative Clerk, \$44,000 Salary for the Operations Manager and \$46,000 for the HR, Events & Marketing Manager. Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, second by Mrs. Strong, to allow the Superintendent or Operations Director the ability to offer up to 8% above the posted starting wage for the three current job openings to candidates who exceed the standard qualifications listed as a method to provide flexibility in negotiation of a starting wage for highly skilled candidates. Motion carried with a roll call vote with Mr. Lambrix abstaining from his vote.

With the 3-year employment anniversary of the Operations Director approaching in April, it was discussed that consideration be given to providing a step increase of 5% on the 3-year anniversary date of employment in appreciation for skills established and exceptional performance throughout the first 3 years of employment in this role.

Ms. Miller motioned, seconded by Mrs. Bradstrom, to award a 5% step increase to the Operations Director on her 3-year employment anniversary date. Motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote.

9. Financial

a. Financial Report – Rev & Expenses, Year-to-Year, Cash Spreadsheet

Reports were reviewed and discussed.

b. Approval of Bills

Mr. Lambrix motioned, supported by Mr. Johnson, to approve the bills as listed and submitted in the amounts of \$14,890.92, \$4,120.79, \$15,744.83, and \$3,500.32. Motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote.

10. Public Comment

None.

11. Other Business:

A. Next Meeting is February 17th at the County Services Building in Big Rapids.

12. Adjourned: 5:53 PM