Mecosta County Park Commission
Commission Meeting

The July 17, 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 Chairman Bill Stanek.

1. **Roll Call:**
   Members Present: Mrs. Bradstrom, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Hatkowski, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Miller, Mrs. Strong, Mr. Vogel, Mr. Zimmerman and Mr. Stanek
   Members Absent: Mr. Lambrix
   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**
   The agenda was approved as presented

3. **Minutes of June 16th Park Commission Meeting and July 13 Rules and Regulations Committee Meeting**
   Mr. Vogel motioned, supported by Mrs. Strong to approve the minutes of June 16 MCPC meeting and July 13 Rules and Regulations Committee meeting. The minutes were approved as presented

4. **Public Comment*** (comments regarding current agenda items)
   Jim Ronan stated that he was there to discuss his eviction and his concern for perceived safety issues at Merrill-Gorrel County Park.

5. **Appeal of Eviction – Ronan – Merrill-Gorrel**
   Mr. Vogel provided a summary of the Rules and Regulations Committee meeting. He advised the Commissioners that the committee reviewed all complaints and statements from campers and staff, the police report, violations, and the eviction documents. After thorough review the committee determined that Mr. Ronan and the park staff both could have handled the circumstances in a more professional manner. The committee felt that Mrs. Ronan was not an active participant in the incident and that she should be separated from the originally served eviction.

   Mr. Vogel motioned, supported by Mr. Johnson to revoke the eviction of Lori Ronan and to continue the eviction for Jim Ronan through 2026 and 2027. Eight yes votes, one no vote (Zimmerman.) Motion carried.

6. **Reports and Updates**
   a. **Superintendent's Updates**
      - Davis Bridge Project – The project manager and paving company were back on-site on July 16th to again remove a section of the asphalt that had not been completed to proper grade and to repair/replace with new material. Multiple meetings have taken place over the past month with all parties trying to get this project to the finish line.
      - Paris Bathroom Issues – We continue to have some vandalism issues with our bathrooms at Paris Park from dumping the trash containers all over the floor to un-rolling all of the toilet paper into the toilets. There are a few campsites that are suspected of causing the issues, but we have been unable to get undeniable proof.
      - Buckhorn Creek Project – Continues to progress well. The new creek channel was installed with flow released and is now the new run of the river. The floodplain was carved out with all necessary overburden removed. Steel Sheeting and Concrete went in this past week to create the abutments where the bridge will be set.
      - MET Application for STP –$250,000 request was approved by the County BOC for phases 1,2, & 3 of the pond's restoration initiative.
      - FEMA Dragon Application – An online application has been submitted to ensure we are on the list of projects being considered/evaluated for funding.

- New Parks Vehicle – We were asked if we would be interested in a used vehicle that was being disposed of from the Sheriff's office. We reviewed the vehicle, which is in much better condition than many of our current fleet vehicles and were able to obtain approval to absorb it into our fleet. The vehicle is a black 2014 Ford Taurus.
- Radio Installs – Paris Park received the base unit and 7-handhelds to replace the radio's that had previously been destroyed in the fire. The cost of these will be added to our itemized insurance reimbursement list.
- Credit Card Processors – We received 3 additional credit card processing devices that are compatible with our reservations system to replace those lost in the Paris Fire. Previously we were short devices and were unable to run credit cards at one of our Paris tills.
- Paris Stonework – all of the above waterline work has been completed. The contractor expects to be back in late July or August when water levels are lower to work on the bottom foot of the wall.
- Haymarsh Mock Event – An emergency lost person(s) training exercise is being scheduled for the Haymarsh State Game Area. This will involve many local and state emergency response departments. We will be communicating the event with all customers and through social media in coordination with Mecosta County Emergency Management, so that everyone is aware that the activity is just a drill and not a live event. The event is scheduled for August 22nd.

b. **YTD Revenue Report**
The report was reviewed and discussed

c. **Save The Ponds – Organization Update**
Mr. Hatkowski gave a brief update on the last Save the Ponds meeting. They are excited to receive the MET funds from the county and begin the process of improving the ponds. He stated that they are working on a groundbreaking ceremony for late summer.

d. **Incident/Accident Reports**
The report was reviewed.

e. **Event Application(s**)
None

7. Committee Actions

a. Finance

i. Promo Code Use – Campsite Discounts
The Superintendent commented that the occupancy at Merrill Gorrel has been low this year. The Operations Director expressed to the Commissioners that the reservation system has the ability to use Promo Codes to offer discounts over select periods. We could utilize this feature to offer discounts during low occupancy times. She added that the discounts are immediate and we can offer either a flat rate off or a percentage. The Superintendent added that we could promote these discounts through directed social media ads.

Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, supported by Mrs. Strong to allow the Superintendent and Operations Director to utilize promo codes as a way to enhance business during slower periods. Motion carried unanimously.

ii. Budget Adjustments – 1st Revisions
Proposed budget adjustments were reviewed by the Commission with no changes recommended. Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, supported by Mr. Vogel to approve all budget adjustments as presented. Motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote.

iii. **School Section – Renovations Bid Review**

The bids for the School Section project were reviewed. This portion of the project includes upgrades to the Beach Bathhouse, Beach Pavilion, septic and electrical renovations, ADA parking spaces, and improved walkways to provide more accessible access. Four bids were received and vetted by Prein & Newhof. The low bid is for $698,900 and will put us over budget by about $150,000.

Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, supported by Mr. Griffith to accept the low bid from Carbon Six in the amount of $698,900. Eight yes votes, one no vote (Zimmerman.) Motion carried.

iv. **Save The Ponds – Bid Acceptance**

Mr. Hatkowski commented that we now have sufficient funds to cover phases 1-3 of the project. We have a single bid from Cliff Youngs for $299,600 to complete phase 1 and phase 3. We are working with Cliff Youngs to find a better solution for phase 2.

Mr. Hatkowski motioned, supported by Mrs. Bradstrom to approve the bid from Cliff Youngs for Phase 1 and 3 of the Save the Ponds project in the amount of $299,600. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Masterplan

i. **School Section Meet & Greet Summary**

The Superintendent reviewed the survey results from the Meet and Greet at School Section Lake. The boat launches, picnic tables and mooring area scored the lowest. Overall, we had quite a few scores of 8 or higher including Overall Park Appearance, Overall Customer Service, and Overall Satisfaction.

c. Personnel

i. **Seasonal Staff Updates**

Brenda Goldammer gave a brief update on staffing at the parks. We are currently trying to replace multiple staff who are leaving Paris Park in mid-August.

8. 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 $23, 233.39, $43,153.72, $37,337.08 and $33,404.17. Motion carried unanimously.

9. **Public Comment*** (general comments) - None

10. **Other Business**:

Meet and Greets

Merrill/Gorrel is on July 25th 9:00 a.m.
Paris Park is on August 1st at 9:00 a.m.
Brower Park is on August 7th at 7:00 p.m.

Brower Lottery – August 15th – 9:00 AM at the Brower Park pavilion
Next Meeting is August 18th at the County Services Building in Big Rapids.

Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.