



Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 3, 2026
2:00 p.m.

4481 Gibbs Road
Danville, IN 46122

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

Board Present: Brad Eisenhart, President
Matt Freije, Secretary
Vicky Byarley
Gary Emsweller
Paul Miner

Board Present: Mike Hayden, Vice President
Jeff Pell

Staff Present: Ryan Lemley, Superintendent
Avery Tyler, Park Manager
Patty Seymour, Administrative Assistant

Guests: None

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Adopt Agenda

Byarley moved to adopt the agenda; seconded by Freije, the motion passed unanimously.

A-2. Approval of Minutes of May 6, 2026, Park Board Meeting

Miner moved to approve the minutes of May 6, 2026, Park Board meeting; seconded by Freije, the motion passed unanimously.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

None

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1. Proposed 2027 Budget Request

Lemley presented the proposed budget request for 2027 to the Park Board. The operational increases include the following line-item accounts:

- Janitorial Supplies: Increased due to new restroom facilities and usage.
- Contractual Services
- Educational Programming
- Maintenance and Repair

The Capital Requests are as follows:

- Vandalia Trail Expansion: A request for \$1,000,000 in matching funds from the Other Improvements (Food & Beverage) line-item account.
- Equipment and Replacements: A request for \$100,000 to replace the Bobcat skid loader (approximately \$90,000 before trade-in) and to purchase a new Kubota Utility Vehicle (approximately \$20,000).

Staffing Request:

- Addition of a permanent part-time Naturalist position to support operations at the new Welcome Center.

The Park Board reviewed the proposed budget request and engaged in discussion. Lemley noted that this request does not include staff wages, which will be determined at a later date. The proposed 2027 budget request is due to the Hendricks County Council by June 26, with budget hearings scheduled for August 4th – 6th. The Park Board voiced their support for the 2027 budgetary request.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

D-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Welcome Center & Administrative Office Update

Lemley provided an update to the Park Board regarding the progress of the septic system. He reported that the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDOH) denied the initial septic permit due to unsuitable soil conditions caused by an accidental site disturbance. A soil remediation proposal, prepared by a soil scientist, has been completed and submitted. The project remains active in the state review process and has not been sent back to the beginning of the permitting process; it is currently awaiting a Technical Data Sheet (TDS) from the ISDOH. Lemley noted that efforts are underway to expedite permit approvals.

Additionally, the construction permit for the public water system from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has been approved. Related work is scheduled to begin in early June. Progress is also being made on stormwater infrastructure and pond construction, as well as on the excavation of parking lots and roadways. Vendors are preparing materials and are ready to start vertical construction as soon as the necessary permits are approved and issued. Lemley remains optimistic about a potential opening in March 2027, provided the permitting process continues as expected. A discussion was held regarding the responsibilities and role of the Construction Manager as Constructor.

E. PROPERTY UPDATES

E-1. McCloud Nature Park

Lemley reported that the interior painting and facility improvements at the Ray and Mary Benson Nature Center have been completed. This work, particularly in the bird-viewing area, was funded by the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC) through the Gary Emsweller Parks & Trails grant award. New furniture has also been purchased to create a welcoming atmosphere for guests, encouraging them to spend time in this part of the nature center.

Ivie designed the Prairie Maze, which features a bald eagle, to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States.

The interpretive bee house was stocked by Bob Gruener, the contracted beekeeper, in late May and is now operational.

Lemley provided the Park Board with an update on both routine and new projects completed by the maintenance team in May.

Additionally, Lemley informed the Park Board that a new summer Naturalist Aide, hired for the peak season, will begin work on June 15th.

As of May 28th, TRAFx counters documented 1,782 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this month.

E-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley reported that a field crew from the Central Indiana Land Trust (CILT) dedicated significant time and effort in May to managing excessive weed growth in the large reforestation project for the eastern extension of the Vandalia Trail. The department's maintenance staff will continue to manage the weed growth throughout the growing season. CILT is scheduled to return in the fall to apply herbicide and plant a mix of wildflower/understory seeds.

The Amo trailhead was used for the CIBA Gear-Up Bicycle Ride, which drew approximately 40 participants who covered distances of up to 63 miles.

Lemley informed the Park Board that restroom hours at the Amo trailhead will be extended to accommodate the festivities surrounding the upcoming Amo Fish Fry, scheduled for June 4th to June 6th. Additionally, Greg Midgely will provide advertising and marketing materials on behalf of the department.

The PFOHC Summer Fun Run and Walk event is scheduled to take place along the Vandalia Trail from June 24th to June 29th.

There was a discussion regarding the unauthorized use of motorized bikes on the trail.

As of May 28th, the TRAFx counter recorded an estimated total of 2,372 patrons using the trail this month.

E-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

Lemley reported that the property encumbrance for the Land & Water Conservation Fund grant has been officially recorded following the resolution of a property survey discrepancy. Ben Comer, President of Abstract & Title, prepared and processed the necessary paperwork at no cost to the department.

The naturalist staff will host another Fishing Derby on June 6th. Maintenance Technician Scott Hawkins created unique fish award plaques for the event. Additionally, the Black Sheep RC Modelers and the Indianapolis Admiral RC Model Boat Club are currently holding weekly RC watercraft events.

Lemley also reported that pond management and maintenance activities are ongoing at Gibbs Park.

He informed the Park Board about a proposed residential development across from Gibbs Park.

Furthermore, Lemley noted that shelter reservations are continuing to increase significantly.

The PFOHC Summer Fun Run and Walk event is scheduled to take place at Gibbs Park from June 10th to June 15th.

Lemley provided the Park Board with an update on both routine and new projects completed by the maintenance team in May.

As of May 28th, TRAFx counters documented 7,633 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

F. REPORTS

F-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley reported that the updated asset inventory has been submitted to the Auditor's Office. In preparation for a potential State Board of Accounts audit, supporting documentation is being assembled for equipment disposal and transferred assets.

An independent ADA consultant praised the department for its exceptional efforts in facility accessibility and compliance. USI Consultants has been contracted by the Hendricks County Commissioners to develop the Hendricks County ADA/Title VI plans. The Project Manager will provide a formal report upon completion.

Lemley stated that interviews will be scheduled for the vacant permanent part-time Maintenance Technician position. Additionally, training in Active Shooter preparedness and OSHA requirements is currently in progress and is expected to be completed soon.

Lemley also reported that employee performance evaluations have been completed on schedule.

F-2. Budget Report

Lemley reported that there are no major budget concerns, and the department is staying within budget. Routine transfers between budget lines are expected. He also noted that significant maintenance expenses have arisen due to aging equipment. Additionally, the funding strategy for the Welcome Center's construction expenditures was discussed.

F-3. Media Report

Lemley reported that the Fishing Derby promotion generated over 3,700 views on social media. Ongoing communication efforts continue to highlight the department's projects, programs, and events.

ADJOURNMENT

At 2:49 p.m., Freije moved to adjourn the meeting, and Miner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Gibbs Homestead located at 4481 Gibbs Road,

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Freije, Secretary