



VALPARAISO/CENTER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF PARKS & RECREATION

Regular Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2025

The regular meeting of the Valparaiso Park/Center Township Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at the Forest Park Golf Course Welter Room. President Tim Warner presided.

Members present: Tim Warner, Kevin Cornett, Mark Hardwick, Martin Sonnenberg, Don Clark and Kay Magnetti. Also present were Park Director Kevin Nuppau, Assistant Director Tristan Leonhard, Recreation Superintendent Madison Bell, Event & Venue Director Dan McGuire, Administrative Assistant Tracy Betustak, Councilwoman Diana Reed, Paul Reed and Matt Welter.

MINUTES:

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve July 29, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None in advance. Mr. Michael McKinley Dowd of 2900 Glen Eagles Blvd, Apt H gave public comment. Mr. Dowd shared his sentiment for the Banta building and the history of it. He also praised the Parks Department on their upkeep of the building and the grounds. He lobbied for using the Banta building for something other than apartments or condos.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Forest Park Golf Course Pump House Bid Openings –Tristan Leonhard

Tim Warner opened the envelope. Tristan Leonhard read the bid.

George E Ley \$330,677.02

Tristan stated they would take it under advisement. They will go over the bid thoroughly with Hydro Designs. The plan is to award it, if possible, at the September 12 Board of Works meeting.

Valpo Parks Update - Kevin Nuppau stated that we have submitted our general fund budget to City Hall for first review last week. The next step is two readings at City Hall for approval of the general fund budget. We are responsible for the NRO internally, so we'll be bringing that before the Park Board for approval.

In an effort to continue adding safety measures to our parks, we are adding several AED's to high traffic areas. That money came from city council members donating their stipends to this project. We received two additional AED's through the Porter County Health Department. A partnership through Porter County Health Department, Valparaiso Fire Department and the Zac Mago Foundation supports AED's in public spaces after the passing of Zac from cardiac arrest as a teenager. They are posted by the Ampitheater at Central Park Plaza and by the concession stand at Fairgrounds Park. We are thankful for their support.

Lastly, we've done many upgrades at Will Park. The most recent one is a partnership between Valparaiso University and University of Chicago Medicine. They donated a rehabilitation to the basketball court. The Park Foundation gave some funding to provide glass backboard hoops. We hope to complete that project later this week. There will be some finishing touches then we hope to have a ribbon-cutting ceremony mid-September. Kevin Cornett asked about parking at Will Park for the Popcorn Fest. Kevin Nuppau stated that now that there are more and new park amenities throughout

the park, the park will be barricaded so cars can't park on the grass. The parking lot will still be available for parking.

Valpo Parks Foundation Update - Kevin Cornett – Friends and Legends is Thursday, Oct 2 at Butterfield Family Pavilion. We are honoring Jim Cunningham, Frank Kusbel and Jeff Zielinski. Free registration is available online now.

The Foundation Executive Committee has been working on the early stages of strategic planning and will be sharing that with the Park Board at some point.

FINANCIALS:

Tristan Leonhard reminded the board that the NRO Dashboard looks a little differently now as we cobble together 2024 and 2025. A couple of caveats as we look at revenues for this year, no sponsorship revenue went into the NRO. We created that new Sponsorship NRO. So when you look at certain NRO's from 2024, they had sponsorship revenues included so they will look a little off. We also continued this year with the Expenses changes trying to absorb a little more on the General Fund side. Day Camp changed systems so the revenue actualized a little later than normal. So overall some of the numbers are slightly off but it still tells the big picture; the full department total shows month over month and year over year with the NRO's.

We had the final payment for the Impact Fee Study come out so that was disbursed from the actual Impact Fee Fund. The General Fund Balance as of July 31, 2025, is \$1,367,956. The NRO Balance is \$581,604. The total balance of the two funds is \$1,949,563. Looking at our overall General Fund Appropriation everything is tracking through the month of July.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the financials as presented. Don Clark seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

CLAIMS: Tim Warner advised that claims documents were provided to members in advance of tonight's meeting. There were no questions.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve all presented monthly claims subject to appropriations balances. Martin Sonnenberg seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

DIVISION REPORT:

The Division Report was provided to the Members in advance of tonight's meeting for their review. Madison Bell discussed the skateboarding program. Jeff Zielinski is working with Madison on offering free classes to the community to give kids an opportunity to come out and try it. He'd also like to offer some sensory skate times and classes for those with accessibility issues.

BOARD ACTION:

Banta Center Proposal Recommendation – Kevin Nuppau – the Banta Review Committee reviewed the sole proposal submitted for the Banta project. Kevin thanked them for their time. Kevin also addressed Mr. Dowd's comments, echoing his sentiments for the building and the history of it. He also shared that we are looking forward to relocating to the Valpo REC center to expand our services and have additional opportunities for seniors. Recommendation: the Review Committee favorably recommends Matt & Wayne Welter and the Banta Building LLC. If approved tonight, it will then go to the Plan Commission for two readings, city council for approval and then back to the park board to make a final resolution for the sale of the property.

Kay Magnetti addressed the public in attendance. She expressed her understanding of their emotions in the sale of the Banta Center and shares them as well. She explained the situation as it is for the parks department and the financial burden the Banta Center presents. She expressed how pleased the board is that a local family is purchasing the building and knows the Welters care about the history of the building and the neighborhood. Mark Hardwick commented that the changes to the exterior of the building will be minimal and will still look like the building they love and that the neighborhood kids can still play on the playground there. Matt Welter shared his sentiments about the project and even suggested they could offer pieces from inside the building not being kept, to the Banta Neighborhood

Association. Paula Keller, Banta Neighborhood Association, requested the historical plaque remain. Matt Welter assured her it would. She also asked he donate any scrapbooks or photo albums he finds while renovating. Matt happily said he would.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the resolution for the sale of the Banta Center. Kay Magnetti seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Indiana Beverage Activity Center Naming Rights Contract – Kevin Nuppau – The Leetz family’s contract is up for renewal. Judy Leetz says they are interested in renewing their contract for another 10 years. We ask for approval for the contract for \$300,000 over ten years, so \$30,000 a year to keep the name of the building the Indiana Beverage Center. This would run through 2035. We’d like to thank them publicly as well as say we are excited about our continued partnership with the family and the business.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to approve the contract. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Ampitheater Naming Rights – Kevin Nuppau announced that Northwest Health Hospital has decided not to renew their Ampitheater Naming Rights so we are actively seeking interested parties to take over that sponsorship.

Joint Park Board Interlocal Agreement - Kevin Nuppau – We’ve been working closely with Jesse Harper of the Center Township Trustees Office. As you know this Park Board is made up of four Valparaiso residents and two Center township residents. As part of this agreement, the Center Township Trustee contributes \$85,000 annually to our budget to help offset some operational expenses. We have spoken to Jesse about raising their contribution. They have agreed to raise it from \$85,000 to \$150,000 a year. We are thankful for that. He also is going to put \$100,000 aside for the new Banta Center inside the Valpo REC. In exchange, they would like the Center Township Park Board appointees to be eligible to serve as President or Vice-President in the future. Additionally, anyone living in Center Township would become a “resident” as it pertains to Valpo Parks fees. We are looking for approval to amend the Interlocal Agreement with the aforementioned changes.

Motion: Mark Hardwick made a motion to approve the amendment to the Joint Park Interlocal Agreement. Don Clark seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Hydro Designs Construction Period Services Proposal – Tristan Leonhard – We are looking for board approval to enter into our third agreement with Hydro Designs. We’ve been working closely with them for the Forest Park Irrigation System. This third agreement covers the construction portion of the project. They will have 5 visits on site, they will work with contractor on all submittals and payment applications and once the project is complete they will go through the punch list system and then they will actually program the entire system the first time setting up all our backend documents itself. The cost is \$41,650. It sits within the overall budget.

Motion: Martin Sonnenberg made a motion to accept the Hydro Designs Proposal. Kay Magnetti seconded it. A voice vote was taken and unanimously carried.

Sports Add to Appropriation – Tristan Leonhard – New this year, as we talked to the State Board of Accounts, we used to have our refunds go through an unappropriated line. About three months or so into this year, we had to make that switch so the refunds are coming out of that specific NRO appropriation. This was not budgeted within Sports’ budget line. So far this year we have refunded \$8,970. Most of those are coaches refunds. We are asking for an additional \$10,000 in appropriation to the Sports NRO. Martin Sonnenberg asked if another word could be used to describe “refunds” to coaches, that would describe it more accurately. Tim Warner suggested “coaching discount”.

Motion: Kevin Cornett made a motion to approve the appropriation of \$10,000 to the Sports NRO. Mark Hardwick seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

OPEN TOPICS:

Golf Irrigation Project Update – Tristan Leonhard gave an update. Obviously we just got the bid in for the pump house. We just received our site permit for the project. Everything is still on track for late February, early March.

rePLAY Project Update – Kevin Nuppau gave an update on current park projects.

- Butterfield Family Pavilion – We recently gave a tour of the improvements to David Butterfield, his daughter and some of you. He was very pleased with how well the building has

been preserved, its extended useful life as well as the amount of activity that goes on inside the building. The entire exterior was tuck pointed, new doors were installed on front and back, bringing in natural light, inside was repainted, the restrooms and kitchen were renovated and modernized, new appliances, and we improved the back patio. One of David's grandchildren visits the building every year and takes a picture in front of the family name.

- Tower Park – Significant updates are happening there. The shelter is done and the playground is half done. The restroom building will be craned into place on Thursday. The goal is completion by the end of September. We are hoping for a ribbon-cutting in early October.
- Kirchhoff Park – We have had a couple of setbacks with getting permits. We are also partnering with the city engineering department to redo the road on Institute, so that's taking a little bit more coordination and timing issues there. Several of the structures have been demolished. We also have to get NIPSCo to disconnect some of the services that way we can take down a couple other buildings. We are still looking for a late December completion. It seems like very little interruption with the schools and neighborhood so far. Kirchhoff is our oldest park and we're excited to put some significant dollars into it to make it new again. Kevin Cornett asked about the Byron Schroeder plaque at the park. Kevin Nuppnau stated that the plaque would be displayed again once construction is complete and the new shelter would still bear his name.

Valpo REC Update – Kevin Nuppnau – On Friday we opened twelve design build proposals for the project. We are now in a five-week review process of those proposals. The price proposals will be opened September 18th. It will be awarded September 26 at Board of Works. Kay Magnetti asked how many are on the Review Committee. Kevin Nuppnau explained they haven't all been named yet but the State requires certain people to be on the committee. We have to have 2 of the 3 following trades: an architect, an engineer and/or a qualified contractor. They cannot have submitted a proposal or intend to get work in the future. Currently, we have Don Clark from the Park Board, Mike Bultinck from V3 Companies is a landscape architect, Max Rehlander with City of Valpo is our engineer representative, Steve Poulos with the City of Valpo has done several design build projects and we are looking to fill one more seat to round out the team. There were no further questions.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the August 26, 2025, Park Board meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.



Tim Warner, President

ATTEST:



Kevin Nuppnau, Director