

Starke County Park Board
August 8, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Present: R. Ballard, T. Busch, R. Ritzler, K. Swihart & S. Byer

R. Ballard called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

R. Ritzler made motion, seconded by S. Byer to approve the minutes from the July 11, 2023 meeting. Passed 5-0

R. Ballard held a discussion about the kayak launch program stating the English Lake launch, located at 650 W, north of Toto Road is the one that the CVC requested be completed first. Bob Aloï presented an updated option of probable costs for that site amounting to \$24,900. R. Ballard reiterated the importance of raising funds for this project. R. Ritzler added that these launch sites must be ADA compliant. However, the construction for that does not need to be done immediately but included in the original plan.

An update on the pier project was given by A. Giuliani who thanked everyone for all of their hard work by volunteering to get the piers installed under very understaffed installers. A total of \$9,713.00 of credit from 2022 was issued and the current billing for the remaining of the season was \$17,000.00 making this project worthwhile. T. Busch added that this will be advantageous for next year because we have them all in according to our permits. Next year's pier rental revenue is anticipated to be \$66,000.00.

G. Laiter lead a discussion regarding the need for accountability to pier slip holders who fail to properly secure their boats and for damage caused to the piers. He suggested implementing a surcharge or possible requiring shore stations moving forward. R. Ballard instructed us to confer with our attorney to include verbiage in the 2024 lease agreement.

T. Williams explained to the board she did not go to the commissioners regarding her request for a salary increase because it was already budgeted for. R. Ritzler reported she is currently at \$44,486.00 and made the motion to add the 3% budgeted to the 10% increase the council has already approved for 2024. R. Ritzler made the motion, seconded by S. Byer and passed 5-0 to approve the additional 3% in January.

The Lake Festival committee did not have staff on-site resulting in a lot of county man hours attending to vendors, directing traffic, collecting trash. R. Ritzler suggested getting a written

agreement with them for next year that will include some type of recouping of revenue lost from donating all our venue and staff to their event.

D. Pearman requested, for the commissioners, that there be better accountability for the revenues generated from the beach and campground, suggesting cameras be installed and an honor box available for when the gate is not manned. He will get a retired laptop for accepting credit cards moving forward.

T. Williams announced the resignation of R. Boonstra from the campground. He has been a huge presence and benefit to the department and his services will be missed. He was applauded by all for his service. It was suggested that a new camp host be considered.

R. Ritzler made motion, seconded by S. Byer and passed 5-0 to accept claims and paying of routine bills.

Conversation was held regarding the need for a new mower. There should be available money in next year's budget. B. Bennet, new council member, stated they were generous in giving the \$575,000 for matching grant money and stated that they aren't saying they won't help more in the future.

Due to the staffing shortage, D. Ballard suggested letting some of the maintenance projects go. G. Laiter suggested using the inmates for the fall clean up. It was determined that the inmates can use county equipment such as weed eaters, rakes and blowers just not the riding tractor or truck.

K. Wittmer expressed her concern over the new dog regulations stating it is inhumane to keep a dog on a 6' leash for 3 days. She feels, as a paying tenant, allowing a dog on a tethered lead should be allowable. R. Ballard revisited the decision and stressed ATTENDED on a lead is acceptable verses non-attended.

R. Ritzler made motion, seconded by K. Swihart and passed 5-0 that the meeting be adjourned at 7:21 PM.