

Starke County Park Board
February 11, 2025
Meeting Minutes

Present: R. Ballard, S. Byer, & T. Trout

R. Ballard called meeting to order.

S. Byer made the motion to accept the minutes of the January 14, 2025 meeting, seconded by T. Trout. Passed 3-0.

R. Ballard recognized a donation to Starke county and the SCPD of property to place a kayak launch on HW 23, made by Dr. and Mrs. Walter Fritz. Dr. Fritz said a few words about his decision to donate his property for the use of the kayak launch. He stated there is much beauty in Starke county to be seen from the river. He also said that this was a way for him to give back to the county and his patients, whose payments enabled him to be able to purchase the land in the first place. He then presented the deed, signed by himself and his wife, to the park board.

Park Board 2025 meeting dates were discussed and approved. All meetings will be the second Tuesday of the month at 6 PM CT, except the November 2025. The November 2025 meeting date will be Monday, November 10 due to Veteran's Day.

Park Board Capital fund discussion tabled until next month. Attention to the Park Board ordinance was called, as it will be part of the discussion on this topic next month.

Kayak Fundraiser discussion: A. Flora reported that she received guidance from our insurance agent on the liability aspect of having a kayak fundraiser. There are forms and waivers that must be used, and can be accessed through our county lawyer, but a kayak fundraiser can be safely done.

2025 Pier Lease contract was briefly discussed. **“Non-utilization of slip for current season does not guarantee a slip assignment for following year. AND All lift canopies must be removed from lift if boat is removed from the lake.”** These are two points the board discussed and still would like to reflect on. It was decided to table the pier lease contract vote until the March meeting.

Superintendent Report—A. Flora:

- Seasonal Camp leases have been sent out. Verbal commitment is due by March 1, first payment by April 1. Monthly newsletter will be sent out to campers every month.
- Apparel Fundraiser—forms are being sent out and will be put on Facebook. Orders are due March 14, and will be in on or before April 8.
- Ismael DeLara is now a paid SCPD employee.
- Starke Co Forest—I will be meeting Bruce and Ismael at the Forest, and Bruce wanted me to extend the invitation to the board as well. 2/22—1 CT.
- Meeting Phil Whoolery at Bass Lake to identify which trees we need to add to the “endangered tree” list for the DNR permit that I need to submit. Also, identifying trees that need to be felled for safety.
- Internet—we have a 60-month contract with Mediacom, would be 9000\$ to cancel early. As of right now, Surf is unavailable anyways...
- Water Softener for campground beach house. White tile is being put up and I'd like to look into getting a water softener to control the rust

No questions about financial reports.

Public comments:

S. England brought up concerns about the proposed kayak launch on HW 23. He stated he, and some of his neighbors, were worried about their privacy and how well the property would be monitored for trash or other problems. He said he felt a public meeting about this donation of land for the kayak launch should have taken place, so that he could have expressed his concerns before the land was officially donated. R. Ballard encouraged him to attend a commissioner meeting to voice his concerns there as the land was officially donated to the Starke County Commissioners, to be maintained by the SCPD.

C. Klein from Doral approached the park board in regard to a pump that was supposed to be placed on park property. The planned pump was supposed to be a second pump that was promised to the Bass Lake property owners, but neither pumps are going to be installed. To make good on their promise to the community, even though the pumps didn't work out and won't be installed, Doral wants to give the SCPD \$4,000 per year for 15 years. No strings attached on how we utilize the money as a department.

S. Byer clarified that the SCPD would have no responsibility over any pump placed on county property, if ever the need would arise to put a pump there. J. Broadstreet from the Conservancy Board spoke up to say that after looking into these pumps, they felt the cost was too high to run them.

D. Binkley explained that he had talked to Tom Jordan from the BLCD that day and that it had been decided that **no** pumps will be going in around the lake. Doral is just honoring the agreement they had previously made before it was decided the pumps were not being installed. He also wanted the community to know he has never told the park board how to spend any money, other than to suggest the department should buy a golf cart with the money we will be getting from Doral since the department doesn't have one. Mr. Binkley also asked for the board's permission to speak with Mr. Klein from Doral pertaining to the drainage issues at Bass Lake. Mr. Ballard said the board is happy to have him helping us on this endeavor and other park board matters, and the rest of the board agreed.

R. Ballard adjourned the meeting.