

Starke County Park Board
January 14, 2025
Meeting Minutes

Present: R. Ballard, T. Busch, & D. Sinn

R. Ballard called meeting to order.

T. Busch made the motion to accept the minutes of the November 12, 2024 meeting, seconded by D. Sinn. Passed 3-0.

2025 Annual Election of Officers for the Park Board: T. Busch made a motion to retain same officers as 2024; R. Ballard as president and T. Busch as vice president. D. Sinn made a motion to accept, all voted in favor. Passed 3-0.

Parks Dept. Facebook page: Discussion took place about how to proceed forward with our official department Facebook pages. The pages (Starke Co. Parks Dept page and Bass Lake Beach and Campground page) were created by a former employee and fully controlled by the employee who is no longer with the department. It was decided to create new Facebook pages to be “fully administered” by the Parks superintendent. It is the board’s wish to possibly have IT involved and another administrator on the pages as well.

Discussion of doing a fundraiser involving the new kayak launches in 2025. It’s the boards wish to investigate the liability aspect of doing something like this, and then discuss again next month.

2025 Pier Lease contract: discussion was held on various aspects of proposed changes. It is the board’s wish that the contract be retyped and presented to the board as a final copy for the February meeting to be voted on then.

2025 Campground Lease contract: no new changes were made to the 2025, so it was decided to vote on the contracts as to get them out by the end of January. D. Sinn made a motion to accept the 2025 Bass Lake Campground Seasonal Camping Permit lease, seconded by T. Busch, all voted in favor. Passed 3-0.

2025 Pier Installation Service contract: Some discussion about the proposed agreement. T. Busch raised the question of “preferred vendor status” and discussion was held around this idea. The board decided the pier installation service contract was good to vote on in it’s final form. D. Sinn made a motion to accept the 2025 Pier Installation Service Contract, T. Busch seconded the motion, all voted in favor. Passed 3-0.

The board was introduced through Zoom to Ismael DeLara, who gave a presentation to the board titled “Soil Erosion on the banks of Bass Lake” and explained that we would be using this information to apply for a grant through *The Arrowhead Country Resource Conservation and Development* organization. We will know in February if we won the competitive grant.

R. Ballard shared information about the Starke Co. Forest that Bruce Wakeland prepared for the board members and reminded us to be thankful for Starke County Forest and the work Bruce has done to make sure it here for the county to enjoy. “Starke county is the most forested county in Northern Indiana. 28%, 56,264 acres of Starke County is Plainfield sand soil type, which is where most of the timber is located...”

Superintendent and Financial Report by A. Flora

- Starke Co Forest: We’re still planning National Environment Day on June 5th. The theme is “Art in the Forest”. I also helped Bruce and the DNR measure trees at the forest (read Bruce’s statement). Bruce has also been seeing fresh footprints after every snow. Next winter, we have some simple and fun ideas to increase usage at the Forest even more.
- Attended a lunch paid for by Rep. Kendell Culp. He wanted to meet with the leaders in the counties he represents to prepare for IN General Assembly. I got a chance to tell him about the Bass Lake Renovation project and new kayak launch. I appreciated his willingness to listen to his constituents ahead of the assembly.
- We had a renovation committee meeting on December 27 and another pre-construction meeting with Todd from Brown and Brown. I want to thank everyone on the committee and Christa from Troyer for all their help and guidance on this project. Building is slated to begin Monday, January 20, and they will be putting all resources toward finishing by Memorial Day. I am currently trying to find someone to get the heavy kitchen equipment out. I’ve got one bid and a few others that are intending to put in a quote in the next few days. We need to get the equipment out before next Monday, so there is a bit of time crunch, but it will get done in time.
- Ismael DeLara will officially be the Park Department intern this semester as his proposal was accepted from Purdue. He will be working at least 4 to 8 hours a week, mostly virtual at first, to fulfill his requirements. We are VERY lucky to have him and I’m excited for what I will learn from Ismael, and I think I still have a few useful things I can teach him as well.

2024 Financial Report-

Receipts: \$313,597. 68 (amount of money we’ve taken in)

Appropriation: \$241,320.00 (budgeted amount)

Expenditure: \$217, 202.38 (what we’ve spent)

Unexpended: \$24,117.62 (how much we have left from the budget to spend)

Cash: \$96,395.30 (available for appropriation upon request from the council)

T. Busch made a motion to adjourn the meeting, D. Sinn seconded the motion, all in favor.