MINUTES - UNAPPROVED
OWATONNA PARKS AND RECREATION
REGULAR PARK BOARD MEETING
January 5, 2026, at 4:30 P.M.

LOCATION: 540 West Hills Circle, Crandall Conference Room 120, Owatonna, MN 55060

OPENING BUSINESS

Call to Order at 4:33 p.m. by Jon Thiel

Executive Members Present: Chair: Jon Thiel, Secretary: Sara Baird
Board Members Present: Tyler Cochran, Carter Klecker, Nancy Ness, Nan Silkunas
Members Absent: Gine McGuire, Vice-Chair

Staff Present: Eric Anderson: Recreation Manager, Dani Licht: Aquatics Supervisor, Drake Simonson: TPC/Athletics Supervisor, MJ Knudson: Admin Coordinator, Maureen Lyons: Admin Coordinator

City Council Member: Don McCann

Guests Present: None

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Nancy Ness to approve agenda. Second by Sara Baird. All members voted aye.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 1, 2025, MINUTES

Motion by Nan Silkunas to approve Park Board meeting minutes and bring before the Council. Second by Tyler Cochran. All members voted aye.

PERSONS WISHING TO APPEAR

The public forum is intended to afford the public an opportunity to address topics to the Park Board. The public forum will be no longer than 30 minutes in length, and each presenter will have no more than five (5) minutes to speak. Topics of discussion are restricted to local park and recreation topics. The Park Board will only listen and not take action on public forum presentations. None present

NEW BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS

Deer Management Update MJ Knudson presented final details regarding the 2025 archery hunt in City parks. Total deer taken was 27, ten fewer than the previous year. A review of the highlights and challenges will be taken into consideration when planning for 2026. A request was made for information to be available in various formats prior to the season to educate the public as to the benefits of a deer management program. The suggestion of additional information and/or a QR code on the signage at parks may be an option.

Community Center Task Force update

Tyler Cochran updated the board on recent task force activities regarding the completion of the intended purpose for the group with the Leatherman Scientific Survey. Next step, City Council may choose to move forward to request legislative approval to bring a ½ cent local tax proposal to voters over the next two years if approved. Don McCann shared that funding for Fire and Safety building proposals is a priority for the Council before the community center.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Park Division and Recreation Division reports were included in the agenda packet. One Park Permit was included at Brown Park on May 30, 2026 for a birthday party that will have a bounce house. Motion was made by Tyler Cochran to approve the Park Permit as submitted. Second by Carter Klecker. All members voted aye.
- Tennis and Pickleball Center season wrap-up along with Youth and Adult Athletics year end reports were provided by Drake Simonson. Board suggestions included advertising Tennis/Pickleball programs/facilities to neighboring communities that don't have similar options, consider a key card/swipe option to more accurately capture the number of users that have passes yet do not reserve court time, and looking into using vetted and trained volunteers to expand the open hours for non-passholder use of City athletics facilities and indoor play space.
- Emergency Disaster Declaration Update: MJ shared that Ed Hoffman is compiling data for the state for the purpose of reimbursement of a percentage of replacement costs for damaged equipment in addition to labor expenses associated with the July 2025 storm.

Communication from Park Board members:

Nan Silkunas expressed support for continuing to have a Parks and Recreation Director.
Tyler Cochran shared his appreciation to the staff for all they do to provide park services and recreation programming.
Sara Baird reiterated the message of thanks to staff.
Nancy Ness commented on the beautiful condition of Kaplan's Woods and work that crews have done to clear invasive buckthorn.
Jon Thiel noted that the Park Board website landing page has terminology that needs updating to reflect board positions of Chair and Vice-Chair rather than President and Vice-President. Also noted, the Park Board Meeting Procedures document needs updating.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Tyler Cochran to adjourn. Second by Nancy Ness. All members voted aye.
Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

After the meeting concluded, staff and board members walked to Vevle Hall for a tour of the newly relocated Parks and Recreation staff offices.

The next board meeting is scheduled for <u>February 2, at 4:30 p.m</u>. 540 West Hills Circle, Conference Room 120.