

The monthly meeting of the Washington County Park Authority was held Monday, May 7, 2025, at 6:34 pm at the Washington County Gov't Center.

Present: Jim Hutton, Lisa Wilson, Claude Worrell, Steven Statzer (Chairman), Ben Casteel, Jennifer Blankenship, Rusty Belcher, Tony Fetty

Special Guests: Jason Berry, Kathy Johnson

Absent:

Park Authority Meeting Agenda – May 7, 2025
6:30 PM, Washington County Government Building

Steven made a motion to alter the agenda to move Jason Berry to the beginning to discuss the Recreation Study.

James Mickel (conducted the study) will be presenting at the BoS meeting May 27 at 6:30 PM. It is a 10-yr plan. One main recommendation is to transfer the Mendota Trail to the Washington County Park Authority. Jason agrees that this should happen and a two-party agreement should take place. Personnel and resources to support this endeavor would happen. The trail is well-maintained as of now and a significant amount of work has gone into getting it into good shape to date. A joint meeting between the Park Authority and the Board of Supervisors would likely be necessary. There is currently 1 full-time employee that would likely be transferred as part of the agreement. (Jason Berry) Think about what resources would be needed, have an idea for both options if necessary

Kathy Johnson then addressed some of the main talking points of the summary from the study and distributed full copies of the study to the board. Pickleball was mentioned as rising in popularity. There is one court at the Cleveland community center. (discussion around pickleball ensued). It was suggested that the recreation department do more with summer camps and after-school programs. Playgrounds were one of the points of discussion and that almost every one in the county needs to be refurbished.

Rusty asked about the County's relationship with the Virginia Creeper Trail. Jason answered that the County does not contribute to the VCT. Jason asked about interest in the Mendota Trail. Steven replied that he is interested and asked if there was appetite in the BoS for including recreation as part of the park authority. Jason thinks that it does need to be discussed. It is not recommended in the study and at least one supervisor is against that proposition. The current budgeted amount for Parks & Rec is approximately \$119,000. Previously it was approximately \$250,000. \$169,900 is currently allotted for Mendota Trail. The Mendota Trail Conservancy has been very active and remained so in the Trail, but is now required to get County approval before doing anything. There are several trail-oriented events that could present potential revenue opportunities including 5ks, bike races, etc. Discussion ensued around the Abram's Falls property which is briefly mentioned in the study. Abrams is likely to be put on the backburner until the Commonwealth's interest increases.

Ben mentioned the need for river access points, especially the Middle Fork and North Fork.

Beaverdam Park is currently a lease agreement with Town of Damascus and Washington County. The Park Authority is paying to maintain the park with no recompense. The Board's discussion was around either the Park Authority, County, or Town should take complete control and ownership. Getting the splash pad completed should be a priority of the Authority.

Consider sponsoring a scout merit badge weekend with tent camping, fishing, etc.

Jennifer made a motion to enter closed session with guest. Lisa seconded, all in favor, motion carries unanimously.

1. Public Comment: Claude and Rusty heard murmurs of getting the gate and splash pad completed.
2. Washington County Park Authority Manager Report:
 - a. Second booth attendant did put in notice of leaving the park.
 - b. Soda machines are repaired
 - c. Paystations have arrived but no current installation date
 - d. Bleachers at Beaverdam are started
 - e. Wi-Fi issues have been repaired
 - f. Summer kick-off event was a great success. This should be an annual event. Perhaps there should be another event in the fall?
3. Recreation Department Report:
 - a. Recreation report is now in hand
4. Submitting and approval of the April & May Minutes (attached):
 - a. Jim motioned to accept the minutes, Rusty seconded, all in favor, motion carries unanimously.
5. Approval to pay the April Bills and Approval of the March Financial Report:
 - a. There was an additional missed charge of over \$6,000 added
 - b. Jennifer made a motion to pay the bills and approve the financial report
6. Old Business:
 - a. **Hiring Decision for Park Superintendent (taken care of in closed session)**
 - b. **Discussion of Recreation Master Plan Summary (attached) (moved to item 1).**
7. New Business:

- a. **Regular meeting time and date** – we are missing financial reports due to our meeting being so early in the month. Ben Casteel made a motion to move the meeting date to the 3rd Monday instead of the 1st. Claude seconded all in favor, motion carries unanimously.
- b. Ben made a motion to direct Tony and Steven to put together a budgetary request at the May 27 BoS meeting to complete the Splash Pad. Jennifer seconded, all in favor, motion carries unanimously.

8. Board Member Action Items:

- A. Ben Casteel – reach out to help Tony, read Parks & Recreation Master Plan
- B. Jim Hutton -
- C. Jennifer Blankenship-
- D. Steven Statzer - attend or present May 27 BoS meeting – agenda item at least by the 16th of May
- E. Claude Worrell-
- F. Lisa Wilson-
- G. Rusty Belcher-

Claude made a motion to adjourn. Jim seconded, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Next meeting will be held June 16 at 6:30 PM at the Washington County Government Building.

Sincerely,

Steven Statzer, Chairman

BIC