

Jennings County Parks and Recreation Board

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 24, 2026

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: Conference Room – Jennings County Government Center

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM by Seth Jones.

Roll Call

Present Board Members:

- Emily Thompson (ET)
- Elizabeth Eaken (EE)
- Kristin Wiley (KW)
- Bill Ertel (BE)

Present Staff:

- Seth Jones (SJ)
- Alex Wallace (AW)

Absent:

- None
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Approval of Previous Minutes

A motion was made by KW to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2026, meeting. KW, EE, and ET signed the approval form.

Old Business

Master Plan:

The Board previously approved the quote from Taylor Siefker Williams Design Group (TSWDG) at the February 24, 2026, meeting.

SJ provided copies of the contract and requested approval to sign. All members were in favor, and SJ signed the contract.

Steering Committee:

A steering committee will be established as part of the Master Plan process. The committee will consist of designated stakeholders responsible for guiding, reviewing, and advising on the development of the park board’s master plan.

The committee will meet monthly throughout the planning process (approximately 8 months).

SJ is compiling a list of potential candidates from various segments of the community. TSWDG will reach out to candidates regarding participation.

Proposed representation includes:

- Government and Parks Leadership (4–6 seats): Park Board, County Commissioners, County Council, Area Plan Commission
- Community Stakeholders (5–7 seats): School Corporation, Health Sector, Tourism/Economic Development, Environmental/Conservation Groups
- User and Equity Voices (3–4 seats): Parents, Teens, ADA/Accessibility Advocates, Rural Township Representation

Board members were asked to submit recommendations to SJ by March 27, 2026. All board members indicated willingness to participate.

New Business

SJ proposed reaching out directly to the County Council with specific recommendations to fill the open Park Board seat to help expedite the process.

KW, EE, ET, and BE expressed approval.

Director’s Report

Personnel:

- Camp host position will be vacant; advertisement to be posted on the website and Facebook.
- Employee bereavement: Paul Gatewood’s mother passed away on March 15, 2026.

Administrative:

- Master Plan and Steering Committee updates (see Old Business).

- Dining hall may be used for a benefit ride event where alcohol would be served. Ongoing discussions with event organizers included liquor licensing, server permits, and insurance requirements.
 - Park staff attended an invasive species program hosted by the Soil and Water Conservation District on March 11, 2026.
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Grounds – Muscatatuck Park

- Graffiti observed at Vinegar Mill and along stone walls near the creek; plan to remove using power washing and cover remaining areas as needed.
- Public restroom project: SJ followed up with Walter Pedigo; work expected this spring.

Liability and Signage Updates:

- Removal of “extreme sports” language from signage and website.
- New liability statement drafted; pending County legal review prior to purchasing new signs.
- Plan to replace three signs (2 at Muscatatuck, 1 at Eco Lake).
- Estimated cost: \$1,000; may request use of non-reverting funds.
- Website updated.

Splash Pad:

- Open Memorial Day through Labor Day.
 - Service appointments scheduled for April 16 and May 13.
 - Materials purchased to replace the worn rubber surface.
 - Plan to replace damaged spray nozzles as needed.
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Grounds – Eco Lake

- Signage completed by Shaw Monument on March 2, 2026; park staff will paint and install this spring.
 - SJ requested \$1,000 from non-reverting funds for signage.
 - Motion by EE, seconded by ET.
 - Vote: EE, ET, BE, KW – yes. Motion carried.
- Portable restrooms:
 - SJ requested \$1,200 from non-reverting funds to contract Jack’s Johns for the delivery and maintenance of a portable restroom at Eco Lake Park.

- Motion by BE, seconded by EE.
 - Vote: EE, ET, BE, KW – yes. Motion carried.
 - Storm damage:
 - Road washout following March 4, 2026 storms; temporary repairs completed.
 - Plans to use bond funds for gravel improvements (pending Commissioner approval).
 - Quotes being obtained for culvert replacement and upgrades.
 - Highway 7 Project:
 - Road widening planned for 2028 (American Structurepoint/INDOT).
 - County to sell a 5-foot easement; contractors will relocate beds and replace trees.
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Equipment

- \$2,397 remaining in equipment and repairs account.
 - 2018 Dodge Ram: transmission solenoid replacement completed by Garlitch (\$1,395.40).
 - Scag mower repairs (brakes and fuel pump): \$282.98.
 - New Scag mower purchased using non-reverting funds.
 - Tractor not starting; planned for diagnosis and repair.
 - Blue Dodge Ram beginning to have starting issues.
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Financial Report

- Bank Balance: \$8,835.07 (as of March 24, 2026)
 - Non-Reverting Fund: \$220,726.21 (as of March 17, 2026)
 - 2026 Outlook: projected income \$110,000; projected year-end balance \$300,576.21
 - Year-over-year income and monthly transactions reviewed.
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Events

- Sassafras Festival – April 25–26
- Day of Caring / United Way – June 4 (FC Tucker volunteering; potential projects under discussion)
- Library WoW Bus – June 11, June 24, July 9, July 22 (12:30 PM)
- DINO – July 10–12 (trail running/mountain biking)

- Hoosier Beemers – September 24–27
 - Cross Country – TBD
 - NICA – October 2–4
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Comments from Guests

No comments were recorded.

Next Meeting

April 28, 2026

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by EE and seconded by ET.
The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 PM.

Signatures

Bill Ertel _____

Kristin Wiley _____

Emily Thompson _____

Elizabeth Eaken _____

TBD _____