Jennings County Parks and Recreation Board

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 22, 2026
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: Conference Room – Jennings County Government Center

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Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 PM by Kristin Wiley, following Master Plan presentation held immediately before the meeting.

Roll Call

Present Board Members:

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

Present Staff:

- Seth Jones (SJ)

Absent:

- None.

Guests:

- Three members of Taylor Siefker Williams Design Group.

Approval of Previous Minutes

A motion was made by JG to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2026, meeting. ET seconded the motion.
KW, BE, EE, ET, and JG were in favor and signed the approval form.

Old Business

Master Plan Update:

- A public workshop was held before the meeting, followed by a brief presentation from Taylor Siefker Williams Design Group on the progress of the Master Plan.
- The first half of the consultant fee, $7,889.95, has been paid. A copy of the invoice was provided.

- A draft of the Master Plan is expected to be submitted to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in November for feedback.

New Business

Muscatatuck Park Splash Pad:

- Following the discussion begun at the August meeting, SJ recommended discontinuing maintenance of the splash pad because of the ongoing strain on departmental staff and financial resources.
- Discussion included the County Council's decision to eliminate splash pad budget support beginning in 2027 and limitations on the amount that may be spent from the Non-Reverting Fund.
- The Board discussed removing the splash pad features while retaining the concrete pad for potential future use, such as a shaded structure. Initial removal would include the splash pad structures, pump house, and underground tank, which would need to be filled.
- The Board also discussed the potential sale or repurposing of equipment, mechanical components, and fencing where feasible.

A motion to discontinue maintaining the Muscatatuck Park splash pad was made by BE and seconded by JG.
Vote: BE, JG, KW, EE, and ET – yes. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Personnel:

- A new campground host began at Eco Lake Park over Labor Day weekend.
- The Muscatatuck Park campground hosts will remain.
- Alex Wallace will be taking time off for paternity leave.

Office and Administrative:

Master Plan:

- See Old Business.

Special Event – Craft Fair:

• A request was discussed to hold a one-day craft fair in the Muscatatuck Park Dining Hall. The organizer would rent the Dining Hall and anticipates approximately 20 vendors, with vendors charged a $30 booth fee. Admission to the public would be free. The event would be contained primarily within the building, although food trucks may also be present.

• SJ requested Board input on how the event should be handled. Special events typically require a Special Use Permit, with event organizers paying the park 10% of event profits.

• KW recommended requiring a Special Use Permit but not collecting 10% of the event proceeds because the event would primarily be contained within the Dining Hall and require minimal park involvement.

• Further discussion may occur at the October meeting after additional information is received from the event organizer.

Highway 7 Widening Project:

- The public comment period has ended. SJ, KW, and BE signed the agreement on behalf of JCP&RB. A copy of the agreement provided by the Indiana Department of Transportation was provided.
- Three flower beds/landscaped areas along the highway will be relocated.
- The park will remain accessible during construction.
- The project may not begin until 2028.

2027 Budget:

- The County Council is considering using a portion of the Non-Reverting Fund for park staff salaries. County Ordinance 97-1 allows up to 15% of the Non-Reverting Fund to be used annually for park staff salaries. A copy of the ordinance was provided.

Grounds – Muscatatuck Park

Splash Pad:

- See New Business.

Grounds – Eco Lake

Hazard Tree Removal:

- Otero Tree Service has been paid $1,150 for the hazard tree removal completed on July 30, 2026.

Dump Station:

- Repairs to the dump station floats and support brackets, previously approved for $1,410 in non-reverting funds, have been completed and the invoice has been paid.
- One of the two pumps failed. The Board previously approved $5,510.60 in non-reverting funds for pump replacement. The replacement is awaiting arrival of the new pump before the repair can be scheduled.

Equipment

- No equipment issues were reported.

Financial Report

- Non-Reverting Fund: $260,468.28 (as of September 4, 2026)
- Non-Reverting Fund Net Change for September: $12,789.61 (as of September 22, 2026)
- 2026 Outlook: Projected remaining income of $25,000.00 and a projected year-end balance of $272,558.23.
- Year-over-year income and monthly transactions were reviewed.

Events

- INDOT Company Picnic – September 23 (more than 200 attendees expected; staff will be available to assist with trash and event needs)
- Hoosier Beemers – September 24–27 – Shelter 2
- JCMS Cross Country – September 28 (final meet)
- NICA – October 2–4

Comments from Guests

No comments from guests were recorded.

Next Meeting

October 27, 2026

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by JG and seconded by BE.
The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 PM.

Minutes Approval – September 22, 2026

Bill Ertel _____

Kristin Wiley _____

Emily Thompson _____

Elizabeth Eaken _____

Johnathan Garrett _____