
PARKS, RECREATION AND CEMETERY BOARD MINUTES

February 24, 2026
Regular Meeting - 5:30 PM

[IGNORE_INDENT]

1) CALL TO ORDER

IN A REGULAR SESSION held on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 5:30 PM in the Training Room of Public Services Building, 900 S Marshall Ave, Marshall, MI 49068, the Marshall Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board was called to order by: Justin Miller at 5:36 pm.

2) ROLL CALL

IN A REGULAR SESSION held on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 5:30 PM in the Training Room of the Public Services Building, 900 S Marshall Ave, Marshall, MI 49068, the Marshall Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board was called to order. Roll was called: by Justin Miller

Present: Jim Coury, Alex Culver, Jerry Underhill, Kaeli Hill

Also Present: Parks Maintenance Supervisor - Justin Miller; DPW Superintendent — Phil Smith, Deputy Clerk - Linda Urquhart

Absent: Natalie Rector, Mitch Robbins, Zack Shippell, Liason Jacob Gates

3) APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Items can be added or deleted from the Agenda by board action.

An amendment to the agenda was made by Miller to add the N. Ketchum Park bathroom replacement and new pavilion project. Moved by Underhill, supported by Culver. **Motion carried on a voice vote.**

A second amendment was proposed by Culver to discuss the purpose and necessity of the Park, Recreation and Cemetery Board. The motion was moved by Hill and supported by Coury. **Motion carried on a voice vote.**

4) APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Items can be added or deleted from the Agenda by board action.

Approval of October 28, 2025 minutes. Moved by Coury, supported by Culver On a voice vote

A. 10-28-25 MINUTES

5) PUBLIC COMMENT Persons addressing the board are required to give their name and address for the record when called upon by the Chair. Members of the public shall be limited to speaking for a maximum of five (5) minutes.

No public present

6) OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

7) NEW BUSINESS /REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION AWARD SUBMISSION

Arbor Day Foundation Award:

Smith presented the Arbor Day Foundation award submission. He also included as of Monday, the 2025 designation has been officially awarded to the City of Marshall by the Arbor Day Foundation.

B. NORTH KETCHUM PARK BATHROOMS

Ketchum Park Project:

Justin cited the Ketchum Park project includes replacement of the existing bathroom at N. Ketchum Park and construction of a new pavilion with restroom facilities and a kitchenette, including an electric stove, intended for future rental use. The restroom location will be slightly relocated.

The City is seeking a Michigan DNR Trust Fund grant, with an application deadline of April 1. Staff is currently working with consultants on design and layout, and the design services will be bid out. The project will connect to Kids Kingdom.

Past vandalism at the park was noted, including spray paint and benches being pulled up. Cameras have been installed and are currently in a test phase, covering the parking lot, skate park, and green space. The system captures motion, facial images, and movement paths; this is a trial installation at this time.

The project is contingent upon receipt of the Trust Fund grant and includes a required \$200,000 local match.

C. PURPOSE AND NECESSITY OF THE BOARD

Board Purpose and Authority Discussion – Summary

Culver questioned the overall purpose and usefulness of the board, expressing concern that it currently exercises no real authority and lacks a meaningful role. He stated that the board does not appear to advise or make decisions and questioned whether it is a productive use of members' time. While he does not want to resign, he emphasized the need for clarity on purpose. Culver suggested either granting the board authority to act or transferring responsibilities to another board. He noted that maintaining the board may be necessary to satisfy a BOS requirement and potentially for City obligations, including Tree City USA recognition. He suggested exploring whether Brooks Nature or another group could assume the role.

Miller recommended elevating the issue to the City Manager and potentially bringing it before City Council to either empower the board or formally reassign authority. Miller will also reach out to the Director of Community Development - Strange, and Smith will contact DPW Director Davenport to determine whether the board can be inactivated or granted decision-making authority. Miller also stated he will send an email clarifying that, at this time, discussions are informational only.

Coury emphasized that boards exist to provide citizen input and public engagement. He stressed the importance of maintaining active boards, particularly for Parks and Recreation and in the context of large corporations, tribal interests, and the I-94 corridor. He advocated for reinvigorating the board so it can actively advise and provide direction. Coury referenced a potential "rebirth" of the MAC with younger community members taking on more active roles.

Culver reiterated frustration that the board is only being presented with information and is not advising anyone or influencing outcomes. He suggested the board should have control over meeting schedules and direction if it is expected to be effective.

8) RECREATION REPORT

Recreation Report:

Since October, all recreation programs have been successful, with every program reaching full enrollment.

Staffing Update:

Drue's last day will be next Friday, concluding 3½ years of service. Drue has accepted a Director position with Parks and Recreation in Sturgis.

Officials / Referees:

Underhill noted that referees need to demonstrate more confidence on the field, avoid standing next to one another, and consistently blow the whistle when necessary. Current pay rates are \$12.75 per game, or \$26–\$30 per game when hiring external referees. Culver suggested presenting and teaching rules to referees, noting that this approach has been effective with softball and baseball programs.

Program Highlights:

- Jesse Sultana received numerous compliments for his work this year.
- **Daddy–Daughter Dance:** March 14, with 316 couples participating
- **Mother–Son Event:** Scheduled for April 17
- **Care & Play Event:** Scheduled on April 11, focused on special needs participants; it includes fire trucks, a bounce house, and T-shirts for the first 100 attendees. The event is being facilitated by Ava.

9) PARKS REPORT

Parks Report

Staffing & Maintenance:

Significant improvements have been noted since hiring additional staff. Equipment availability, including mowers during the summer, has improved and operations are running more smoothly.

Facilities & Programs:

- Pickleball Courts are expected to open mid-April, as soon as nets are installed.
- Pickleball leagues planned for the season.
- Splash Pad is scheduled to officially open Memorial Weekend.

Events:

Luminary Hike: Highly successful turnout, with 300–350 participants. Limited parking noted; portable heaters were used along the 1½-mile route. It was noted at the event some community members expressed opposition to the Data Center on Oliver Drive.

10) BOARD REPORTS

No report

11) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:24 pm. Moved by Coury, supported by Culver on a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by:
Linda Urquhart
Deputy Clerk