



Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Warroad City Hall

121 Main Avenue NW, Warroad, MN 56763

Minutes for July 24, 2024

APPROVED

Commissioners Present: Rick Anderson, Beth Pierce, Rob Mason, Reid Huttunen, Brad Bonk, Jonathan Wolf, Jen Foley (virtual), Tom Schmitz, Karlin Ziegler, Barry Wendorf, Peg Furshong, Tom Stoa (virtual)

Commissioners Absent: Tim Engrav

Consultants Present: Renee Mattson-Executive Director, Joe Czapiewski–System Plan Coordinator, Tess Dandrea-Administrative Assistant (virtual)

1. **Call to Order** – Chair Anderson called to order at 10:00 am.
Meeting Goals are to have a timely and efficient meeting.
2. **Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance**
Welcome and overview of Warroad Point Park, Kathy Lovelace, City Administrator who talked about plans for the park, so it is more utilized and visible.
3. **Approval of Agenda for July 24, 2024, Minutes from June 26, 2024 and Treasurer’s Report through June 2024**
Motion by Bonk
Second by Furshong
Motion Approved
4. **Executive Director’s Report**
One addition to the written report related to the change pages now being worked on at DNR for the biennial budget. The most recent change page stated we would be charged 2.5% for grant administration, not the “up to 2.5% of actual cost” language that had previously been used. It has been caught on our end and changed back to the appropriate language.
5. **System Plan Coordinator’s Report**
It has been a busy month. With regard to the Emerging Opportunities Grants, there have been inquiries about applying for funding based on recent flooding events and how do we react to them? There was no assurance on his part that we would make these grants, and obviously

FEMA and other agencies are available for Federal assistance once disaster declarations have been made.

6. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission

Stoa-nothing

Foley-nothing

Mason-nothing

Huttunen—Update on new project starting Aug 1st 2024, they've been delayed due to recent rain events but anxious to start and should be substantially complete by the time the snow starts to fly.

Schmitz-MRPA Convention, the GMRPTC session is in the morning of the 27th in Mankato. He emailed the information to all and hopes some will attend.

Wolf-nothing

Furshong-nothing

Wendorf-Attended GMPT joint meeting in Elk River along with many other Commissioners. It was a good event with the DNR Commissioner and grants staff all attending. Hated to miss the July meeting but it was do to moving and it was closing day and while he hates to miss meetings it could not be helped.

Bonk-nothing

Pierce-nothing

Ziegler-nothing

Anderson—Invitations went out for DNR listening sessions around the state for the “4 the Outdoors” initiatives. Commissioners Anderson and Schmitz attended the session in Blue Earth. The sessions were generally brainstorming on how to get more money for natural resources and recreation, not just DNR but in general. Both Anderson and Schmitz felt they were good sessions and worth attending.

Commissioner Anderson reported on letters of support from proponents of the Frazee Wannigan Park funding application. These letters were sent to Mattson to share with the Commissioners. Anderson noted each of the senders and the letters were available for viewing at the meeting. Commissioner Foley also attended the session in Roseville which was well attended and interesting.

7. New Business:

7.1 Preview of FY26 Funding Applications

Not all applications are in, there is a week left as the deadline is the 31st. We are scheduling site visits for the applicants and Commissioners will be invited to attend as you are able. Thus far we have 15 applications started and we expect a few more. There have been good calls asking for a review of their applications before submittal and generally applicants are doing a good job. Next month we will have preliminary reviews as well as the supplemental grant application review. You will have September and October to review the applications and we will have the Evaluation Team at the October meeting, they do not score, but do provide input to the consultants. The supplemental grant round applies to projects with cost overruns, CPO and access. Hopefully we will make all the supplemental grant decisions at the September meeting as those funds are available now. All districts have at least one project in the portal. Mattson noted that the tax collections continue to be strong and we will have a

better idea of what is available to grant with the November forecast, our approximation of \$12.5 million is likely very conservative.

7.2. Recap of ADA Conference

The conference was excellent and helped us formulate an idea for an accessibility strategy and ideas for an accessibility value statement. We will be sharing the session materials we have from the conference over time, so we don't overwhelm everyone. Interesting takeaways from the conference include the fact that engineers and architects are not required to take classes or be informed about accessibility. There is a definite lack of education about what the base ADA is. The work we do on the statements can/should be incorporated into the funding application updates we do this year. Mason suggested in the strategy statement adding "where possible" after physical barriers. Czapiewski notes there is more to be done in our facilities so our goal is to recognize we can't suddenly impose all new standards, but we can provide assistance to get them to being more accessible as a start to the end goal. Foley notes that even some components of accessibility are not accessible, for instance the accessible porta potties at the recent joint conference were not completely accessible as there wasn't enough room to transfer with her larger chair. Furshong also noted the bathroom issue and called Mattson to talk about what more we can do to move us to a better place. One of the front end of the application process we need to have them thinking about what they are doing to make the project accessible. People are limited to what they know and examples will help. We should have a ratio for the equipment our parks are buying, as an example, accessible picnic tables. We can provide guidance. Huttunen discussed having assistance from accessibility specialist Bill Botten (who was a presenter at the ADA conference) through Community Options, an organization in their community. Botten was great to work with and explain so they could understand what is required and what someone who is in a chair needs. It cost more but it was worth doing. How can we connect people with consultants early on in a project so they are better? Several Commissioners asked if we should we add an access specialist to our team to review our facilities? Wolf, should we add to the strategy statement "consider a broad range of perspectives". Mattson will contact Bill Botten, recently retired from the US Access Board and now working with PlayCore, and see if he is available to help us in the various areas that were identified at the meeting. Including facility review, develop guidelines and materials, playground review and conduct forums. We would provide the help to review the facilities to help better the universal access. Set aside funding for accessibility grants that are available year round, as needed to improve access. Value statement, add "The" to start the statement.

7.3 Resolution 034 Project Scope Change for Great River Park Complex

Motion by Wendorf

Second by Schmitz

Motion Approved

7.4 DNR Administration Fee – Next Steps

Mattson to write a letter to the DNR Commissioner inquiring about charges, and stating we feel we are the same as LCCMR and would like to be charged similarly for grant contracting.

7.5 Verbiage for Addition to Legacy Logo Signage

Draft of it shown to commissioners. Discussion about edits. Foley offered to assist with incorporating edits into the draft.

7.6 Approval of Policy and Procedures Manual Section I and II

Recommended changes for approval, committee of Engrav, Mason and Foley.

Motion by Furshong with today’s minor changes

Second by Zeigler

Motion Approved

7.7 Grant Request 24-002E Belle Prairie Park Environmental and Archeological Grant

Legacy request \$40,000 with match of \$10,000 for a total project of \$50,000

Motion by Schmitz

Second by Wendorf

Motion Approved

7.8 Grant Request 24-003E Hole in the Mountain Park Environmental and Archeological Grant

Legacy request \$43,200 with match of \$10,800 for a total project of \$54,000.

Motion by Wendorf to approve with a second quote for the work

Amended to say approve funding based on receiving a second quote

Second by Bonk

Motion Approved

8. Old Business:

Furshong asked if we can add to the September agenda setting aside funding for the access specialist and the next round of archeological grants and a sum of money for access granting. Suggestion was to make \$2.25 million the starting point for the supplemental grants when we made the funding decisions at the September meeting. Discussion about what is the amount to set aside for these new grants. Mattson suggested we use operating budget for the access specialist. Staff to explore costs of an ADA consultant. Commissioners expressed opinion that having the specialist on site was important and should be considered. There should be an “up to” amount set aside for the special grants.

9. Approval of July 2024 Expenses

Consultants	\$25,993.53
Commissioners Expenses	\$ 7,665.76
Total	\$33,659.29

Motion by Bonk

Second by Mason

Motion Approved

10. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

There is NO meeting scheduled for August.

The next meeting is September 25, 2024 at Oxbow Nature Center and Zollman Zoo