

Augusta County Government Center
Parks and Recreation Activity Room 1, Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 7:00 PM Augusta
County Government Center
Parks and Recreation Activity Room 1

1. Call to Order

Present: Larry Curry, Sally Williams, Ernie Landes, Leon Bartley, Steve Bridge, Anne Gordon

Absent: Samantha Bosserman

Chairman Gordon welcomed those present at the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

2. Comments by the Public

No public present.

3. Adoption of Minutes

No amendments or changes to March 2025 minutes.

Parks and Recreation Commission member Landes moved, seconded by Parks and Recreation Commission member Williams, to approve March 2025 minutes.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Larry Curry, Sally Williams, Ernie Landes, Leon Bartley, Steve Bridge, Anne Gordon
Nays: None

Motion Passed.

4. Treasurer's Report

Chairman Gordon asked Mr. Wells if it is unusual that the revenue showing through the end of February is less as a percent than it had been in the past for the same time period. Mr. Wells stated those numbers are tied to timing, mostly of large trips. In this instance, Parks and Recreation had a large trip planned last year when the final balance was due in February, so the numbers for that time frame last year are elevated. This year our trip is leaving later in the year, so the final balances will be due in June, which means numbers for that month may be elevated from previous years.

5. Director's Report

Chairperson Gordon stated that though she enjoys getting the Activities Guide in the mail and having a tangible copy, she also understands that printing and mailing a guide of this size is not cheap. She inquired if Parks and Recreation is looking for alternative methods of delivery to citizens in order to save money. Mr. Wells informed the Commission that staff has a meeting in July to look into and explore other alternatives. He stated the mail system has been unreliable in the past, with some areas of the county getting their Activity Guides weeks before another section of the county, even though the guides were delivered to the post offices on the same date. He stated some

alternatives that other departments across the state use are radio, TV (though not prime time slots), email and digital billboards. He said staff are aware of our market and know that getting the guide in the mail is often a "call to action" for citizens. This is their reminder to call or go online to sign up. We are spreading the word about early online access for registration, but it doesn't always work. After the pandemic, the department went from 4 guides to 3 guides per year as a way to save money. This has helped, but costs are continuing to rise forcing our department to look at further ways to save.

6. Matters to be presented by the Commission

Chairperson Gordon updated the Commission on the actual "turning over of dirt" for the restroom and concession structure at New Hope Community Center.

Member Bridge asked Mr. Wells for clarification on excess revenue generated through Parks and Recreation trips. He wondered if Parks and Recreation's excess revenue goes back into the general fund rather than a separate line item for Parks and Recreation needs. Mr. Wells stated that all the revenue we generate goes back into the general fund. All revenue expected or anticipated and all revenue that exceeds that.

Member Bridge asked if the money has always gone back into the general fund. Mr. Wells informed him that the money has always been put into the general fund versus into a Parks and Recreation account. There was a discussion regarding putting that money, proportionately, into an escrow account for future Parks and Recreation new construction and enhancements. Mr. Wells informed the Commission members that items such as pool liners and shelter roofs are replaced through depreciation. Such a fund would help when we would like to add amenities to the parks, like pickleball courts.

Chairperson Gordon asked if capital funds in the annual budget process had ever been approved for new construction. Mr. Wells stated they have not in the past 15 years. Mr. Wells informed the Commission that parks like Deerfield, Augusta Springs, and Dooks Crossing were all started from Board of Supervisors Infrastructure account allocations, not from budgeted capital funds. Member Bridge asked what percentage of the budget Parks and Recreation recovers from our operations. Mr. Wells stated we recover between 50-60% of our operations annually. That percentage does not include maintenance costs as those come from a different budget. He stated there have been multiple years when Parks and Recreation has recovered close to 70%. Member Bridge inquired if the excess money going to the general fund is standard practice throughout the state. Mr. Wells stated it is. Member Bridge asked if capital requests have ever been a budget item. Mr. Wells stated yes but limited without a master plan. He stated this is why having a master plan for the department is so important.

Mr. Wells informed the Commission he and Mrs. Bragg met with members of the Stuarts Draft Ruritans to discuss pickleball courts. The Ruritans are interested in donating to get pickleball courts in the Draft area, but would like the donation recognized.

Member Bridge asked what the next steps are now that some concept plans have been shared with Parks and Recreation for the south end. Mr. Wells stated the plans will be reviewed, and then a meeting will take place to discuss the plans. Ultimately, the plans would make their way back to the Board of Supervisors for review.

7. Matters to be presented by Staff

1. Presentation of Annual Report

Mr. Wells informed the Commission that minor changes will most likely be made to future annual reports as staff will be meeting to discuss what information should be included in the reports. He stated that we currently mostly report on dollar figures, but thoughts are leaning towards more focus on participation, new experiences, and the like. Member Bridge made the suggestion of adding a page to the Activity Guide to show citizens where the money goes and how we use it to serve them.

2. Summary Report of Recreation Infrastructure and Matching Grant funding for 2024

Mr. Wells updated the Commission on the Mt. Sidney Ruritan playground Matching Grant project. He stated the playground looks great, but the project is not quite complete. The group came in under budget, but they do still have a bench donation, which should bring the group very close to receiving the full allocation for a Matching Grant.

8. Old Business

No Old Business to report.

9. New Business

Mr. Curry asked if anyone knew about the new big park planned for Augusta County and Waynesboro. Mr. Wells explained where the property is located. He said he had a meeting with the representative developing the plan for the facility. Mr. Wells said the park would be privately owned, not public. He said there are some infrastructure and utility issues, such as no public sewer at the planned building site, that will most likely be a factor in slowing down the progress. Chairperson Gordon inquired about the new YMCA development. There was some discussion about the location and development.

10. Announcement of Next Meeting & Adjournment

Chairperson Gordon announced the next meeting will be held on May 21, 2025, at 7pm in the main boardroom at the Government Center.

Parks and Recreation Commission member Curry moved, seconded by Parks and Recreation Commission member Bridge, to Adjourn.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Larry Curry, Sally Williams, Ernie Landes, Leon Bartley, Steve Bridge, Anne Gordon
 Nays: None

Motion Passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.

