



## **BENTON COUNTY Park Board**

### **MEETING MINUTES 13 August 2024**

#### **Board Members Present**

Dave McNeal, Chair  
Robin Emmingham, Vice Chair  
Michael LeCompte, Secretary  
David Cannon  
Kit McBurney

#### **Benton County Employees**

Adam Fyall

#### **Board Members Absent**

Frank Cooper (excused)  
Ismael Mendoza-Jimenez

The meeting was held at Higgins Field at Horn Rapids Park. Before the formal business meeting began, the Miniature Aircraft Association put on two flight demonstrations, gave a brief tour of the field and shared with the board its troubles with irrigation this season and a recent break-in at the facility where several items were stolen, including an automatic external defibrillator (AED).

Mr. Fyall informed the Miniature Aircraft Association that the County would replace the AED.

#### **Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call**

Dave McNeal, Chair of the Board called the meeting to order at 7:02 and the Pledge was recited.

David Cannon, the newest Park Board member was introduced.

#### **Review and Approval of Agenda**

The agenda for the August meeting and minutes from the July meeting were approved as presented.

## **Chair Report**

Chair of the Board McNeal thanked Dick McGrew and the Miniature Aircraft Association for hosting the meeting and putting on a demonstration. It was the first meeting of the Board at Higgins Field in seven years, the previous two Board meetings have been in 2008 and 2017.

Chair McNeal went on to thank Mr. Fyall for drafting a letter to the County concerning the garbage and irrigation situations at Two Rivers Park.

Chair McNeal then expressed his hope to select the ordinance revision or restroom policy for discussion next month and provided an update on stargrass harvesting and how dumping on the bank vs. hauling to the boat ramp has increased productivity.

## **Committee Report: Staffing Committee**

Mr. Fyall and Vice Chair Emmingham reported that they hope to get together soon with member Mendoza-Jimenez to continue to address the staffing shortage issues in our parks.

## **Staff Report**

Mr. Fyall spoke about the annual all-area park boards dinner that will be held at the West Richland Police Station on Sept. 16 this year. Mr. Fyall will be out of town on that date, and reminded the Board that it will need a presenter for a brief slide show.

Mr. Fyall then updated the search for Benton County's next Communications Coordinator, informing the board that 29 people have applied for the job so far and the County hopes to have the position filled by mid-September.

Mr. Fyall went on to discuss how the boardwalk project at Two Rivers Park and the parking lot project at Hover Park are currently being held up by a permitting issue.

## **Business**

### Park Board Letter to County Administration

The Board discussed the draft letter concerning the July 4 garbage situation at TRP, the angry email from a park user and the continued trash and irrigation issues of Aug. 2 at TRP.

According to Mr. Fyall, the County is aware of the situation and understands the funding/staffing shortcomings, if not how to address them between county administration and the parks department.

Vice Chair Emmingham reported that things at TRP haven't gotten any better concerning trash collection and the irrigation system.

Board Member Cannon brought up the possibility of bringing up possible code violations concerning overflowing trash cans or garbage left uncollected.

Board Member McBurney broached the subject of past precedent and wondered if there was any, or if there were any documents in place concerning past precedent for the collection of trash at TRP.

Chair McNeal discussed whether it may not be better to contract trash or maintenance services out, if only to get what needs to be done officially done.

Vice Chair Emmingham expressed his willingness to meet with Benton County Commissioners about the ongoing problems at TRP.

The Board agreed to make any suggested revisions to Mr. Fyall's draft letter and return it to him.

Washington Invasive Species Council Award Nomination:

Mr. Fyall wrote up a nomination for Mr. David Beach of the Friends of Badger Mountain who for the past seven years has led the volunteer weed brigades on Candy and Badger mountains for an Invasive Species Council award, and his nomination was carried by the Board.

Miniature Aircraft Association:

Association members thanked the Board for coming out and for their support.

**Public Comment**

Mickie Chamness of the Native Plant Society reminded the Board that the Society's annual sale is Oct. 5 and 6 at the Wildlands Nursery in Benton City.

George Hager of Tri-Cities Shooting Association explained that the Recreation and Conservation Office recently visited the shooting range, and also that work on the new 100-meter range is almost done (the funding had expired, but has since been renewed), and that they hope to have it completed by winter.

Mr. Fyall reminded everyone that the September meeting will be another field meeting, this time to be held across the street at the Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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