



BENTON COUNTY Park Board

MEETING MINUTES 8 October 2024

Board Members Present

Dave McNeal, Chair
Robin Emmingham, Vice Chair
Michael LeCompte, Secretary
David Cannon
Frank Cooper
Kit McBurney
Ismael Mendoza-Jimenez

Benton County Employees

Adam Fyall

The Oct. meeting was held at the Benton County Administrative building in Kennewick.

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order at 6:27 p.m. and the pledge was recited. The full board was in attendance.

Review and approval of minutes and agenda:

The minutes for Sept. and agenda for the Oct. meeting were approved as presented.

Chair Report:

Chair McNeal thanked George Hager and Mark Monopoli for hosting the Sept. meeting at the Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility Shotgun House and thanked Adam for arranging the tour of the law enforcement training center.

Chair McNeal also thanked board member Frank Cooper for his presentation at the annual Joint Parks Board Meeting.

A reminder that the board has been invited to join in the annual Tapteal Greenway Celebration was issued.

Chair McNeal reported that the Horn Rapids Campground was used over the past month by a wedding party and the Society for Creative Anachronism and that RMSF had its second fire of the season last week.

Committee Reports:

None

Staff Report:

Mr. Fyall announced that Katie DoValle has been hired as the new Benton County Communications Coordinator and that she hopes to attend the Nov. Parks Board Meeting.

Mr. Fyall went on to report that the closure of drop-in camping at HRP worked well in 2024, with a few minor problems. Staff recommends continuing with this approach in 2025.

Cleanup efforts at Yellepit by the Corrections Work Crew are scheduled for Nov.

Business:

Park Restrooms: Mr. Fyall gave an overview of the restroom situation and current problems in the parks and introduced a discussion on brick-and-mortar versus Porta-Potties for use in the future.

The issue of perception concerning Porta-Potties against the maintenance issues of traditional restroom structures was discussed, especially concerning the restroom situation at Two Rivers Park.

The TRP restroom is in constant need of maintenance due to age and vandalism. The current restroom facilities were closed and Porta-Potties were tried this year.

Vice Chair Emmingham talked of how TRP is heavily used and needs a permanent restroom facility.

The Board agreed to look into the possibility of a shipping container restroom, such as one installed at Columbia Gardens. Mr. Fyall plans to communicate with the Port of Benton about the feasibility of the idea.

Benton County Parks Ordinance:

The Board discussed revisions to the Benton County parks ordinance with Board member Cannon suggesting the County attorney look through what's already covered legally.

Vice Chair Emmingham said that we should aim for simplicity because if people aren't likely to check the ordinance now, then they aren't going to go look up codes and laws.

Board member McBurney recommended deciding what does or doesn't need to be included in any new ordinance.

Board member Cooper suggested that legal counsel set some parameters for the ordinance then perhaps a special committee could work on revising the ordinance.

Board member Cannon suggested that each board member compile a "wish list" of what they want to see covered by a new ordinance before meeting with legal.

A special meeting to consider the Benton County parks ordinance was scheduled for Oct. 30 at 3 p.m.

Public Comment:

George Hager explained that the rimfire small bore range is almost done and that an RCO grant addendum will help cover the cost of 20 shooting stations and benches.

Dick McGrew told the board that in terms of brick-and-mortar restrooms or Porta-Potties it was beneficial for the model airplane association to buy their own Porta-Potty and call for service when needed and wondered about how any new ordinances would be enforced.

Poll of the Board:

Ismael: Board member Mendoza-Jimenez apologized for his absences from some recent meetings and welcomed David Cannon to the board.

Michael: Board member LeCompte expressed his appreciation for the fact that the board decided to have a special meeting on the ordinance due to the fact that he hadn't had the time to review the material.

Kit: Board member McBurney thanked the park partners for their work and dedication and asked about a blanket or park-by-park approach to addressing the restroom situation.

Robin: Vice Chair Emmingham reported that 40 sprinklers and 9 valves were out this summer at TRP and a long-term plan for sprinklers needs to be budgeted, as do temporary workers during the summer.

David: Board member Cannon expressed his excitement for the ordinance wishlist and how to get youth involved in park maintenance.

Frank: Board member Cooper expressed that he felt it was a productive meeting and he's looking forward to the special meeting on Oct. 30.

The Oct. Parks Board Meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

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