



MINUTES

WATERTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

DATE: June 4, 2026

TIME: 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Town Hall – Parks and Recreation Conference Room
61 Echo Lake Road, Watertown, CT 06795

I. Call Meeting to Order:

Chairman Bill Donston called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call:

Members Present: Margaret Germain, Alan Mickel, Joseph McGrail, Bill Donston

Absent: Pat Rinaldi, Vice Chair
Karim Belica
Tadd Johnson
Herm Desena, Town Council Liaison

The Chair called for a moment of silence for Town Council Member Michele McHugh and for former Crestbrook Golf employee Scott Hassle, who have both recently passed away. An extended moment was observed.

III. Public Participation:

Ms. Taylor, President and CEO of the CT Community Foundation, provided the commission with information regarding the Staver Fund. The language of the fund states in part, "Maintenance and Improvements for recreation facilities in the Town of Watertown." 50% of Mr. Staver's bequest was gifted to Watertown Parks and Recreation, and 50% was bequeathed to the Greater Waterbury YMCA.

Ms. Taylor encourages the Town to honor his request sooner rather than later and emphasized the importance of informing the public of such generous gifts.

Barbara Zulkeski reported that Adams Road Park is in disrepair. Ms. Zulkeski applied for a \$100,000 grant from the Lowes Foundation. Ms. Zulkeski is willing and able to participate in solutions as a concerned citizen.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

May 7, 2026, Regular Meeting

Motion: Joe McGrail seconded by Alan Mickel to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 7, 2026. Aye:3 Mickel, McGrail, Donston Nay: 0 Abstain: 1 Germain Motion passed.

V. Correspondence:

- a. Thank you letter from Brian's Gibbons Homeless Outreach
- b. Thank you letter from the Exchange Club
- c. Monthly report from the department

VI. Reports:

- A. Chairman –
 - a. Line stripping has been completed at parks and public buildings
 - b. Presented the report from Carrie Godfrey, Assistant Recreation Director.
 - c. Water-Oak Circle of Sports is having its annual dinner this evening.
 - d. There is a new business partner at Sunset Grille
 - e. Questioned the status of the letter about "Wayne the bull"
- B. Director – written report attached
- C. Sub-Committees – Golf.
 - a. No Report. Tonight's meeting was cancelled.

The Director is working on a comprehensive plan to present to the Commission regarding the Enterprise Fund and the viability of the Golf Course's continued absorption of employee benefits.

VII. Old Business:

- A. Policies and Procedures – No update
- B. Staver Fund update
 - a. Questions and answers were directed at Ms. Taylor. Discussion ensued
 - b. The priority list was reviewed and updated
 - c. Discussion about leveraging the Staver Fund with a municipal bond

Motion: Bill Donston, seconded by Al Mickel, to update the priority list as follows:

1. Where Angels Play
2. Adams Road Park
3. Tennis Courts

4. Jump'n' Jacks Playground
5. Swimming Pool and Splash Pad

Items # 1-3 are to be recommended to the Town Council at a future date. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Maintenance List Update

VIII. New Business:

- A. Review and Consideration of Submitted Applications for 2026 - None
- B. Account Balances for Parks and Recreation – No Report

IX. Adjournment:

Motion: Alan Mickel seconded by Margaret Germain, to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 pm

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

William Donston, Chairman
Watertown Parks and Recreation Commission

Approved: _____
Susan King, Clerk

Director's Report

To: Parks and Recreation Commission

From: Michael Ganem, Director of Parks and Recreation

Date: June 4, 2026

Subject: Monthly Operational Update and Strategic Overview

I. Opening Remarks

As we head into our busiest season of the year, our staff and contractors have made tremendous progress across all divisions. Thanks to coordinated efforts across our teams, our major summer preparations are moving smoothly, and we are currently operating ahead of schedule.

II. Maintenance and Infrastructure Projects

We are making excellent headway on structural improvements and safety updates across our park facilities:

- **Paving & Line Striping:** Seasonal paving projects and public building line striping have either wrapped up or will officially conclude within the next few days.
- **Veterans Park:** Comprehensive fence repairs at Veterans Park are locked into the schedule and will be completed by the end of this month.
- **Where Angels Play Playground:** Since our last meeting, I met on-site with Playground Medic to review outstanding maintenance issues. We discussed necessary structural repairs to specific play features as well as a complete patch and seal of the safety surfacing. Initial estimates for this project range between **\$25,000 and \$30,000**.

III. Seasonal Operations: Aquatics and Golf

- **Crestbrook Park Golf Course:** The course is experiencing a remarkably high volume of play. The significant number of rounds recorded to date keeps us firmly on track to meet or exceed our projected revenue goals for the enterprise fund.
- **Municipal Pool Preparation:** The pool has received targeted structural repairs and a fresh coat of paint. I am pleased to report that the pool is actively being filled right now, keeping us well positioned for our target opening later this month.
- **Aquatics Leadership:** Collaborative conversations are ongoing regarding the next steps and strategy for publicly posting the Aquatics Coordinator position to secure long-term leadership for the division.

IV. Fiscal Management & Strategic Goals

With the June 30th deadline approaching, our primary administrative focus is a clean and accurate closeout of the current fiscal year while simultaneously setting up a strong launch for the next.

Director's Goal: Moving forward, one of my primary operational goals is to intentionally shift the procurement and execution timelines for predictable annual projects. By executing these initiatives earlier in the calendar year, we can completely avoid the traditional administrative logjam that occurs during the fiscal year-end.

V. Summary of Upcoming Milestones

Event / Milestone	Anticipated Timeline	Status
Paving & Line Striping	Early June 2026	Nearing Completion
Veterans Park Fence Repairs	June 2026	Scheduled
Municipal Pool Targeted Opening	June 22, 2026	Ahead of Schedule (Filling)
Fiscal Year-End Closeout	June 30, 2026	Active / In Progress

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Ganem, CPRP

Director of Parks, Recreation, Senior, and Social Services