September 24, 2024

Call to Order

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting of the Brainerd Park Board was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Board President Miller in the City Council Chambers.

Roll Call

Upon roll call, the following board members were noted present: Berns, Sandy, Schaefer, Shipe, and Chair Miller.

Also noted as present Mayor Badeaux and Public Works Director/City Engineer Dehn.

Board President Miller opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Approval of Agenda

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS SHIPE AND SANDY, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH THE ADDITION OF APPROVING A SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION AND APPROVING PRIZES FOR PICKELBALL LEAGUES.

Approval of Consent Calendar

A. **Approval of Minutes**
B. **Approval of Disbursements**
C. **Financial Reports**

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS SHIPE AND SANDY TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

Upon roll call, Members Berns, Sandy, Schaefer, Shipe and Miller voted “aye”. No member voted “nay” in approval of the consent calendar.

Presentations

Presentation by YMCA- 2024 Youth Recreation Programs

Shane Riffle, CEO Brainerd YMCA, gave an update on the 2024 Youth Recreation programs. Overall, the program saw about 100 new participants in programming. The YMCA started to offer programming at various times during the day. He stated that 55-60% of the participants are in the Brainerd zip code. He stated that he hopes to approve a similar contract with the City again in 2025.

Mayor Badeaux reminded everyone that 56401 encompasses much more than the City of Brainerd.

Member Shipe asked about fast-pitch softball.

Mr. Riffle stated that it has done well. Volleyball is also a sport of interest. The YMCA aims to provide entry level training for those that may be interested in getting involved in sports.

Presentation by Community Education- 2024 Youth Recreation Programs

AnnMarie Lacher, Brainerd Community Education, gave an update on the 2024 Youth Recreation programs. Overall, the program saw an increase in most programs while others saw a decrease as high school programming takes priority at the older ages. This year, the pony league organized a few teams from other communities to play against. The feedback for this change was well received.

New Business

Approve Event Application - Dangerously Thrilling Decibels

City Engineer Dehn gave an overview of the event. The event would be on Halloween from 3-8. The applicant is hoping to start setup at 5:00 a.m., they're asking for access to electricity in the pavilion and bandstand, vehicle access to the park, and waiving of the facility rental fees.

Member Berns asked where the event was held previously.

The applicant stated that it was held in Gregory Park the first year and near the hospital the following two years. They are requesting to return to Gregory Park.

Mayor Badeaux stated that as a resident of North Brainerd, he loves this presentation.

Chair Miller stated that a blanket no to having vehicles in the park. He really wishes they could make it easier for the applicant. But no parking in Gregory is an issue they have been dealing with since he was on the board.

Member Shipe stated that The Friends of Gregory Park has gotten donations from people who would like to make a difference. The group would cover the fee.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS BERNS AND SANDY, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE EVENT APPRLICATION WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS APPROVAL OF THE 5:00 A.M. START TIME FOR SETUP, NO VEHICLE ACCESS TO THE PARK, AND THAT THE FRIENDS OF GREGORY PARK PAY FOR THE RESERVATION.

Approve Recreation Specialist Job Description and Recommend Council Authorize Advertisement

HR Director Schubert stated that Recreation Specialist Blank submitted her resignation as of September 16th. Prior to hiring, the Park Board requested hiring a Specialist as opposed to a Coordinator. At this time recommends maintaining the Specialist level and to advertise hiring.

Member Shipe asked about the "toxic environment", and whether staff thinks hiring someone else in the same environment will lead to the same result. Are there changes to be made prior to hiring again so that the same situation does not occur. He is frustrated by the situation. He has seen BLAST posts and comments and is still concerned.

City Engineer/Public Works Director stated that the workplace provided is safe and welcoming. He believes that there have been supportive members in our activities to make positive changes. He does not foresee an issue long-term.

Member Berns stated that this is a government position, they are going to be subject to the public. The person needs to be aware of and accepting of that when they are hired. There are a lot more items from the past need not be discussed. It may take some time, but the Board needs to look forward.

Mayor Badeaux stated that the City did handle the BLAST posts very well. When it became clear that the City didn't need to be involved in the social media group, the City did act very quickly to remove the biggest concerns. The front of house needs to be very strong.

Member Schaefer asked about the plan for training for the next person in the future to set up for success.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that based on the person hired training would have to be provided to fill their skill set gaps. He has expressed using networks with folks that are much more experienced and other programs that are in the area. Haley was great at documenting and taking notes of things learned and how to do things better in the future and addressing issues in the future.

Mayor Badeaux is not a huge fan of education requirements. It's difficult to tell children to jump into college out of high school for most of our positions.

Member Shipe pointed out that the way the training is written, is that they should have concussion training prior to employment. He asked about the hiring process, whether the Public Works Director should be hired previous to hiring for this position.

Member Berns asked about the number of applicants last winter. Making sure that things that can be taught during on-boarding isn't a requirement but understood that they can obtain. He also is not in favor of the education requirements.

HR Schubert stated that the training would be provided with the onboarding.

City Engineer/Public Works Director stated that the position does need to be filled in order to prep for winter and spring. He stated that there were about a dozen applicants.

Mayor Badeaux spoke against the motion. He does not think that the experience requirement is attainable.

Member Sandy suggested that the three years of experience in the recreation programming field be a "desired" qualification.

Discussion was held regarding qualifications.

Member Shipe suggested including marketing, event planning, or program management field or equivalent as a change to the first bullet.

Member Sandy suggested three years of supervisory experience in recreation, leisure, parks, coaching, sports management, event planning, marketing, event management, or similar experience.

Chair Miller asked whether given these specific changes, could a quality candidate could be hired.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated yes.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS SCHAEFER AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED, TO RATIFY THE CURRENT RECREATION SPECIALIST JOB DESCRIPTION AS PRESENTED WITH CHANGES TO THE TRAINING SECTION TO CLARIFY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS; FURTHER, TO RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZE STAFF TO BEGIN THE HIRING PROCESS TO FILL THE POSITION.

Approve 2025 Campground Host Agreement

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that Bill and Teresa would like to continue as the campground hosts for 2025.

Mayor Badeaux thanked the hosts for their work.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS BERNS AND SCHAEFER, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE 2025 CAMPGROUND HOST AGREEMENT WITH WILLIAM AND TERESA KELM AS PRESENTED.

Approve Change Order #1 - Parks ARPA Project

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn presented the change orders for the campground and the beach at Lum Park.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS SCHAEFER AND SANDY, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE CHANGE ORDER AS PRESENTED IN THE AMOUNT OF $10,070.

Discuss 2025 Parks Operating Budget Request

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that the City Council is requesting that the Park Board take a closer look at their budget for 2025 to find any adjustments to reduce their budget. The Park Board is showing an 18% increase over 2024. Personnel and Finance Chair Johnson asked whether the two additional temporary staff are necessary.

Mayor Badeaux stated that the budget is too high. All departments are looking at what can be removed to reduce the increase to the levy. He would like to suggest that the tree cost could be reduced coming from a person who has been advocating for replacement trees.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that the number of extra employees is a testament to the standards that would be delivered.

Member Sandy asked for clarification on the $133,000 increase to personnel services. He asked whether a good faith effort would be to give up 1 of the extra positions and reducing the trees.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that a majority of it is step/wage increase for staff. However, it also includes portions of the Public Works Specialist, Public Works Director, and Rec Specialist wage.

Member Schaefer asked whether concessions could be looked at and the number of warming house attendants. She doesn’t want to see anything with security. The water conservation of the splash pad, we could stated that the splash pad utilities are expected to be less as the water level is being adjusted.

Member Berns asked about the lease program. He recommends cutting a vehicle.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that the City is still trying to catch up from the years that vehicles were not available. There have been discussions about the need to remove vehicles, the Council would need to make that decision.

Member Schaefer stated that removing a bench installation could be cut.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS SHIPE AND SANDY. DULY CARRIED, TO REDUCE THE MILLS FIELD STRIPING BY $5,000, THE BUDGET OF TREES BY $15,000, REDUCE THE ASK TO 1 EXTRA TEMPORARY MAINTENANCE STAFF, AND ELIMINATE THE BENCH INSTALLATION PROGRAM.

Information on Rice Lake Weed Treatment

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that this item had presented at the public forum for the aquatic growth at the Lum Park Beach. There were two businesses that looked at the matter, both had similar recommendations. The proposals were included.

Member Sandy stated that it is good information, but again is a good thing to start thinking about for 2026.

Noah Rushmeyer, Dive Guys, stated that he is most concerned with the cat tails encroaching the pier which may in the future turn into a bog. The other concern he has is the lily pads affecting the soil quality, it will turn it to muck.

Mayor Badeaux stated that this should be added to the Capital Budget for next year sooner than later.

Information on Memorial Park Softball Utility Costs

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that there was a request at the previous meeting for this information. Utility usage was roughly $14,000 for the last 12 months.

Mayor Badeaux stated that he would like to see these analysis used for program costs.

Approval of Outdoor Play Lab Special Event Application (added item)

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn gave an overview of the event. It will be held on October 20th at Lum Park. Staff recommends approval of the event.

Chair Miller asked about promotion of the event on the Parks and Recreation Facebook.

City Engineer/Public Works Dehn stated that it could be advertised on our Facebook page. He would like to see events in our parks added to the Parks and Recreation Page.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS BERNS AND SHIPE, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE EVENT APPLICATION AS PRESENTED.

Approve Prizes for Adult Pickleball Leagues (added item)

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that there was gift cards given to pickleball champions in 2023. Haley was instructed not to make any changes to leagues in 2024. Although there isn't mention of the prize in the sign-up, staff is recommending continuing the process in 2024 and ask Park Board to give guidance for the future. He provided a breakdown of the fees and costs incurred. There are minimal costs incurred. However, nets at the facility were replaced this year.

Chair Miller asked whether the net revenue was paid out as a prize in 2023.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that the net for 2023 was $270 after the purchase of the gift cards. The total offsets the parks budget.

Chair Miller stated that in 2024, he thinks the practice should continue but be evaluated in future years.

Member Berns stated that the Board recently went over the Softball Budget. The rental fees were included in the softball fee, he believes that they should also be included in the pickleball fee.

Mayor Badeaux stated that giving gift cards is crazy to him unless they are donated.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that first place and second place teams received gift cards for $610 for summer leagues and $735 for fall leagues.

Chair Miller stated that when talking about improvements, you cannot wrap up the net revenue to increase the experience. The City should not be distributing cash prizes.

Mayor Badeaux stated that the revenue should be used for maintenance not for gift cards.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn asked for clarification on fees for future years, whether a fee should be established for maintenance and rental.

Member Shipe requested that fees be discussion at a future meeting.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS BERNS AND SANDY, DULY CARRIED, TO NOT PROVIDE AWARD GIFT CARDS TO THE PICKLEBALL LEAGUE IN 2024 AND ENSURE THAT THE BOARD WILL NOT BE PROVIDING MONETARY PRIZES OUTSIDE OF PLAQUES IN THE FUTURE.

Public Forum

Chair Miller opened public forum at 5:56 p.m.

No one came forward.

Chair Miller closed public forum at 5:56 p.m.

Staff Reports

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn gave an overview of updates from the last meeting. He spoke with Maintenance Crew about reducing the amount of water flow per button press it may cause malfunctions to some of the water features. The private pickleball league decided to decline hosting a league due to the court fees. There was left over money in the sign budget for 2024. Jaycees and Bane Park signs were able to be replaced. This will be a great look in Jaycees Park with the updates that have happened to the park. Staff is asking for direction on the Bane Park sign, whether to leave the juniper bushes in front of it or not.

Generally, the Park Board was ok with the bushes being removed.

The Great Pumpkin Festival will be held on October 12th. City Administrator Broyles and Community Development Team are finalizing the event. The Mayor has provided great guidance. Park Board members are encouraged to volunteer their help. Fall Ball tournaments will be taking place in the coming weeks as fall leagues wrap up. Staff is working on putting together the Buster Pavilion and Memorial Benches. The facilities will begin to be winterized, this takes a few weeks to complete. Dechantal Excavating is grading Jaycees Park, they will

begin work at Lump Park Campground in the next week. Finally, Hytec is continuing their work at Lum Park in the pavilions.

Chair Miller asked about moving the Great Pumpkin Festival from park to park, it had previously been discussed. He asked about the cause of MS1 having less participation.

Mayor Badeaux stated that the way Memorial is setup is ideal for the event.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn stated that there were some teams signed up, but there were not enough for a league.

Member Berns stated that the softball ages are increasing, so the numbers are dwindling to prevent injury.

Mayor Badeaux requested that staff look into costs of parks having a porta potty in Parks that have been winterized for a period of time after being winterized.

Member Shipe asked about the Buster Park complaint.

City Engineer/Public Works Director stated that the pavilion was not fabricated to add a screen to it. He stated that the previous screen was in terrible condition.

Board Reports

Chair Miller stated that he was concerned about the vehicles in the park for Pride in the Park.

Member Shipe stated that there were vehicles in Gregory Park on Wednesday. Generally, a positive report from Wayne Harting about the Ski Loons.

Mayor Badeaux stated that he will be at the Great Pumpkin Festival running the races again this year.

Adjourn

MOVED AND SECONDED BY MEMBERS SHIPE AND SCHAEFER, DULY CARRIED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Toni Gage, Administrative Specialist