

Park Board Meeting

September 14, 2026

Pursuant to due call and order, the Board of Park Commissioners, Dickinson Park District, met for a Regular Meeting at 3:30 pm on Monday, September 14, 2026, at the West River Community Center.

ROLL CALL: Commissioners Tim Daniel, Tyler Tucker, Zach Jahner were present. Also, present were Executive Director/Clerk Benjamin Rae, Deputy Director Caleb Burgard, and Administrative Manager, Leah Hoenke. Commissioner Nic Stevenson and Zach Keller were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: President Tim Daniel asked for a vote to approve agenda as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-3; Nays-0; Absent-2 (Stevenson/Keller). Motion carried.

SPECIAL APPEARANCES

ESGR Statement of Support – Stepheny Reger was present from the ESGR employer support of the guard and reserve. She said there are a lot of individuals serving here in Dickinson who also use the Park District services. She read a statement of support that she is asking the district to sign showing our support and display within the facility. The consensus was that the district will support and sign the statement of support.

City of Dickinson Easement at Jaycee Park – Engineering and Community Development Director Josh Skluzacek from the City of Dickinson was present. He said he has been working with Executive Director Benjamin Rae on the Jaycee Park area on the south end of 4th Ave E of which there is a development agreement in place that the city would replace the storm water outlet line, but there was never an easement put in place. It was decided to wait until construction was completed to make sure the easement was in the right place. All have been reviewed by necessary parties and the intent moving forward they will address easements earlier. He reviewed the project. Director Rae said we feel we have a good relationship with the city and that we could take care of easements as we go. President Tim Daniel said we have been in full support as the project has been going on and he entertained a motion.

MOTION: Tyler Tucker; SECOND BY: Zach Jahner to approve the Stormwater Easement with the City of Dickinson as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-3; Nays-0; Absent-2 (Stevenson/Keller). Motion carried.

TIMETABLE AGENDA – 4:15 PM – BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

President Tim Daniel opening the Public Hearing at 4:15 pm.

Executive Director Benjamin Rae presented the proposed 2027 budget, which includes a total property tax levy of \$3,162,470, consisting of \$2,421,269 for the Parks and Recreation General Fund and \$741,201 for Park Facility capital improvements. Key budget considerations include the addition of a new full-time community relations position to oversee sponsorships, grant writing, and community partnerships. Rae also noted the need to better account for unpaid property taxes, highlighting that approximately \$72,000 in taxes went uncollected in 2025. While recent collection rates were near 99.8%, the district's long-term average is closer to 96%, and slowing community growth makes more conservative budgeting necessary moving forward. Rae also discussed the district's application for funding through the Rural Health Transformation Fund, submitted in partnership with the school district. Because the amount and timing of any award remain uncertain, the proposed budget assumes no grant funding will be received. If awarded, the funds would support community wellness initiatives, expanded youth and family programming, partnerships with schools, businesses, and healthcare providers, and potentially help offset projects that may otherwise be delayed due to limited bonding capacity. Although the grant process has been lengthy and challenging, we remain optimistic about receiving funding and are prepared to implement programs quickly if awarded. The presentation also reviewed financial trends affecting the district. Dickinson's overall property valuation increased 5.85% over the previous year, with 5.1% attributable to new development and only 0.75% from increases in existing property values, indicating that future revenue growth will depend largely on continued development. Property taxes account for approximately 33.5% of total district revenue but provide 98.7% of capital project funding, making them essential for maintaining and improving facilities. Nearly 50% of General Fund revenue also comes from property taxes, while the West River Community Center receives no property tax support, relying primarily on sales tax revenue and user fees, with about 90% of operating costs paid directly by facility users. To address ongoing operational and capital needs, the district is recommending a mill levy increase from 18.41 mills to 18.83 mills. For a home valued at \$100,000, this would increase annual property taxes by approximately \$3.11, bringing the total annual Park District tax to about \$85.96 before state tax credits and early-payment discounts. Rae noted that the proposed levy remains relatively modest, increasing just over one mill since 2020 despite significant growth in community property valuations during that time. Compared with other large North Dakota park districts, Dickinson's proposed levy and property tax revenue per capita remain among the lowest. At approximately \$124.72 per capita, Dickinson collects significantly less property tax revenue than many comparable districts, while communities such as Minot and Williston have supplemented or replaced property tax funding with dedicated sales taxes to support park operations and capital improvements.

President Tim Daniel asked if there was anyone present to speak or give written comment regarding the 2027 Preliminary Budget. He asked three times. Rich Wardner was present and there was discussion on unpaid property taxes. Mr.

Wardner also commented that he has learned some things from the presentation, and he thanked the board members and appreciates what they are doing.

President Tim Daniel closed the Public Hearing at 4:35 pm and said the final budget will be approved on Monday, October 5, 2026.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent agenda items were presented for approval as follows. Meeting minutes from August 3 and 26 and the Claims in the amount of \$858,622.74.

MOTION: Tyler Tucker; SECOND: Zach Jahner to approve the consent agenda items as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-3; Nays-0; Absent-2 (Stevenson, Keller). Motion carried.

PARKS/GOLF MAINTENANCE

Director of Parks/Golf Maintenance Report – Director Scott Mack provided a written report for informational purposes. He updated the board on the new Friendship Park shelter saying concrete work will start this week. Golf course practice green should have a soft start this week.

RECREATION/FACILITIES

Deputy Director Report – Director Caleb Burgard provided a written report for informational purposes. He elaborated on his report, the WRCC top coatings on the leisure pool deck, we've picked two alternative options that either they do or we do in house. Hopefully by next meeting we'll have a plan of action. WRIC boards are being put in this week, ice in Charbonneau rink will be put in next week. President Tim Daniel asked about the timeline of the steam room. Director Burgard said the part has been ordered but he has not seen information on the shipping. He explained that the boiler inspection failed and that is why we had to replace the part; he said timeline is anywhere between 2-4 weeks.

DSU Student Membership Agreement – Director Burgard reviewed and said DSU was re-assessing departments, and this agreement was being reviewed. With the two semesters, we have been assessing \$65 per student which is a discounted rate than our normal semester pass. He reviewed the history of the agreement. President Molander tasked their team to look at membership usage by their students. We felt it was in our best interest if the college gives students ample notice for the student to opt-in for the membership. They must sign up with the college first for on-campus students and in 2027 will be open to all DSU students which will help to draw more students.

MOTION: Zach Jahner; SECOND: Tyler Tucker to approve the DSU Student Membership Agreement. Roll call vote: Ayes-3; Nays-0; Absent-2 (Stevenson, Keller). Motion carried.

BUSINESS/FINANCE

July Financials – Executive Director Rae stated that due to last month's early meeting the financial was not available at that time. MOTION: Tyler Tucker; SECOND: Zach Jahner to approve the July financials as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-3; Nays-0; Absent-1 (Stevenson). Motion carried.

August Financials – Director Rae noted that we are 2/3 through the year, we are noticing economic softness in some areas. Member numbers are still strong, green fees are off about 5-7 percent. Pro Shop is down about 20 percent, which you will see when there is economic softness. We may not see those big surpluses that we have seen in the past but still believe we are in a good place.

MOTION: Zach Jahner; SECOND: Tyler Tucker to approve the August financials as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-3; Nays-0; Absent-2 (Stevenson, Keller). Motion carried.

Executive Director Report – Executive Director Benjamin Rae provided a written report for informational purposes. He said we are the host of this year's NDRPA conference and said the staff has been doing a great job with planning.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (NO ACTION) – No public comments.

BOARD COMMENTS (NO ACTION) – No further board comments.

Adjournment – MOTIONED BY: Tyler Tucker; SECOND BY: Zach Jahner to adjourn the meeting at 4:35pm. All aye, motion carried.

PREPARED BY:
CLERK

APPROVED BY: