

Park Board Meeting
October 6, 2025

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, October 6, 2025, at the West River Community Center.

ROLL CALL: Present were Commissioners Scott Karsky, Tim Daniel, Nic Stevenson, and Zach Keller. Also, present were Executive Director/Clerk Benjamin Rae, Director of Buildings/Grounds Craig Pearson, Director of Recreation/Facilities Caleb Burgard, and Leah Hoenke, Administrative Manager. Commissioner Tyler Tucker was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: President Scott Karsky added a guest appearance to the agenda. MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the agenda with adding the guest appearance agenda item. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nayes-0; Absent-1 (Tucker). Motion carried.

GUEST APPEARANCE – Steve Wiesing, Facility Maintenance Manager – Director of Buildings/Grounds Craig Pearson introduced Steve Wiesing who was recently hired as Facility Maintenance Manager who will oversee the facility maintenance operations for the West River Community Center and West River Ice Center along with associated areas.

GUEST APPEARANCE – DAVE OUELLETTE – Review of Big Sticks and NAHL Expansion

Dave Ouellette, Owner of Badlands Big Sticks was present to speak giving an update on the summer league, as well as bringing a NAHL junior league to Dickinson. He said it was the second year in Northwoods League which is the oldest and largest league in the country. He said now in second year they had the seventh best record in the league. Weather affected attendance this year, averaging around 550-600 with a record night of 1080. Mr. Ouellette says it is a huge part of our community. Moving forward he will be speaking with the City Commission, trying to find ways to assist financially with the program to offset the cost of the rental of the ballpark. Executive Director Benjamin Rae said it is \$13,000 in rent and \$5,000 for facility improvements which were made in-kind this season. Commissioner Nic Stevenson asked if the rent is fixed. Director of Recreation/Facilities Caleb Burgard said the last 3 years of agreement will be \$14,000. Commissioner Stevenson also asked about the new scoreboard. Director Rae said everything for the scoreboard is on site and ready to be installed. Mr. Ouellette commented that he agreed to pay for the scoreboard and Director Rae said that the Park District gave up advertising rights for that scoreboard. Commissioner Zach Keller asked Ouellette if he has a specific request from the Board. Mr. Ouellette said on paper it is a for-profit business but is running as a non-profit and he believes over time we have a lot of potential with increasing profits down the road. He would like the agreement to be considered yearly based on the financial of that specific year. He also spoke of the trade out investments that he gets from local businesses. Commissioner Keller asked Directors Rae and Burgard to look at what makes sense to benefit both the District and the Big Sticks. Commissioner Tim Daniel also commented that he agrees that the Big Sticks has benefited the community. Mr. Ouellette stated that somewhere between the parks and rec and the city there are funds that should be going to the Big Sticks until it is self-sustainable.

Mr. Dave Ouellette also spoke on the NAHL expansion, possibly bringing in a junior hockey team to Dickinson. He said the biggest hurdle is the facility but otherwise the support and desire to have a team in Dickinson is substantial. He said 90 percent of games are held on Friday and Saturday and that he believes we have the perfect amount of seating right now for a startup program. He said he is on the investment, business side of things and it would only enhance our offerings in town during the winter months. Dallas Kuntz, Dickinson Hockey Club Coordinator, was present and said it doesn't affect the hockey practice time. As far as the game schedule goes, there's a busy time in December and January, but it is something they will work around. President Karsky asked if there would be any staffing issues. Director Rae said he doesn't think it will affect staffing. Dallas Kuntz commented that it is a good opportunity and will positively impact the hockey program and said the schedule and facility will work just fine. He said it is not a long-term solution for locker rooms but will work for now. Discussion followed on a start date of September 2026 and the cosmetic changes that would be needed. Mr. Ouellette said we have the support of the community, good hockey community and he doesn't see any issue with filling the stands. Discussion was held on game day experience and concessions that would have to be worked out with the Hockey Club. Dave Ouellette said a starting point is to have a commitment from the Park District to use the facility for the operation. Commissioner Nic Stevenson said if the Hockey Club doesn't have any reservations, then he doesn't either. Executive Director Benjamin Rae stated that we need to work out details of advertising, concessions, capital improvements, details of the contract, those are the biggest things we need to work through. His initial concern was the off-season events that we'll need to sort out. Discussion followed on year-round ice. Dave Ouellette said a commitment needs to be made ASAP to secure moving forward with the team. President Karsky said the consensus is that we are in support. Commissioner Tim Daniel stated that we will also need formal documentation to move forward.

2026 BUDGET APPROVAL –

Resolution for Increased Levies – The Resolution for Increased Levies was presented for the 2026 Budget, written as follows. Whereas, the governing body of the Board of Park Commissioners, City of Dickinson, has approved a budget for the operation of the functions of government; and whereas, the budget results in an increase in the dollar amount to be levied as an ad valorem tax over the previous year; and whereas, House Bill 1053, as passed by the 48th Legislative Assembly, requires the governing body to pass a resolution specifically approving such an additional levy; therefore, be it resolved that the governing body of the Dickinson Park District specifically approved an increase in additional ad valorem in the following funds: Parks and Recreation General Fund, \$2,184,269.00; Park Facility, \$737,031.00; Special Assessment, \$0.00.

MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to approve the Resolution for Increased Levies as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nayes-0; Absent-1 (Tucker). Motion carried.

Certificate of Levy – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reviewed the Certificate of Levy for the 2026 Budget stating that the Park District levied a tax of \$2,921,300.00 for its 2026 Budget. MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the Certificate of Levy as provided. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nayes-0; Absent-1 (Tucker). Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA – Consent agenda items were presented for approval as follows. Meeting minutes from September 8 minutes; and Claims in the amount of \$688,804.76. MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Nic Stevenson to approve the consent agenda items as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nayas-0; Absent-1 (Tucker). Motion carried.

BUILDINGS/GROUNDS

Director of Buildings/Grounds Report – Director Craig Pearson provided a written report for informational purposes. He said blowing out the irrigation at the golf course is weather dependent.

RECREATION/FACILITIES

Director of Recreation/Facilities Report – Director Caleb Burgard provided a written report for informational purposes. He added that we received the Innovative Programming Award for Teen After Hours at the NDRPA State Conference in Fargo. Commissioner Zach Keller commended Caleb, saying he crushed the presentation on Teen After Hours in Florida at the NRPA conference.

Agreement to Operate Concession and Liquor Operation at DCB&T Ballpark – Director of Buildings/Grounds Caleb Burgard said it is a renewal of the agreement to operate concession and liquor at the ballpark. We are proposing an extension of the existing agreement, which would be an eight-year agreement and doesn't qualify for public bid as it is below the \$50,000 mark. He stated that they have met with Dave Ouellette and are recommending approval. Commissioner Nic Stevenson said he has a hang up on doing a lease this long, considering the conversation today, that we table until we have more time to review. Commissioner Zach Keller said he agrees, not knowing what we are doing with everything else to make sure this fits into the normal lease agreement. Executive Director Benjamin Rae stated there is no need to act today. Agreement will be tabled until further notice.

BUSINESS/FINANCE

September Financial – MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the September financial. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nayas-0; Absent-1 (Tucker) 0Motion carried.

Investment Review and Renewal – No discussion or action was taken on this item.

Executive Director Report – Executive Director Benjamin Rae provided a written report for informational purposes. He added that Caleb Burgard was elected to the Board of Directors of NDRPA as Education Chair and that our District is hosting the state conference in 2026. He also said he was accepted as a member of the National Certification Board. Director Rae said there will be a project workshop on October 20 at 3:30 pm at Heart River Retreat. Commissioner Nic Stevenson said as we talked about the ending the season at the golf course, he would like to see a season recap. Discussion followed on there being a more in-depth look at the golf operations, possibly having a presentation from Golf Pro Mike Rademaker.

Adjournment – MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson: SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to adjourn the meeting at 4:53 pm. All aye, motion carried.

PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Clerk

President