Kendallville Park and Recreation Department

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BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2026

6:30PM

Present: Tracy Tipton, President, Kevin Jansen, Vice President, Dave Button, Jen Blackman, Jeni Ekovich, Dennis Nartker, Dawn McGahen, Park Director, Rachel Ort, Office Manager, Brian Brennan, and Grace Johnson.

Public Comments: Brian Brennan informed the board that he has reached out to several agencies on ideas to repair the shoreline. He also mentioned that a DNR biologist told him about the number of carp in the creek running from Bixler Lake to Henderson Lake.

Minutes of the August 10,2026, meeting was approved. (Nartker, Button)

Claims were reviewed and approved as presented. (Jansen, Blackman)

Directors Report:

1. Dawn introduced Rachel Ort as the new office manager for the park department.
2. The board was informed that the purchase of the Rodman property that adjoins the Youth Center was complete with the total cost being $8,075.25.
3. Met with The Apple Tree Center regarding a forest preschool located on park property.
4. Passed out copies of the 2027 budgets for the board to see.
5. Advised the board of the total fund balances and the total spendable balances of our accounts at the Community Foundation of Noble County.
6. Discussed the upcoming Apple Festival and work that is being done with it.
7. Dawn will be attending a conference from Wednesday through Sunday of this week.
8. The board approved to carry over up to 100 hours of vacation time for Dawn. (Blackman, Button)

Maintenance Report:

1. Staff continue to mow and trim.
2. Weekly water tests continue with good results.
3. Taking and setting up the mobile stage for various rentals.
4. Helped weed eat the cemetery.
5. Sanded and cleaned up graffiti in park bathrooms.
6. Maintained and fixed mowers, golf cart, gator and vehicles.
7. Craig Myers designed and crafted the art work that was installed in mini golf.

Recreation Report:

1. We cancelled the last 2nd Saturday due to it conflicting with the Kendallville Car Show.
2. Working on the Community Christmas Greetings.
3. We will be hosting another Halloween event in the campgrounds.

Kendallville Outdoor Recreation Complex:

1. Staff replaced the plastic tubing on the ball diamond fences on fields 5-8.
2. There was an issue with the adult coed softball teams. It wasn't a park issue, but we did tell them, we didn't want trouble during the games.
3. NASA had some concerns about fields not being available when they reserved them. It was a misunderstanding on our part, and we explained that to them.
4. The Pumpkin Bowl is scheduled, and several teams have signed up.

Acceptance of Donations: (Jansen, Ekovich)

- General Use: Community Foundation $500.00
- General Use: Community Foundation-Wilber Helmer $3,223.61
- Mobile Stage: Restore Avilla $500.00

Board Input:

Dennis asked about the last time we had the channel dredged and when the last fish kill was. The board discussed when they thought these both occurred.

Jen asked about the city ordinance regarding board members and was told that the Mayor and City Attorney are looking into this.

Kevin mentioned that the park looks great, and I should pass this along to staff.

Tracy asked the board to think about projects they would like to see happen in the future. Bring your ideas to the next meeting.

Adjournment: 7:19pm (Nartker, Jansen)