

Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 18, 2026; 8:15 am
Fargo Parks Sports Center
Lindenwood Conference Room

Present: Vicki Dawson, Jerry Rostad, Zoe Absey, Susan Faus, Dave Bietz, Jayne Gust, Tyler Kirchner, Stephanie D'Ambrosio, Kenna Krchnavy, Kali Mork, Broc Lietz, Paul Grindeland, Luke Evenson

Consideration of Longfellow Park Building Siding Project Bids

Dave Bietz, presenter

- 4 bids received; 2 rejected.
- Recommended contractor: Zulauf Construction for \$36,500.
- Total project budget: \$60,000.
- Remaining funds will go toward doors and windows at the Longfellow Park building (warming house / restroom / summer programming space).

The committee recommends moving this to the full board and placing it on the Consent Agenda for consideration and approval.

Consideration of South Maintenance Shop Drainage Improvement Project Bids

Dave Bietz, presenter

- Long-standing drainage problem in the wash-down area (park and golf equipment): water pooling, mosquito problems, "swamp" conditions.
- 3 bids received; all opened.
- Base bid: initial catch basin and partial drainage solution.
- Alternate: full connection to an inlet to fully remove water.
- Western Excavation as low bidder for base + alternate: \$37,708.
- Project budget: \$40,000.
- Western has confirmed price and summer 2026 completion.

The committee recommends moving this to the full board and placing it on the Consent Agenda for consideration and approval.

Consideration of 2026 Playground Replacement Project Bids

Tyler Kirchner and Kenna Krchnavy, presenters

- Parks included: Anderson/Tharaldson, Pointes West, Milwaukee Trail South Adventure Course
- All playgrounds: 5 bidders.
- Staff (construction + engineering) vetted bids for compliance.
- Anderson & Point West
 - All 5 bidders met requirements; all designs went to public engagement.
- Milwaukee Trail South (adventure course)
 - Only one contractor met the inclusive/accessibility requirement (at least one inclusive component integrated into the circuit).
 - Others failed to include that required accessible/inclusive element.

Community Engagement Process

- Led by Kenna, Communications & Community Engagement Specialist
- Timeline: Feb 19 – Mar 8.
- Outreach methods:
 - Ground signage at parks.
 - Geographically targeted postcards to nearby residents.
 - Social media and LinkedIn promotion.
- Survey design:
 - Very short: show designs, pick favorite, where respondents live, why they like it.
- Weighted responses:
 - 3 points – residents of the immediate neighborhood.
 - 2 points – “local” (nearby but not in the core neighborhood).
 - 1 point – others (including non-Fargo residents who still use the parks).
- Selected vendors/designs:
 - Anderson: Dakota Playground.
 - Point West: American Fence.
 - Milwaukee Trail South: Weber Recreational
 - Only bidder meeting requirements; community selected among color schemes.

Key Discussion Points

- Commissioners value inclusive and accessible features (particularly at Milwaukee South).
- Strong community participation, including many non-Fargo users (e.g., people coming for baseball or specific park amenities).
- Written comments are being “scrubbed” for:
 - Highlights / lowlights and recurring themes.
- Staff exploring:
 - Enhanced sentiment analysis in engagement software.
 - Using AI (e.g., Copilot) to digest open-ended feedback.
- General agreement that:
 - Engagement is increasing community ownership.
 - The adventure course concept responds to community desire for non-traditional playgrounds.
- Plan for Board Meeting:
 - Tyler/Kenna to present:
 - Winning designs,
 - Engagement numbers,
 - High-level findings.

The committee recommends moving this to the full board and placing it on the Regular Agenda for consideration and approval.

Discussion on Orchard Glen Road

Dave Bietz, presenter

Background

- Orchard Glen is a popular nature park in South Fargo
- Access road passes directly in front of two homes.

- Road is county-owned public road up to the gate and throughout the park.
- Residents are increasingly frustrated by vehicular traffic, especially at night.

Past Efforts & Agreements

- 2024: Concern raised about closer / accessible parking to the Orchard Glen gate.
- Multi-party meetings held with:
 - Residents, County, Sheriff's Department, Stanley Township, Park District.
- Initial tentative agreement (July 2024):
 - Add two accessible parking spaces near the gate.
 - Targeted for late 2024, then shifted to spring 2025 due to timing.
- Before construction:
 - Park District was contacted by an attorney representing residents seeking to vacate the road with the County.
 - Park District paused the parking project pending County decisions.

Park District Actions on Access So Far

- Built a new trail from the existing parking lot to improve pedestrian access (less steep, more manageable than old route).
- Installed split rail fencing to:
 - Direct visitors to the official trail.
 - Reduce informal use of the road corridor.

Park District / County Constraints & Concerns

- Legal/planning issues:
 - Park land and lots have complex plat lines;
- Operational:
 - Park District does not provide private driveway snow removal anywhere else; concerned about setting precedent.
- Commissioners:
 - Recognize Orchard Glen's city-wide value.
 - Want a solution that protects public access, accessibility, and long-term use, while being good neighbors.
- No formal action taken; this remains informational / exploratory.

Update on Sports Center Lease Agreement Amendment Discussions with Sanford Health

Kali Mork, Susan Faus and Dave Bietz, presenters

A. Exclusivity (Programming & Healthcare Sponsorship)

- There was discussion regarding the current lease and what it includes.
- Discussion on Sanford's proposal to amend the lease.

B. Priority Scheduling

- There was discussion regarding priority scheduling and if it is included in the lease.
- Discussion on Sanford's proposal to amend the lease.

C. Discounted Rental Rates on Additional Courts & Turf

- There was discussion on current discounted rental rates on courts and turf.
- Discussion on Sanford's proposal to amend the lease.

D. Tournament Weekends (Use of Courts 7-8 & Turf Field 2)

- There was discussion on the current lease for courts on tournament weekends.
- Discussion on Sanford's new proposal to amend the lease.

E. Early Morning Access & Front Desk Staffing

- There was discussion regarding having a Sanford employee at the front desk to sit at the Park District welcome desk between 5:15–6:45am on weekdays, instead of a Park District employee.

F. Community Room Use & Digital Advertising

- Discussion on Community Room usage and TV advertising.

Review Preliminary Year End

Broc Lietz and Luke Evenson, presenters

- Total revenue (all funds): \$61 million.
- Major funds:
 - General Fund
 - Revenue: \$43.4M
 - Expenses: \$40.7M
 - Net surplus (after transfers & asset sales): ~\$1.3M
 - Surplus is smaller than in prior years by design.
 - Capital Projects Fund
 - Large outflows due to:
 - Fargo Parks Sports Center final construction costs.
 - Island Park Pool project.
 - 2025 capital project spending: ~\$7.3M.
 - Transfers in: \$1.7M.
 - Result: planned deficit of ~(\$5.5M) to be covered by:
 - General Fund surpluses (current and prior years),
 - Pledged private donations (over time) beyond bridge loans.
 - Valley Senior Services (VSS)
 - Initially shows a small deficit (~\$14k), but:
 - A ~\$300k transit grant reimbursement is pending.
 - Final expected surplus: around \$280k–\$290k.

Structural Notes

- After audit and final transfers:
 - The large capital project accounts (Sports Center, Island Park Pool) will be closed out.
 - Future capital projects fund is expected to be more stable and self-sustaining, without such large swings year-to-year.
- External auditors will be on-site next week, then report formally to the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 am.

Minutes submitted by Carmen Johnson, Executive Assistant