



VAN BUREN COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting

Date: April 14, 2026

Time Called to Order: 11:00 AM

Time Adjourned: [H:MM AM/PM]

Location: Board of Commissioners Chambers, Van Buren County Administration Building, 219 E Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chappell called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

2. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS

Mike Chappell, Chairperson – Present
John Small, Vice Chairperson – Excused
Gail Patterson-Gladney, Member – Present
Paul Schincariol, Member – Present
Joe Parman, Member – Present
Wayne Nelson, Member – Present
Becky Grabemeyer, Member – Present
Daywi Cook, Member – Excused
Emilly Hickmott, Member – Present
Paul Garrod, Member – Present

A quorum was present.

STAFF & OTHERS PRESENT

Lisa Ransler, Community Services Director
Jacob Diljak, Community Services Assistant
John Faul, Van Buren County Administrator
Julie Pioch, Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) Veterans Therapy Garden

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Patterson-Gladney made a motion to approve the April 14, 2026 agenda as presented, supported by Parman. Motion carried unanimously.



4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Grabemeyer made a motion to approve the March 10, 2026 minutes as presented, supported by Hickmott. Motion carried unanimously.

5. FINANCES

Ransler presented a financial update.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

7. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

No reports nor correspondence.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 Veterans Garden Presentation

Pioch presented on the MSUE Therapy Garden at the County-owned Hazen Street campus. Discussion included the veteran-focused program, amenities, damage and repairs, funding, and public survey results. Funding from a grant has paid for upgrade and repairs but grant funds are depleted with large repairs needed. There are position openings for a director and assistant for the Veterans Therapy Garden. Commissioners and staff commented on their appreciation of the programming and the garden.

8.2 Parks Millage Renewal Recommendation

Ransler presented on the Parks Millage. Discussion included the annual recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for renewal of the Parks Millage by resolution for .10 (1/10) mills. Motion by Parman to recommend the renewal of the Parks Millage for renewal by the Board of Commissioners. Seconded by Grabemeyer.

Roll call vote:

Mike Chappell, Chairperson – Yes
John Small, Vice Chairperson – Excused, absent
Gail Patterson-Gladney, Member – Yes
Paul Schincariol, Member – No
Joe Parman, Member – Yes
Wayne Nelson, Member – Yes
Becky Grabemeyer, Member – Yes
Daywi Cook, Member – Excused, absent



Emilly Hickmott, Member – Yes
Paul Garrod, Member – Yes

Motion carried 7 – 1, with 2 absences.

8.3 Community Parks Grant Policy

Diljak presented on the draft policy for the Community Parks Grant Program. Discussion included eligible entities and projects, supporting communities by providing a grant program to bolster their own parks and recreation projects and grant applications. Features of the drafted policy and amends were discussed. Schincariol expressed excitement for this policy and programming which would justify the Parks Millage. Staff will take Commissioner input and amend the drafted policy for future consideration during meetings.

8.4 Rescheduled May Meeting

Ransler presented on rescheduling the regularly scheduled May 12, 2026 meeting. Discussion included allotting space for external partner budget meetings by rescheduling the regularly scheduled May 2026 meeting. Staff will coordinate with Commissioners and partners and send appropriate communications in rescheduling.

9. ONGOING BUSINESS

9.1 Hartford Kayak Launch Update

Ransler presented an update on the Hartford Kayak Launch update. Discussion included communicating with Abonmarche on project cost and design, timeline, and waiting on updates. Staff is working towards getting project designs and estimated costs to project partners and the Commission.

9.2 Fairgrounds & Museum Update

Ransler presented on the County Fairgrounds leases with the Van Buren Youth Fair and Van Buren County Historical Society, respectively. Discussion included clarification that the Van Buren Youth Fair has a current lease, the Van Buren County Historical Society needs a new lease, current fairgrounds boundary dispute and resolution progress, and road sign initiative.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENT & DISCUSSION

Hickmott shared the release of the 2026 Van Buren County Food, Farm, & Fun Guide. The Van Buren Conservation District produces this yearly booklet to promote local



farms, businesses, and public outdoor spaces. Copies are available throughout the County.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Parman to adjourn, supported by Patterson-Gladney. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:09 PM.

Next Meeting: Regular

Date: May 26, 2026

Time: 11:00 AM

Location: Board of Commissioners Chambers, Van Buren County Administration Building, 219 E Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079