

CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR BOARD MEETING

**Dr. Lawless International Dark Sky Park/Michigan Dark Sky Preserve
Maintenance Building - Conference Room
15122 Monkey Run Street
Vandalia, MI 49095**

December 11, 2025

4:00 P.M., - CALL MEETING TO ORDER - President R. Parrish

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Commissioner File

ROLL CALL – Secretary Dohm

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

PUBLIC COMMENT

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Director Wyman

LEISURE SERVICES REPORT – Coordinator Dohm

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Dark Sky
- LWCF Update
- Lawless Entrance Fee
- 2026 Goals and Objectives

NEW BUSINESS

- Funding Options for Projects
- Commission Meeting Dates and Times
- Great Start Collaborative

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT / ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Next regular meeting January 8, 2026. Please call 445-4456 if you cannot attend.



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

December 11, 2025

Dr. Lawless:

- Hosted Star Gazing Night
- Removed Snow
- Opened Tubing Hill
- Trail Clean-Up
- Opened cross-country ski trails
- Attended Cass County Conservation Annual Meeting

Dodd:

- Mulched Leaves
- Removed Snow
- Added Ballards to Stop Snowmobiles

Russ Forest:

- Removed Snow
- Closed West Side for the Winter
- Trail Clean-Up
- Groomed Trails
- Removed Five Loads of Wood

Stevens Memorial Park:

- Closed for the season.

Sears Park:

- Snow Removal

Harmon Park East / West:

- Closed for the Season
- Removed Snow

Before the snow came, Jay spent much of his time cutting wood, mulching leaves and preparing Lawless Park and equipment for the busy winter season. Now that we have enough snow to allow winter activities, he is grooming the cross-country ski trails and preparing the tubing hill. He put the walls up on the Schug Shelter to keep visitors warm when the fireplace is in use. He did some fall cleaning and reorganizing our maintenance building. He will shift to picnic table and sign repair as the winter progresses. Jodi is all but done working for us during the winter months except for Dark Sky Nights. We like to save the bulk of her hours for the busiest times of the year.

CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
1st Floor Conference Room
Cass County Administrative Building
120 N. Broadway
Cassopolis, MI 49031

November 13, 2025

4:00 p.m. – CALL MEETING TO ORDER –President R Parrish

INVOCATION – Commissioner R. Parrish

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner R. Parrish

ROLL CALL –

Director Wyman – P	Sam Barrera – P	Annie File –P	Lyndon Parrish -P
Jamie Stafne –A	Jayne Bailey – P	Fritz Kucklick - A	
Joyce Sheteron-Locke - P	Robert Parrish –P	Tami Stewart - P	Jeff VanBelle – A

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to accept: Commissioner Barrera

Second: Commissioner L. Parrish

Approved

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to accept: Commissioner Sheteron-Locke

Second: Commissioner Barrera

Approved

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS – Thomas Enright, Ambrosia Neldon

COMMENTS: Mr. Enright is the superintendent of the Middlebury Parks Department. During his time with the parks department, they have reconstructed the boardwalk at Middlebury and the mile trail to connect to the Pumpkin Patch Trail, a \$1.2 million project. Mr. Enright is also in charge of the River Watch Study at Russ Forest with Marcellus Middle School.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Director Wyman

1. Was Presented
 1. Getting stuff ready for winter in the parks.
 2. Big thank you to all that helped throughout the fall.

PATTY’S REPORT – Leisure Services Coordinator Dohm

1. Presented the current fee schedule structure with an overview of similar services of area parks for comparison to help the board modify the schedule for 2026.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Dark Sky

- a. There were approximately 150 cars in the park on November 12 hoping to see the Northern Lights, which could not be seen with the naked eye from the park.
- b. Explained the Northern Lights index, and what those conditions need to be in order to see them with the naked eye.
- c. Attended the Dark Sky conference via zoom. It was a 3-day event highlighting tourism.
- d. Trying to figure out what the noticeable light source is to the south of the park that turns off about 1:00 a.m. consistently.
- e. Continuing to work on the annual report for Dark Skies.
- f. Beaver Island has dedicated a week in September '26 for Dark Skies.
- g. Possibility of having our own dedicated time in September or October for Dark Skies, or maybe in April in conjunction with Earth Day.

2. Special Events

- a. We have been registered to be in Dowagiac's Christmas Parade on December 2nd.
- b. Working on Winter Nights, which will be January 24 & 31 and February 7 & 14, weather permitting.

3. LWCF Grant

- a. Had to refine the drawings to reduce the scope of the grant to save \$300,000, and then rebid. Even after that, it was \$200,000 over the grant. The DNR wants us to be successful. There will be a conference call with the lowest bidder to find out why we are still so far apart.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Park Fee Review/Recommendations

- a. Much discussion.

Motion to leave the fee schedule the same except the following: Commissioner Sheteron-Locke

Second: Commissioner Barrera

Motion Carried

Entrance fee for out-of-county residents raised to \$5.

Special Events entrance fees raised to \$3/per person or 2 canned goods per person

Winter Nights entrance fees raised to \$3/per person or 2 canned goods per person

Dark Sky Special Camping: \$15-car / \$20-tent / \$30-camper less than 30 feet

Hunting for non-resident: \$70-deer / \$50 – waterfowl

Hunting for out-of-state: \$100-deer/ \$70 - waterfowl

2. Annual Pass

- a. Review

Motion to continue the tradition of passes on sale through January: Commissioner Sheteron-Locke

Second: Commissioner L. Parrish

Motion Carried

3. Future Goals 2026

- a. Please think about our goals for 2026 for the next meeting.

4. Board Members Comments/Announcements – next meeting will be at the Community Room at Lawless, bring a dish if you would like

Motion to adjourn: Commissioner L. Parrish

Second: Commissioner Barrera

MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Dohm
Recording Secretary

Next regular meeting December 11 in the Community Room at Dr. Lawless Park. Please call 269-445-4456 if you cannot attend.