

CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR BOARD MEETING

**1st Floor Conference Room
Cass County Administrative Building
120 North Broadway St.
Cassopolis, MI 49031**

March 5, 2026

4:00 P.M.- CALL MEETING TO ORDER - President VanBelle

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Commissioner Stafne

ROLL CALL – Secretary Dohm

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

PUBLIC COMMENT

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DIRECTOR’S REPORT - Director Wyman

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Dark Sky Update**
- LWCF Update**
- Egg-Extravaganza**
- Veteran’s Park**

NEW BUSINESS

- SWxSW Cisma**
- SESC Trade Show**
- GLPTI**
- Meeting**

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT / ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Next regular meeting April 2, 2026. Please call 445-4456 if you cannot attend.

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

February 5, 2026

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

INVOCATION – Commissioner Parrish

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner Parrish

ROLL CALL –

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

NEW COMMISSIONER INTRODUCTION - Welcome Tharan Suvarna!

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to accept: Commissioner Barrera

Second: Commissioner Parrish

Approved

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to accept: Commissioner Parrish

Second: Commissioner Locke

Approved

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS –

Administrator Rentfrow and Ambrosia Neldon, Marketing

COMMENTS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Director Wyman

1. Was Presented
2. Question was asked as to how the trails are groomed for skiing.
 - a. NIMBA donated a piece of equipment that is used for the biking trails and is hooked behind the snowmobile for the ski trails. It works great.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Dark Sky

- a. Finalizing Dark Sky Week in April.
- b. Michiana Astronomical Society wants a star party at Dr. Lawless in June; the same day as our viewing date. They are not wanting any of the buildings, they just want to bring their telescopes to view the sky.
- c. Has received an email from a lady that would like to donate either a telescope or telescopes to the cause, he will follow up.
- d. March 3rd is the lunar eclipse.

2. LWCF Grant

- a. The letter that Director Wyman wrote regarding eliminating the splash pad is in a holding pattern while working with Cass County to determine the path forward.
- b. Director Wyman had a conversation with a municipality close to us regarding their challenge in mitigating a project similar to ours.

3. Special Events

- a. Saturday, February 7th will be our next Winter Nights program, and if the snow holds on the hill, February 14th will be our last.

- b. The Spring Egg-Stravaganza will be March 28th since Easter is so early this year.
 - 1. The commission selected the flyer that will be used for this year's event.

4. Promotional Video

- a. Looking forward to a new promotional video being created after the improvements at Dr. Lawless Park are complete.
 - 1. Turning the project over to in-house marketing director, Ambrosia Neldon, who has experience with such projects. Director Wyman indicated he has a video of the old one for her to view.

5. Lawless WiFi

- a. It appears that the funds allotted for WiFi at Lawless were left in the budget, and after verification will be contacting IT director to move forward with that.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Russ Forest Wood Removal

- a. Received a proposal regarding removing the wood for funds to be used for the less fortunate. Since Michigan State University owns Russ Forest, the proposal has been forwarded to them.

2. Veteran's Park

- a. DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) have adopted the park and have partnered with us to plant flowers and trees, etc. Through a granting source, they are planning on repairing and redoing the sidewalk. There is a meeting tonight with the Potawatomi tribe to see if they would like to partner with the project.

3. Recognition of Service

- a. Director Wyman questioned if the Board would like to do some type of recognition to exiting members, and if so, what type and for what length of service it should be awarded. Something to think about for a future meeting.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Commissioner Barrera

Second: Commissioner Locke

Motion Passed:

MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Dohm
Recording Secretary

Next meeting will be March 5, 2026. Please let us know if you cannot attend.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

March 5, 2026

Dr. Lawless:

- Hosted two Discover Winter Night events.
- Hosted Cass County Conservation birding event.
- Met with OCBA leadership and Capital Improvements Committee concerning LWCF grant.
- Resumed winter activities such as tubing, skiing and snowshoeing.
- Cut many trees off all trails during extremely windy conditions.
- Finished re-furbishing picnic tables that required fixing at Dr. Lawless Park.
- Attended GLPTI conference.
- Hosted a tubing party for 150 middle school students from Cassopolis.
- Met with video team to develop a strategy for creating a new parks video.
- Attended SWxSW annual meeting.
- Hosted invasive species removal team from SWxSW at Dr. Lawless Park.

Dodd:

- Water testing.

Russ Forest:

- Plowed snow.
- Removed woody debris from hiking trails.

Stevens Memorial Park:

- Closed for the season.

Sears Park:

- Plowed snow for fishermen and special needs student.
- Replaced signage.

Harmon Park East / West:

- East side closed for the season.
- Plowed snow for fishermen.
- Removed old signage.
- Attended SESC workshop

Jay has been busy trying to keep up with this crazy weather. One moment he is cutting wood and fixing signage and the next minute he is back grooming trails and the tubing hill. We had two successful Discover Winter Nights and his preparation for those events contributed to the success of those two nights. He did finish refurbishing all the picnic tables that needed fixing at Dr. Lawless Park. He will now turn his attention to Dodd and Russ to see what tables and grills need fixing and/or replacing.

Patty has been extremely busy with annual pass requests with a few reservations being made as well. As you would imagine, much of her time is being spent preparing for the spring egg-stravaganza on the 28th of March. In addition, she is making wonderful progress on our 2026 spring newsletter as well. Like Jay, Patty played a key role in the success of our two Discover Winter Nights events. Thank you to Commissioners Parrish and Bailey for their contributions to the success of those two nights.