

CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR BOARD MEETING

**Dr. Lawless International Dark Sky Park
15122 Monkey Run St., Vandalia, MI 49095**

June 4, 2026

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

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Commissioner Stewart

ROLL CALL – Secretary Dohm

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

PRESENTATION

PUBLIC COMMENT

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DIRECTOR’S REPORT - Director Wyman

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Dark Sky Update**
- **LWCF Update**
- **WiFi**

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resolution in Support of Parks and Recreation Month**
- **Reservation Policy**
- **Review Conservation Conversation Data**
- **Property Donation**
- **July Meeting Location**

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT / ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Next regular meeting July 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

May 7, 2026

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

INVOCATION – Commissioner Parrish

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner Locke

ROLL CALL –

Director Wyman – P

Sam Barrera – P

Annie File –P

Tharan Suvarna - P

Jamie Stafne –A

Jayne Bailey – A

Fritz Kucklick -P

Jeff VanBelle - P

Joyce Sheteron-Locke - P

Robert Parrish –P

Tami Stewart - P

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to accept: Commissioner Barrera

Second: Commissioner Kucklick

Approved

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to accept: Commissioner Barrera

Second: Commissioner Parrish

Approved

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS –

Roger Boyer

COMMENTS: Suggesting the board be proactive regarding the possible data center, go to the meetings and see what it's all about.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Director Wyman

1. Was Presented

- a. 15 NIMBA members volunteered to help with the trails.
- b. Michiana Jeep Club staged their start-off ride at Lawless.
- c. WIFI cable was put in today at Lawless, The Friends of Cass County Parks will be purchasing a WIFI extender.
- d. With all the wind, trees down in the parks is constant this year.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Dark Sky**

- a. Did the U-Tube channel presentation. Many thanks to James from the IT Department for the set up.
- b. One of the groups opposing the data center is wanting to use the dark sky designation to help deter the project. Will be giving a dark sky presentation for them in June,
- c. Penn-Harris high schoolers were challenged to write letters to their local government regarding dark sky. Two participants followed through and earned dark sky T-shirts.
- d.

2. **LWCF Update**

- a. Director Wyman had a zoom meeting with the DNR representative (with Patty in attendance) regarding having an extension to the grant. The representative was very positive and encouraging letting Director Wyman know that many other grant timelines need to be extended also. He gave Director Wyman the information to access the form for National Parks Department to get permission to remove the splash pad part of the grant and maintain the grant monies in entirety.
- b. Committee set: Commissioners Locke, Kucklick, and Suvarna.

3. **Wi-Fi**

- a. Covered in the Director's report.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Proposed Data Center**
 - a. Covered in Dark Sky segment and public comment.
2. Next meeting will be June 4 at Dr. T.K. Lawless Park at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner VanBelle – regarding the county attendance policy for boards and commissions. As the current chair of the Cass County Parks and Recreation Commission, he is the person that can excuse someone from attending a meeting; so please let him know prior to the meeting if you are unable to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Suvarna

SECOND: Commissioner Lock

MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Dohm
Recording Secretary

Next meeting will be June 4, 2026. Please let us know if you cannot attend.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

June 4, 2026

Dr. Lawless:

- Hosted one scouting troop.
- Disc Golf volunteers
- Cut many trees off all trails during extremely windy conditions.
- Hosted one Dark Sky viewing night.
- Hosted one reservation.
- Mowed and trimmed.
- Met with MEC fiber installers.
- Entertained Great Head Start field trip.

Dodd:

- Water testing.
- Hosted four reservations.
- Hosted Great Head Start leadership day.
- Mowed and trimmed.

Russ Forest:

- Hosted equestrian charity ride.
- Removed woody debris from hiking trails.
- Hosted Great Head Start field trip.
- Mowed and trimmed.
- Hosted four reservations.

Stevens Memorial Park:

- Cleaned and opened for the season.

Sears Park:

- Trash removal.

Harmon Park East / West:

- Cleaned and opened for the season.
- Repaired steps.

Veteran's Memorial Park:

- Removed woody debris

Jay and Jodi did a wonderful job opening our swimming areas after nine months of being closed. As you can imagine it is a challenge to keep up with mowing and trimming trails and turfed areas with all this warm weather and rain. Jodi has started working at the booth at Dodd, collecting fees and making sure all is well on the weekends. She also works Sunday afternoons doing a routine check of all the parks on busy weekends.

Reservations are really ramping up, so Patty continues to be busy with those. She has all but finished the summer newsletter and continues to work on updating, if warranted, park information within our brochures. She is also trying to consolidate and check for accuracy the information about our parks that others put on the web. It is crazy on what visitors have seen on other websites concerning our parks.