



*Johnson County Parks & Recreation Department will develop, operate and maintain parks that enrich the quality of life for residents and visitors alike, and preserve greenspace for future generations.*

---

REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
**Johnson County Park Board of Directors**  
**Johnson County Park Department**  
Thursday, January 8, 2026

The regular meeting of the Johnson County Park Board was opened at 6:00p.m. by Park Board President, Gary Cooper. Penny Lee, Dan Cartwright, Scott Jamieson, and Jeri Thompson were also in attendance. Park staff and audience in attendance: Kevin Leonard, Superintendent; Brad Wisner, Assistant Superintendent; Christy Howe, Recreation Director; Peggy Racke, Indiana Live Steamers; and Ben Cockrum, Indiana Live Steamers.

**Roll call was taken of those in attendance.**

**Jeri Thompson moved and Scott Jamieson seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**Election of 2026 Park Board Officers:**

- Gary Cooper asked the Board for nominees for Park Board President. **Jeri Thompson nominated Dan Cartwright to be Park Board President and Scott Jameison seconded. Motion carried.**
- Dan Cartwright asked the Board for nominees for Park Board Vice President. **Scott Jamieson nominated Jeri Thompson and Penny Lee Seconded. Motion carried.**
- Dan Cartwright asked the Board for nominees for Park Board Secretary. **Gary Cooper nominated Penny Lee and Jeri Thompson seconded. Motion carried.**

**Approval of Quote for Independence Park Gazebo Project:**

- Kevin informed the Board he spoke with Wes Harrison on his recommendation. Wes agreed to move forward with Duke Commercial since they were the lowest quote.
- Dan Cartwright informed the Board of his thoughts on the project, and he agreed to move forward with Duke Commercial. **Gary Cooper moved and Jeri Thompson seconded to accept the quote from Duke Commercial and that the project should not exceed \$125,750. Motion carried. Motion was amended by Gary Cooper to add that Kevin Leonard could sign all necessary documents for the project.**
- Penny Lee asked for native plants to be in the landscape portion of the project. The Board discussed possible alternatives for the project and for the landscaping. Dan Cartwright stated he would speak to Wes regarding landscaping and alternatives. Dan asked Kevin to contact Duke to obtain the contract.

**Jeri Thompson moved and Gary Cooper seconded that December 4, 2025 minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

Claims for January were presented for approval. **Jeri Thompson moved and Gary Cooper seconded to approve the January claims, as presented for \$29,576.60. Motion carried.**

**Legal Report:**

- Kevin Leonard presented John Youngs annual attorney contract. **Gary Cooper moved and Penny Lee seconded the approval of the contract. Motion carried.**

**Christy Howe's Recreation Director Report:**

- Deck the Stalls went well for the first year. Christy thanked everyone who helped with the event. The Board discussed the event for 2026 and what improvements could be made, such as heating the building.
- Christy handed out event flyers, sponsorship packets, and maps for the Park events. Christy is still working on sponsorship for events and adding new events to the Parks.
- The Renaissance Faire is under new management. Christy is working with them on securing the contract for 2026. The Board discussed in length the event in 2025. Parking issues and traffic were the two topics



*Johnson County Parks & Recreation Department will develop, operate and maintain parks that enrich the quality of life for residents and visitors alike, and preserve greenspace for future generations.*

discussed the most. It was recommended that Christy reach out to Boy Scout groups to assist with traffic and parking.

- Christy asked for the Boards approval to continue using Blonde Entertainment, Bouncers-R-Us, and Ramsey Pyrotechnics. **Penny Lee moved and Jeri Thompson seconded to continue working with Blonde Entertainment, Bouncers-R-Us, and Ramsey Pyrotechnics. Motion carried.** The Board discussed several topics such as music at the Amphitheater. The board suggested Christy reach out to a promotor to put on events at the Amphitheater.

#### **Brad Wisser's Assistant Superintendent Report:**

- Browns Tree Service was contracted to perform two days of tree and stump removal at the Park. The focus was on the Cross-Country Course, and the shelter area.
- Brad discussed the 2026 Horse Park schedule. The schedule has 52 events from March into December.
- Invoice spreadsheets will be handed out at the April Board meeting.
- The Horse Park website has been updated. The updates included aerial photos of the Horse Park, provided by the Sheriffs Department.
- Brad handed out the 2026 Horse Park Sponsorship and went over the details of it.
- Brad handed out a quote for an Aggravator attachment. This would be for preparing the footing of the Cross-Country Course. IEA reached out and is willing to donate towards the purchase. Brad told the Board he will keep them informed once he knows how much the group is willing to donate.
- The ATM will be installed in the Campstore in January.
- Brad informed the board that the estimated cost to mill the trail at Independence Park and asphalt a new 9ft wide trail would be \$75,000 to \$100,000. The board asked Brad to pursue putting a specifications sheet together and pursue quotes.

#### **Kevin Leonard's Superintendent Report:**

- The open position in maintenance has been filled. Currently, all maintenance positions are filled. Interviews for part-time staff will begin soon.
- Kevin was contacted in December by Pamela Harris. She wants to add the Parks Department as a beneficiary on one of her IRA's. **Jeri Thompson moved and Gary Cooper seconded to accept. Motion carried.** Kevin informed the Board that when the time comes to receive the donation the Board will have to approve that as well.
- The annual meeting for user groups is scheduled for January 20<sup>th</sup> at 10am. This meeting goes over yearly paperwork, park updates, events, and allows the groups to ask any questions they may have.
- Kevin asked the Board how they wished to complete the payment for the new gazebo at Independence. Kevin gave the option of transferring the \$75,000, currently in the 1178 equipment lease line item, then appropriate the remaining amount. The second option is to appropriate the full amount of the project from cash balance. Kevin stated he would have to go to the February Council for both options. Dan recommended pulling the full amount from cash balance. **Jeri Thompson moved and Gary Cooper seconded to appropriate the full amount necessary for the project from cash balance. Motion carried.**
- Kevin informed the Board of 3 quotes received for the campground full hook-up road expansion project. B.E Hasler Excavating was lowest quote at \$9,600. There was discussion amongst the Board over the project. The Board asked Kevin if he confirmed the lowest price, considering it was lower than expected compared to the other two quotes. Kevin stated he did confirm the price with the contractor. **Scott Jameison moved and Jeri Thompson seconded the approval of the quote from B.E. Hasler Excavating. Motion carried.**
- The Park was contacted by the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission about the gas line that was hit by Park staff. Kevin is working on sending in the response forms and the Park could be subject to a fine. Scott Jamieson asked what the Parks policy was for digging. Kevin confirmed that staff have been spoken to about the incident and no digging in the future will take place without approval from Kevin or Brad. Gary Cooper recommended using signed work orders for confirmation on projects involving digging.

#### **Presidents Report**

- Dan Cartwright recommended the Board get a tour of the Park. The Board collectively agreed on sometime in March. Dan asked Kevin to schedule the tour with everyone.



*Johnson County Parks & Recreation Department will develop, operate and maintain parks that enrich the quality of life for residents and visitors alike, and preserve greenspace for future generations.*

---

- Dan discussed how the Board could be more involved with the Park. Dan suggested the following Board members oversee different segments of the Park:
  - Campground: Jeri Thompson
  - Independence Park: Penny Lee
  - Hoosier Horse Park: Gary Cooper
  - Capital Improvement/ Maintenance: Dan Cartwright
  - Financial: Scott Jameison
  - Programs: Jeri Thompson
- Dan requested Park staff to contact the Board member for each category at least one week prior to Board meetings to discuss activities or any new information, so the Board is better informed prior to meetings.
- The Board further discussed the direction of the Park.

**From the Floor and More:**

- Penny Lee recommended Board members should represent the Park User Groups. Dan Cartwright appointed himself and Penny Lee to be the liaisons for the User Groups.
- Scott Jamieson recommended Christy Howe to receive free camping and be able to store her camper at the Park. The Board discussed the options of this. **Jeri Thompson moved and Scott Jameison seconded to grant Christy Howe free camping for the duration of her employment at the Park. Motion carried.**

**Jeri Thompson moved the meeting be adjourned at 7:51 p.m. Motion carried.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Penny Lee, Secretary