

THE MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC RECREATION COMMISSION
May 19, 2026

The regular meeting of the Public Recreation Commission was held with the following Commissioners present: Messrs. Lee. Mmes. Rich and Staff in attendance: Mmes. Williams, Nuss, Swift, Stewart, and Jones. Messrs. Higby, Johnson, Courtland Benjamin, Heyl, and Ford.

Commissioner Rich called the meeting to order at 4:08 pm.

PRESENTATION

None

INTRODUCTIONS

None

PROMOTIONS

Lucretia Hicks, Laborer
Charles Steadman, Laborer
Sonya Swift, Senior Administrative Specialist
Tim Heyl, Assistant Recreation Director

RETIREMENTS

None

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The North Avondale Recreation Center team provided an overview of the center's staff, programs, partnerships, and community impact. Staff members present included Tim Johnson, Nialani Robinson, Bobbi Covington, Sam Walker, and Melinda Edwards.

The team highlighted the success of their NFL Flag Football Program, which continues to provide youth with opportunities for skill development, teamwork, and healthy recreation. Building on the program's growth and popularity, North Avondale plans to launch a teen division in the fall and is currently fundraising to support program expansion, equipment needs, and participant opportunities.

Staff also discussed the center's ongoing partnership with Mercy Health, which has provided valuable support and resources to the community. Commissioners and CRC leadership expressed interest in further developing this partnership by identifying opportunities to capture additional participation and outcome data, better measure community impact, and explore ways to replicate similar collaborations with other Cincinnati-based businesses and organizations. Leadership emphasized the importance of leveraging community partnerships to expand programming, enhance services, and increase resources available to residents across the city.

The presentation showcased North Avondale's commitment to youth development, community engagement, and strategic partnerships that strengthen services for neighborhood residents.

MINUTES

As a quorum was not present, the Board was unable to approve the April meeting minutes. Approval will be considered at the June meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

CORRESPONDENCE

None

TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

Greg Courtland highlighted the outstanding work of the Ball Field Team, which supports baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and other athletic programs across more than 120 fields throughout the city. To strengthen partnerships with Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) and the Public Employee Services (PES) division, the team established a dedicated five-person crew focused specifically on maintaining and supporting school athletic facilities. This year marked the highest level of baseball participation in the past decade, and the team's efforts have been instrumental in ensuring fields are safe, prepared, and game-ready.

Special recognition was given to Chris Cain, Mick Elliott, Charlie Stendman, LaCrecia Hicks, and Laron Simmons for their dedication, expertise, and commitment to serving student-athletes and community sports programs.

DIRECTORS REPORT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Director shared plans to allocate \$10,000–\$15,000 in the budget to support professional development opportunities for mid-level and senior staff. Employees were encouraged to actively seek out training, certifications, and leadership development opportunities that align with their career goals and departmental needs.

CRC will continue exploring additional ways to invest in employee growth and engagement. Updates were provided on the department's Parks and Recreation accreditation efforts, including ongoing discussions with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) about bringing accreditation study and preparation courses directly to CRC staff. The Director also highlighted opportunities through NRPA's Executive Leadership Program and other professional development initiatives designed to strengthen leadership capacity across the organization.

HUMAN RESOURCES

April Jones provided an update on current vacancies across the department. The School Resource Coordinator (RC) position is scheduled to move forward to the Civil Service Commission on Thursday as part of the hiring process.

An update was also provided on the Community Center Director (CCD) Focus Groups. All focus group sessions have been completed, and the department is awaiting the final report and recommendations from PROS Consulting, which are expected next week. The report will help inform future planning and strategic initiatives.

FINANCE UPDATE

Tiffany Stewart provided a general finance update. Brian has been with the department for approximately 60 days and is continuing to transition into his role while becoming acclimated to CRC operations and financial processes.

The Budget & Finance (B&F) Committee is scheduled to begin meeting in June. To strengthen financial support at the center level, accountants have been assigned to specific recreation centers and will conduct site visits to meet with center staff, answer budget and finance-related questions, and assist with audits and financial oversight. Tiffany will distribute a report outlining these assignments and related information.

Additional process improvements include creating a dedicated Finance email mailbox to better track financial documents, requests, and communications. The finance team has also developed a processing timeline to establish clear expectations for staff regarding document submission and approval timeframes. These efforts are intended to improve communication, accountability, and efficiency across the department.

RECREATION OPERATIONS UPDATE

Kristen Riggins provided an update on recreation operations.

- The Winton Hills Reds Community Makeover is scheduled for June 23, bringing community partners together to support neighborhood improvements and engagement efforts.
- Through a grant-funded partnership, the department is addressing the needs of children experiencing developmental delays and the impacts of trauma. Many youth affected by trauma may exhibit behaviors similar to those associated with disabilities, reinforcing the importance of supportive and inclusive programming.
- Efforts are being guided by principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to help ensure programs are accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of participants.
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Kristen also emphasized the department's strong commitment to professional development. Training has been a major focus this year, with staff completing more than 100 hours of training across a variety of topics. Areas of focus have included stress management, employee wellness, and resources available through the PEAP (Public Employees Assistance Program), helping staff build skills while supporting their overall well-being.

CRC REPORTING STRUCTURE

City Manager Long was not in attendance. Due to the absence of a quorum, the City Manager's office will follow up with Board members individually on pending matters.

PLANNING AND ENGINEERING - CAPITAL PROJECTS (UPDATE)

Maddi Nuss updated the Commission on the major capital projects underway currently:

Projects Under Construction:

- 2022-24 Projects from the Recreation Special Activities Fund 323 for the purpose of providing resources (\$1.5M) for improvements and renovations to recreation centers and outdoor recreation areas, security camera upgrades and installations at various sites and signage upgrades at various locations: \$700k is budgeted for CRC center requested improvement projects. \$350k is budgeted for security system improvements and \$450k for signage

throughout all CRC sites. The Planning and Development Division completed a signage inventory at each CRC site. New sign designs, created by CRC P&D staff, have been approved. ETS requested the scope be changed to install the same type of camera system as CPD.

UPDATE: Remaining funds are being used to finish up the signage projects at Rec Centers and continue with the security cameras. Bush Recreation Center received a new sign in March. Lincoln, Bond Hill and Millvale are currently in fabrication. North Avondale will be next once we need to identify a workable spot to get the new sign. The camera projects are in progress.

- As part of the 2025-26 capital budgets, improvements at various tennis and sport court hard surfaces improvements are being planned for 2026-27. Since the city term contract has been eliminated, all future projects of this type need to be bid out through the city procurement system. This increases the project schedule timeline significantly. **UPDATE:** Sport courts at Mt. Airy, College Hill, Daniels, Mt. Airy and Schwarz are being scheduled for 2026-27. A proposed design to convert one of the Hartwell basketball courts to a hard surface futsal court is planned to start Summer-Fall 2026, this was requested by the community.
- As part of the 2024 to 2027 capital budgets, recreation center roof renovations are planned. Several roofs are out of warranty, renovating the roofs while they can still be brought back into warranty (10 to 20 years) condition is desired. The cost of replacing the roof is much more than the re-warranty improvements. CRC has had the roofs out of warranty inspected to create a prioritized list. 2026-27 roof projects are being planned. **UPDATE** The Millvale roof is under construction through May 2026 and the HVAC was completed in February. The Corryville Recreation center roof is scheduled for renovation along with a new HVAC unit, Design is in process for this project. Dunham Recreation center was repaired with plans to replace a section in the Renovations of the Center. Part of Winton Hills Roof was renovated with the Gym

Projects in Design:

- As part of proposed 2026 and 2027 COT funding, CRC will be receiving funding for the renovation of the Dunham Recreation Center. CRC is studying what kind of space is needed. An RFQ for the full design is in progress and final submittal is due 10/21/25. A Feasibility Study completed beginning of April before the RFQ contract was completed. **UPDATE:** Scope of project TBD. Assessment work in progress, will amend contract for Design once Assessment is completed, MSA was chosen as the Design Firm for the project. Construction will be bid out after Design is completed. MSA and Motz are in the process of mapping and assessing current building conditions and will be doing some public engagement for their assessment and proposal into design.
- As part of the capital budget, design work for ADA access to the Riverside Sports Complex boat ramp restrooms, a new boat dock and connecting walking loop is in progress. The renovation is being designed by CRC staff. CRC did not receive the grant, ODNR recommends applying for it again when available. An RFP is in progress for the design work. The existing rolling dock is no longer usable; a new one has been constructed. The new rolling boat dock is complete and installed. **UPDATE:** With the grant being denied, the process to hire an A/E firm is in progress for restroom improvements. Design work was completed by Verdantas. Construction will be sent to bid once procurement reopens.

COMMISSION BOARD COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEES:

BUDGET AND FINANCE UPDATE

No Update - Budget and Finance did not meet this month.

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Commissioner Bolton and West were absent. No report and policies pending approval will be moved to the June meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

None Currently

NEW BUSINESS

As a quorum was not present, the Board was unable to act on new business items. All new business was deferred to the June meeting for consideration.

Meeting adjourned at 5:51 PM

NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

The next meeting of the Public Recreation Commission will be held on June 16, 2026, at CRC Main Offices.

Leslie M. Rich, President

Daniel E. Betts, Director

/ss Minutes prepared by Sonya Swift