

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD

Chairperson – James Jones – At Large 1
Vice Chair – Ruth Wood - District 7
Pat Owens – District 1
Susannah McDuffie – At Large 2

Vacant - District 3
Roy Wahl – District 4
Michael Rovito – District 2
Vacant – At Large 4

Jill Martinson - District 5
Vacant – District 6
Keni Linden – At Large 3

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING Lower Level Conference Room

January 22nd, 2024

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING
 - A. NOVEMBER 27TH, 2023
- VI. BOROUGH STAFF REPORT
 - A. Hugh Leslie, Recreation & Library Services Manager
 - B. 2024 Arctic Winter Games
- VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD / AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – 3 minutes per person
- VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - A. Matanuska Valley Moose Range at Jonesville PUA
 - B. Code of Ordinances for Parks and Recreation
 - C. 2024 Meeting Schedule
- IX. NEW BUSINESS
- X. VOLUNTEER NOMINATIONS
- XI. CORRESPONDENCE
- XII. MEMBER COMMENTS
- XIII. NEXT MEETING
FEBRUARY 26TH, 2024
- XIV. ADJOURNMENT

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD**

Chairperson – Chris Wilson – District 2
Vice Chair – Kenni Linden – At Large 3
Pat Owens – District 1
Susannah McDuffie – At Large 2

John Harris - District 3
Roy Wahl – District 4
James Jones – At Large 1
Sarah Gotschall – At Large 4

Jill Martinson - District 5
Vacant – District 6
Ruth Wood - District 7

Draft Minutes

**REGULAR MEETING
Lower Level Conference Room**

November 27th, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Mr. Wilson at 6:17 pm.

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Members Attending: Mr. Wilson, Mr. Jones, Mr. Wahl, Ms. Wood, Ms. Harris, Ms. Matinson

Members Absent: Ms. Gotschall, Ms. Owens, Ms. McDuffie,

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Matinson moved to accept the agenda as amended, Mr. Jones, 2nd. All in favor.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Wilson led the pledge of allegiance.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

A. AUGUST 28TH, 2023

Ms. Matinson requested that we change her attendance to in person.

Motion: Mr. Jones moved to accept the minutes as amended, Ms. Matinson, 2nd. All in favor

VI. BOROUGH STAFF REPORT

A. Hugh Leslie, Recreation & Library Services Manager

Mr. Leslie stated that we have been having interesting weather. Plowing prohibits grooming with limited staff. Plowing has to be completed before grooming is started due to health and safety reasons.

B. 2024 Arctic Winter Games

Mr. Leslie stated that they are still looking for volunteers for the event.

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD / AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – 3 minutes per person

None.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Matanuska Valley Moose Range at Jonesville PUA

Mr. Leslie stated that there has been completed and is going out to public in 2024.

B. Code of Ordinances for Parks and Recreation

Mr. Leslie stated that it is still with the Borough Attorney for review.

C. ADA TRAILS

No comments.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Elections for 2024

Motion: Mr. Wilson moved to open the floor for nominations. Mr. Jones nominated Ms. Wood for Vice Chair. Mr. Wahl moved to accept the nomination, Ms. Martinson 2nd. All in favor.

Motion: Mr. Wahl nominated Mr. Jones for Chairperson. Ms. Martinson moved to accept the nomination, Ms. Wood 2nd. All in Favor.

B. 2024 Meeting Schedule

X. Motion: Mr. Jones moved to accept the 2024 Meeting Schedule, Ms. McDuffie, 2nd. All in favor

XI. VOLUNTEER NOMINATIONS

A. Dave Werner

XII. Motion: Mr. Wahl moved to nominate Dave Werner, Ms. Martinson 2nd. All in favor.

XIII. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

XIV. MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Wilson – Expresses his appreciation to the staff for all their support.

Mr. Wahl – Thumbs up to those that cleared the Wild Rose Trail.

Mr. Harris – Great group, enjoyed serving for great department.

Mr. Jones – 2024 here we come. Post vacancy on social media.

Ms. Martinson – Merry Christmas.

Ms. Wood – Good meeting and great trails report.

XV. NEXT MEETING

January 22nd, 2023

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

XVII. Motion: Ms. Martinson moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Jones 2nd. Meeting adjourned at 6:50pm



MSB Parks, Recreation & Trails Board

2024 Meeting Schedule
All meetings will be from 6-8 pm

Agenda cut-off date	Meeting Date	Meeting Location
January 11	January 22	LLCR
February 8	February 26	LLCR
March 8	March 25	LLCR
April 12	April 22	LLCR
May 10	May 20 changed due to Memorial Day falling on the 4 th Monday	LLCR
June 14	June 24	LLCR
July 12	July 22	LLCR
August 9	August 26	LLCR
September 13	September 23	LLCR
October 11	October 28	LLCR
November 8	November 25	LLCR

REMINDER: Please send an e-mail or call the Chairperson if you will not be attending a meeting. This is to establish a quorum and if any member has 3 or more unexcused absences the board can request they be removed.

~YOUR TIME AND EXPERTISE IS TRULY APPRECIATED, THANK YOU~



December 2023



Recreation & Library Services

Parks

Last year December brought record breaking snowfalls. This December has already surpassed last years records and keeps climbing. The Parks department has been nonstop plowing since early November. The most popular sites being plowed first and the others that are further and less popular plowed second and third. Most Days have become a “ground-hog Day” where we are going back and hitting the same sites that we did the day before, not even able to tell that we had cleared the entire area.

During the periods where it wasn't snowing (which only happened twice), the Bobcat was brought out with the Snowblower attachment to push back the encroaching snow berms on the more heavily used areas such as Lazy Mountain, and Government Peak trailheads. The snow berms have become so dense and thick that it takes three times as long to cut and throw back a berm 10 feet than previous years. This is due to the high amount of compaction from plowing the snow daily, causing super heating during movement followed by rapid freezing after completion creating a drift like consistency.

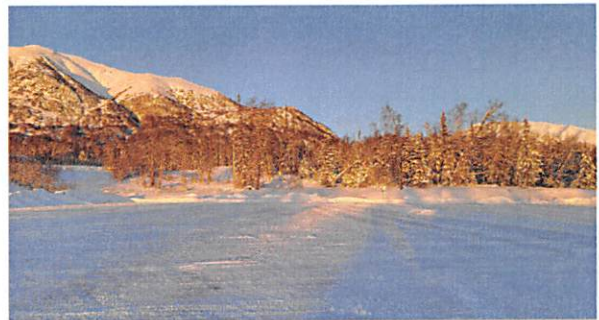
The snow continues to fall, and hours of plowing are in the future of both seasonal new hires for the Parks Department. One of which will be working weekends to keep up with the high demands at the trailheads for the hikers, skiers, sledders, and dog walkers that use them daily.



Big truck and Sno-cat buried under 18" snow, 3 days after being cleared



Parks and Trails Tech pushing back snowberms at Government Peak



New overflow lot at GPRA, plowed and cleared for use!



Out Grooming Crevasse Moraine with the Snow cat

Parks cont.

Starting to near the end of the month signage is being installed for the two new electronic pay stations at Government Peak, and Lazy Mountain trailheads. This is to inform users that the Borough will no longer accept cash payments at these locations and must pay via credit card. These initial signs were installed on the first of December and will be taken down at the start of the new year. The pay stations are both currently up and running and have been accepting cashless payment for over a month to aid in transitioning the public to the new system.

The Parks Specialist was able to get away from plowing towards the end of the month and bring out the Pisten Bully 160. This smaller snow groomer helps create a more solid and smooth base while also being able to set tracks for cross country skiers. The “Snow-Cat” is able to maintain larger trail systems such as Lazy Mountain, Crevasse Moraine, Matanuska River park, and Alcantra Sports Complex. At these locations trails are widened to allow for Skate Skiers, Nordic Skiers, Fat Bike enthusiasts, Walkers, and Dog Walkers alike. The snow becomes super hardened allowing for many users to use the trails without sinking or punching through. This makes for a much more enjoyable winter outing and brings the users back for repeat use.

The year 2023 has brought many interesting challenges and seasons for the Parks Department, and with 2024 right around the corner, the crew is ready to take on whatever the new year brings!



New overflow at GPRA All cleared!

Mat-Su Trails

This report is being written early due to holidays and vacation time. The report is pretty simple. December had lots of snow and another wind storm. That meant that the Trail Specialist spent almost his entire time at work grooming trails and removing trees that fell during one of several early winter windstorms. Time was spent using the Polaris Sportsman Big Boss 6x6 on tracks, with 5 foot Ginzu groomer, and the new Kubota Diesel SxS on tracks with 7 foot Ginzu.

The Kubota replaces a very well used and underpowered Polaris Ranger 570. The Kubota is a perfect grooming tow rig. It moves very slowly on tracks, rarely breaking the 5 MPH mark. Its diesel engine has great low-end power so it has no problem pulling steep hills with the Ginzu. This is very important at areas such as Lazy Mountain Nordic area and Crevasse Moraine trails.

The MSB Saw Crew and Parks Crew assisted in clearing the trails of downed trees and packing trails to establish a good base. By 12/19/23 the Plumly Maud trail, Morgan Equestrian trail, Mart River Park trails, Mat River trail, Alcantra Athletic Complex trails, Crevasse Moraine trails, and Settlers Bay Coastal Park trails have all been cleared, packed and groomed. This totals about 25 miles of trail. Many of these trails need to be packed 3 to 5 times, each grooming session, to make quality ski trails.

When not grooming, the Trail Specialist spent time working with a Land Management Specialist on a grant application. Making plane, car, lodging, reservations for the National Sustainable Trails Conference that will happen in March in Georgia this coming spring.



Pools

Staff training: The pool staff at both Palmer and Wasilla participated in oxygen administration and the safety precautions concerning blood borne pathogens.

Pool maintenance: The hot tub at Wasilla pool is still down. At the Palmer pool during the last wind storm, the galvanized steel air intake hood on the roof had come loose and hanging off the building. Shane McNellis, our pool maintenance technician climbed onto the roof and did his best to temporarily secure this large apparatus until a permanent fix can be completed. Borough public works have been involved in making these repairs.

Programs: The pools are now in Winter schedule as the high school swim and dive season is complete. Both Palmer and Wasilla pools offer a variety of recreational opportunities for the public to enjoy. We have 8 open and family swims as well as 45 lap swim sessions offered weekly. There are water exercise classes. Swim lessons offered day and evening. The pools offer private rentals and have scheduled use times for the Mat-Su school district and club swim teams to utilize. The pool holiday schedule is modified to allow daily open swims.



Brett Memorial Ice Arena

December has been a little bit different here at the Brett. We have revised our schedule at the rink to accommodate many projects taking place. We have Started our low e ceiling replacement, continued with our roofing project, all while remaining open to the public up until the last two weeks of the month. Construction crews have worked nights while our crew worked days to keep the building open as long as possible. Our staff have been continuously shoveling and breaking snow away from exits and refrigeration equipment in order to keep everything operating as it should.

Despite the projects and weather the rink continued with its busy schedule. We hosted our annual Holiday ice show featuring the Polar express. All of our adult leagues, high school, youth, and private rentals have continued to use the facility. We have made ice out at the outdoor rink but have battled constant snow fall in keeping it functional.

We are excited to wrap up 2023 as it has been the best calendar year the Brett has ever seen in respects to Gross Revenues, We finished the calendar year at \$656,365, beating our 2022 record. We look forward to 2024 in continuing to provide our community with excellent customer service, great ice, all while capturing as much revenues as possible.



Parks & Trails Northern Region

December in the Northern Parks has been cold and snowy! We have received 46” of snow so far this month and have been very busy keeping our trailheads & parking lots cleared, open and our winter trails groomed. Cold temperatures early in the month solidified our lake ice allowing us to expand the multi-use trails in Talkeetna Lakes Park, adding another 8km of mushing, skiing, biking, and snowshoeing opportunities on X, Y and Tigger Lakes. The Nordic ski trails have solid base with lots of classic and skate skiers enjoying the fresh snow conditions. We have been able to groom our trail network an average of 3 times per week this month. Windstorms continue to blowdown beetle-killed spruce trees throughout the TLP, particularly on the X-lake multi-use trail.

Talkeetna Village Park CXT installation began this month, currently the contractor is making the utility connections and preparing the building pad. The western half of the Talkeetna Village Park is blocked off and D Street is closed to allow for construction.

We have serviced Kroto Creek facilities every other week and with the increased snowmachine traffic into the Peters Hills has filled the parking lot with trucks and trailers.



Libraries

Trapper Creek Library

This year, with the help of local businesses, we created a Holiday Wall of Wreaths. Everyone is enjoying them and we hope to expand next year.

The homeschoolers and after school kids celebrated December by helping decorate our hallway with personalized snowmen, making pinecone trees, ornaments and especially enjoyed decorating cookies!

December has brought a lot of snow to Trapper Creek, our usual Movie night was cancelled due to heavy snow but we have rescheduled for the end of the month to watch The Grinch.

The creative ladies of the adult craft group had fun making festive ladders to decorate their homes.



Libraries

Big Lake Public Library

We made it through December! And we had very busy weekends the entire month! The first weekend we had Conductor Tim read a train story and set up 3 electric train sets, 2 of which the kids could play with. The second weekend we had our annual gingerbread house event. We made 62 gingerbread (graham cracker) houses, all of which were decorated in the library throughout the day. And the third weekend of the month we had two author visits, a father and daughter team. The daughter, Vivian Palin, writes juvenile fiction and the dad, Erik Palin, writes travel books. Both were well attended and Vivian would like to run a writing group for kids in 2024. Staff were busy weeding the collection and processing lots of new books. We are very thankful for our plow guy, he has moved so much snow. OM came and replaced a lot of lights in the building and outside.



Libraries cont.

Sutton Public Library

Tis the season to enjoy what's happening at the library. After hard work from the Friends of the Sutton Library Board and library staff to prepare our space, we started off December with our annual Holiday Bazaar and visit from Santa Claus. The event brought in a dozen local vendors selling homemade items and 300 patrons to shop for the holidays and visit with Santa and their neighbors. Deb Carver, from the Friends of the Library Board, volunteered to take your picture with Santa.

Story time themes this month were: Mrs. Claus, Mittens, Christmas, and New Year. After school kids also enjoyed a visit with Mrs. Claus and made holiday crafts. Our youth program had their monthly Thrive Mat-Su visit, made ornaments and candles, had a holiday party and played games. They will continue to meet over winter break for ice skating and fun. Our home school group had a day filled with holiday crafts and merriment.

On the last day of school, we hosted our annual Christmas Carol Sing Along, with cookies provided by Friends and patrons. Charlie and Jason (father and son) Overby have led the music for this event for several years and it is always a great way start winter break and enjoy the holidays with community.

The Librarian attended December's monthly Librarians Meeting. MSB Library Board does not meet in December. Strong People, Common Threads, and Book Club all had good attendance this month. Sutton Community Council, Boy Scouts and Alpine Historical Society used the library for their December monthly meetings. Nature's Nest, a local business, hosted a holiday craft event in the resource room; providing crafts for our story hour group and anyone with school aged children that wanted to join in.



Libraries cont.

Willow Public Library

During this month, the Librarian participated in meetings with WACO, Mat-Su Library Board, Alaska Library Catalog and Willow Library Association as well as a request for reconsideration meeting.

The Library hosted Mystery Book Club, Storytime, Mentoring and two Festival of Trees Open Houses.

The mentoring program continues. The students arrive on the bus, are given a snack and then have an hour of one-on-one or one-on-two time to explore the Library and its resources. We will be taking a couple of weeks off for Winter Break and all of the current students are signed up to return in January. We have started a waiting list for new students who want to participate.

For our Festival of Trees we have 16 trees and a light post provided by assorted groups, businesses and families from Willow. We have had 2 Open Houses with Cookies and Hot Drinks as well as caroling at the evening one.

Snow has been plentiful already this winter but so far it hasn't caused too many issues.



Libraries cont.

Talkeetna Public Library

It was definitely winter and Christmas break at Talkeetna Library this month. When patrons showed up at all, the place was packed. Other days, the staff got a lot of prep work and organizing. And snow shoveling. The Craft Closet continues to have a very vole-like odor, and O&M are working on a solution.

The Reading Mentor program for the first semester wrapped up with the usual Pizza Party and stories by a local author. Cil Gregoire read from her newest work-in-progress, a children's fantasy story. Everyone enjoyed it. One young man even offered to help her illustrate it.

The library added two new multi-generational programs this month, and they were well-received. One is Game Day and the other is Wednesday Afterschool Craft Day, featuring holiday crafts. We plan to continue meeting but may change the focus to STEM activities. Santa and Mrs Claus came to visit as well as the choir from Our Lady of the Valley School. Strong Women continue to meet twice a week on zoom and in person, and 2 new exercisers have joined. Breakfast Book Club met as well as Storytime with ever-increasing attendees. The adults outnumber the kids most days.

The librarian took a vacation, and the staff stepped up to keep everything going. The librarian zoomed in on the monthly Librarians' meeting while on a ferry from Vancouver to Victoria. Everyone attended the Almost-Annual Staff Gathering and enjoyed getting together. Everyone got Library Crew t-shirts from the Friends' group. The Friends' Giving Tree received donations to purchase 30 new books.

