



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 3, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar

<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/94184441385> Or 1-669-444-9171 | Webinar ID: 941 8444 1385

A. CALL TO ORDER

PRAC Vice Chair Josh Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

- B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. Gunalchéesh!

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Josh Anderson, Danika Swanson, Emma Van Nes, Jennifer Gross, Kaasáank' Andrew Williams, Paulette Schirmer, Ren Scott, Susan Crandall

Absent: none

Staff Present: Marc Wheeler, Parks & Recreation Director, Lauren Verrelli, Parks & Recreation Deputy Director; Mary Richey, Parks & Recreation Administrative Officer II; Christine Woll, Assembly Liaison; & Annie Carroll, Parks & Recreation Staff Liaison

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Ms. Scott to approve the agenda and ask for unanimous consent. *Seeing no objections, the agenda was approved.*

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes from December 2, 2025

MOTION by Ms. Scott to approve the minutes from December 2, 2025, and ask for unanimous consent. *No objections were heard, and the minutes were approved.*

F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - NONE

G. AGENDA TOPICS

2. Budget Process Update— Presented by M. Wheeler

Mr. Wheeler presented an overview of the FY27 budget process. He explained that the department prepared its draft budget in December and submitted it on January 5 despite weather-related closures. The budget is currently under review by the Finance Department and will next be reviewed line-by-line with the City Manager's Office. The Manager's proposed budget will be presented to the Assembly on April 1, followed by a public hearing on April 29 and adoption scheduled for June 8. The Assembly Finance Committee will meet

regularly throughout the process to review the budget in detail. Mr. Wheeler recognized Administrative Officer Mary Richey for her extensive work in preparing and coordinating the department's submission.

Mr. Wheeler described that the recent election and passage of tax-related propositions mean the City anticipates a \$10–12 million reduction in General Fund revenue, primarily from sales tax. The Assembly has directed the Manager to pursue \$3–4 million in reductions through budget assumptions and vacancy adjustments, \$2 million in increased revenues, and \$2–4 million in service reductions. Assembly liaison Christine Woll, attending via Zoom, clarified that these figures are preliminary estimates. She explained that the Assembly is intentionally phasing reductions over two years to understand the actual revenue impacts better and avoid making premature or overly drastic cuts. She also mentions that inflation and negotiated wage increases will likely expand the scale of the budget deficit.

As part of the budget process, the City launched the CBJ Community Compass public engagement effort. Mr. Wheeler explained that the short online survey is intended to provide the Assembly and Manager with a sense of community priorities as they weigh service reductions.

Ms. Gross noted that ranking services is difficult and sometimes misleading, and asked how Parks & Recreation programs are grouped within broader service categories. Mr. Wheeler responded that some programs are embedded within larger functional areas, which can make it challenging for residents to see the full scope of Parks & Recreation services represented in the survey options.

Mr. Wheeler provided an overview of the Parks & Recreation budget, which totals nearly \$20 million, with approximately \$9 million coming from the General Fund. Major divisions include Facilities Maintenance, Youth Services, Aquatics, Parks and Landscape Maintenance, and Downtown Parking. He also shared that the department's Facilities Maintenance oversees 44 borough buildings.

Ms. Gross asked what programs fall under Youth Services. Mr. Wheeler clarified that it includes the Zach Gordon Youth Center, Shéiyi Xaat Hít Youth Shelter, the Transitional Living Program, youth sports, activity grants, and after-school programs.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy asked who is responsible for downtown parking enforcement. Ms. Richey explained that Parks & Recreation manages the downtown parking garages and off-street lots, while on-street parking enforcement is handled by the Juneau Police Department. She further explained that only a small portion of the parking program relies on General Fund support, with most operational expenses covered by user fees.

Mr. Wheeler outlined cost-saving measures implemented to present a slightly reduced FY27 budget compared to FY26. These include reducing travel and training, trimming materials and commodities budgets, eliminating seasonal retention bonuses, and increasing facility fees.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy asked what fee increases are coming and how much revenue they are expected to generate. Mr. Wheeler explained that adjustments vary by category but average

around 25 percent, with pool admission increasing by one dollar per visit. They estimate an increase in revenue of approximately \$400,000.

The Committee discussed Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), which operate separately from the General Fund. Mr. Anderson asked whether CIP funds could be redirected to cover operating shortfalls. Mr. Wheeler explained that capital funds are typically voter-approved or designated for specific projects and cannot be freely transferred to operations. Mr. Anderson asked about the proposal of \$1.5 million to the Lemon Creek Multimodal Path and why funds were allocated to a project located partly on state and private land. Mr. Wheeler clarified that the project was specifically approved by voters as part of the temporary sales tax package and that any changes would require Assembly action. Ms. Woll emphasized that CIP funds are distinct from operating funds and that this allocation does not reduce the department's General Fund budget.

Ms. Swanson asked about deferred maintenance needs at Diamond Park Fieldhouse and Treadwell Arena. Ms. Verrelli confirmed that turf replacement funding was requested but not awarded this cycle. In response to Ms. Swanson's question about whether closing facilities would meaningfully reduce costs, Mr. Wheeler explained that mothballing facilities still requires ongoing security, minimal utilities, and maintenance, and therefore does not eliminate expenses entirely.

Mr. Wheeler reported on two emerging financial pressures, including the heavy involvement in winter storm emergency response, and newly discovered preexisting oil contamination issues at the Treadwell Historic Complex. The impact of recent snow emergency response efforts on the budget is still being evaluated and will depend on potential insurance and state reimbursements.

Ms. Gross asked about the oil contamination discovered at Treadwell Historic Park. Mr. Wheeler explained that contamination is related to an old bunker fuel tank and that cleanup is estimated at approximately \$300,000. Contaminated soil must be excavated and shipped out of state for remediation, and staff are coordinating with regulatory agencies and exploring funding options.

The committee discussed PRAC's advisory role in the budget process. Ms. Scott, and Mr. Kaasáank' asked how the results of the assembly's efforts will affect Parks & Rec, and whether PRAC could formally recommend priorities or submit comments to the Assembly. Mr. Wheeler responded that PRAC may provide advisory recommendations and encouraged members to consider how they would like to engage, whether through individual public testimony or a collective statement.

H. STAFF REPORTS

3. Dimond Park Field House Update

The meeting concluded with a Diamond Park Fieldhouse update. Ms. Van Nes asked about the elevator project timeline and the potential for a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Ms. Verrelli explained that completion was delayed after discovering that the existing fire alarm panel could not accommodate additional connections, requiring a full replacement. Completion is

anticipated in early April, and she is already in touch with contacts arranging for a ribbon-cutting ceremony once the project is finalized.

4. Director's Report

Mr. Wheeler presented a brief written report with updates on activities of the Parks and Recreation Department, including the Marine Park Redevelopment, Lighting at the Adair-Kennedy field, and the Jackie Renninger Park Project. He concluded by thanking Ms. Richey for her hard work during the budget process.

I. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. O'Shaughnessy thanked Mr. Anderson for chairing the meeting, as he couldn't make it in person. He continued noting the incorporation of a land acknowledgement into the meeting agenda, expressing appreciation for its inclusion, and encouraged more intentional attention to it in future meetings. He concluded by thanking Parks and Rec staff, acknowledging the complexity of balancing service levels amid emergency response efforts and planning for significant fiscal constraints.

Mr. Kaasáank' highlighted the inclusion of the land acknowledgement as meaningful and important. He noted that there is often limited understanding, particularly among the broader community, of Indigenous perspectives on land and stewardship and explained that, in the Tlingit worldview, land is not owned individually but collectively by all people. Respect for land extends to everyone who lives on it, not just tribal leaders or members. A Tlingit expression ***Haa Aani***, meaning **"our land"** was shared to illustrate this concept. The term reflects an inclusive understanding that all people, regardless of background or status, are connected to and share responsibility for the land. He emphasized that land acknowledgements should be understood as inclusive, recognizing all people who live within the community, and concluded by expressing gratitude to everyone contributing to the community.

J. NEXT MEETING DATE - MARCH 3, 2026

K. ADJOURNMENT With no further business to discuss, the committee adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Annie Carroll on 04/03/2026, approved at the 04/07/2026 meeting.