

Canon City Area Metropolitan Recreation and Park District
575 Ash Street
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BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 9, 2026

CALL TO ORDER The Canon City Area Metropolitan Recreation and Park District Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Board President, Cooper Trahern, in the board meeting room located at 575 Ash Street.

ROLL CALL

Board Members:

Present: Cooper Trahern
Melissa Smeins
Andrew Palmasano
Kristina Post
Sean Rodgers

Staff: Kyle Horne Executive Director
Dawn Green Finance Director

Attorney: Dan Slater

Guests: Pat Grette Dan Francis
Beth Katchmar Mike Banker
Della Rieger Sandy Montague
Julie McCuller Kalem Lenard
Eric Rieger

ACCEPTANCE OF CONSENT AGENDA

Board member Andy Palmasano made a motion, seconded by board member Melissa Smeins to accept the consent agenda as written for the June 9, 2026 regular meeting. Motion carried unanimously, all present voting aye.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Board member Cooper Trahern stated that Opening Day for youth baseball was a well-attended event, and Programs Director Tawny McCall threw out a great first pitch.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Executive Director – Kyle Horne reported:

The District's grant application to Black Hills Energy for the Mini-Pitch at Harrison Park will be considered in their next round of funding. The District was not awarded funding from T-Mobile -it was a very competitive grant. Kyle will be meeting with a private individual concerning a donation to the project.

Harrison Park was heavily tagged Friday night. Maintenance is working to repair the damage, and the police department was notified.

The feasibility study for the John Griffin Regional Park project is ongoing. The deadline for the RFP is June 30th.

In an update on the Bighorn Roundtable, the government agencies involved are working well together. Grant funding was awarded from Pikes Peak Outdoors. In another grant application, the Envision Regional Partnership has included some Fremont County projects.

There is no update on the school district facility fees.

The annual SDA (Special Districts Association) meeting is September 15th-17th in Keystone. Kyle would like to know by the July meeting if any board members would like to attend.

As of now there are 868 children participating in the District's summer programs. The Adult Sand Volleyball program sold out in three minutes and there was a record number of participants (of all ages) in the annual pickleball tournament.

Dan Slater:

No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion on Pool Project

There are three options for the pool project moving forward:

Option1- Redesign the pool facility and fund operations with existing resources.

Option 2 - Request an Operational Mill Levy Increase from Voters on November 3, 2026

Option 3 – Let the Pool Go and Go Back to the Drawing Board.

Kyle Horne presented the pros and cons of each option.

Option 1 Pros: The money for construction has been authorized by the voters and there would be no need to seek voter approval for operation funding. Cons: A redesign would mean additional costs. What could be built is divergent from what was presented to the voters. (The outdoor only option was the lowest ranked option in the community survey). There is no funding mechanism for capital replacement. The (annual) operational subsidy could be more than \$100,000. A parking lot would be necessary, which would require reimbursing the school district for expenses related to that area of their BEST grant project. There are costs associated with maintaining the parking lot which will affect the facility's operational subsidy. Prior designs were for smaller sized communities, and limiting the size of the pool will reduce services. Constructing a pool facility different from what was presented to the public will impact public trust. New pool designs have evolved to multiple bodies of water. Using existing Recreation District funding for the pool subsidy will negatively affect the sale of the bonds – increasing costs due to higher interest rates.

Option 2 Pros: There would be an option for two outdoor bodies of water, but cost escalation is in effect. The mill levy ask would be for the subsidy of the pool and less than the prior 4 mill ask. This option more closely aligns with the intended design. Cons: The District would have to approach the voters for the third year in a row. There is voter fatigue on this issue. It would be necessary to reimburse the school for the land associated with the BEST grant. The number of mills to ask for would have to be assumed due to time constraints.

Option 3 Pros: It would give the Recreation District time to rebuild trust with the community by pausing this project for which voters have not approved operational funding. It will give the District time to thoughtfully develop a new plan. Cons: The District cannot provide a pool for the community.

Following this summary, the topic opened to public discussion.

Pat Grette disputed the pool design ranking in the public survey as there were two options for outdoor and only one indoor. She also said an L-shaped pool opened in Kansas in 2021. Her idea is to trade Pathfinder Park (which she deemed an albatross and was added without voter approval) for a pool.

Dan Francis encouraged the board to support Option 3. The current location doesn't allow for expansion. He suggested kicking it back for private funding. It needs to be multiple use, like adding a restaurant.

Beth Katchmar mentioned that we were so close, yet the paid parking didn't go through. The sales tax is being collected to build the pool. People voted to build the pool and if the board was to do so, they would satisfy some of the people at least.

Mike Banker said it has been a long and difficult road. The money was there to build the pool. Community members brainstormed for ways to support operations, even asking for help from local government entities. Children need to learn how to swim. He believes that it is unlikely to get money to build the pool again, so Option 3 is not good. Option 1 is the best option. He stated, "Do the best with what you have." He believes a mill levy should be done.

Della Rieger echoed what Mr. Banker and Ms. Katchmar said- just build the kids a pool. She acknowledged the voter and volunteer burnout. We have to accept what is and move forward with Option 1.

Sandy Montague recommended the Board downsize the pool and think about Option 1. She is a “no” on Option 2.

Julie McCluller has lived here for 50 years. Children need swimming lessons. Fremont County is tax poor – nonprofits are big local employers. She believes Option 1 is probably the best.

Kalem Lenard had a question with Option 1- what cuts would have to be made to fund the subsidy? Is that reducing other services? He believes we should try to get a pool. Kyle responded that every cut you make normally has a negative impact on other funds. The Recreation District uses reserves to balance the budget. He gave examples of local pool subsidies: Florence at over \$70,000 and Pueblo’s four pools at \$848,000. Board member Cooper Trahern talked about the idea to have the City take over the District’s parks. But the parks that the District manages are tied to programs. The park that doesn’t make money is the Riverwalk, which he would argue is the most popular public amenity we have. Kids Klub operates nearly breakeven and provides a needed service for families in the community. Neither the Riverwalk nor Kids Klub should be cut. The District runs on a shoestring budget. Almost all the programs the District offers run at a breakeven point or at a surplus.

Kyle Horne then gave the staff recommendation. The District has been trying to replace the pool for decades but had to close it in 2023. In 2024 there were two successful ballot questions. The 2025 question for operations failed. A committee was formed to look at other options. At this point, the District lacks funding for operations and we are two years behind schedule. Staff supports Option 3 for the following reasons: Faced with a redesign, the District would not be offering the public a pool facility they voted for. The bond rating would not be good without the operations piece solidly in place. The District does not have the funding for the operational subsidy. There would be no funding for capital repairs and replacements. The voters clearly stated their position on operations, and it is crucial the District acknowledge that. Going back to the voters for a third year may not be the best approach. The District should reassess and explore alternative solutions to foster a sense of progress and community involvement. The District must rebuild trust with the community. Redesigning the facility to something different may hurt that trust.

Following the staff recommendation, the board members discussed the options. Board member Cooper Trahern stated that over the years there has been a lot of collaboration among the different entities working on this project. Overall, it was an extremely thought-through process. He is disappointed with the way the City handled the issue last week as it undermined the collaboration that we had. As elected officials we should listen to the will of the voters. Right now, our community is fractured, and we need to step back and take a breather. The demographics in the community are changing. It is heart wrenching, but we should revisit it later.

Board member Melissa Smeins does not agree. She has worked on this issue since 2019. The campaign (in 2024) was a success. Based on the size of our community we needed that size of facility, but we cannot take on a pool that needs that size of subsidy. The District's various partnerships in this effort was an exercise to see if the money to operate that size of facility was there, but it is not. If we let this go now there will be a whole generation of kids who won't know how to swim. The District has a tight budget. To provide the portfolio of services the community relies on, the District will have to look at cuts. She would like to build a facility that provides swimming lessons and something for the kids, but she acknowledges that a downsized pool does not meet all the needs of the community.

Board member Sean Rodgers said there is tension between the past, present and future. Progress on the pool has been made in the last 25 years, but not to our satisfaction. The need for the pool will continue and the issue will not disappear. Personally, he does not trust Option 1. It is at least a 12-million-dollar decision that shouldn't be made in "a fog". That would be questionable in front of the taxpayers. He is angry with the voters as there isn't enough unity to come to a decision. He believes the pool project requires a lot more collaboration.

Board member Kristina Post echoed Cooper Trahern in that the District appreciated the collaboration with the City, but the meeting last week was very disappointing. She feels the opportunity we have with the 24 million we have now does not come around often. Teaching kids to swim is important. If we let it go now we will have to go back to the voters, which has not been good for the District. If we have the funds, any pool will have to be worked out.

Board member Andy Palmasano stated Option 2 is off the table. He manages money and risk for a living, doing what is in his clients' best interests. This project has to be done with a voter approved tax. He is going to listen to the experts and the bond underwriter and will do what is in the best interest of the Recreation District now and for the future. Option 3 is the best choice now.

Board member Cooper Trahern said the District would be settling with Option 1.

Board member Andy Palmasano made a motion, seconded by board member Cooper Trahern to approve Option 3 – to forgo the pool and advise the City Council to stop collecting the tax. Motion passed with three board members voting aye and two opposed.

Board member Cooper Trahern thanked all who worked on the pool.

Eric Rieger wondered if some of the sales tax collected could be used for those learning to swim at the Florence pool. Attorney Dan Slater answered that the money is clearly earmarked for the construction of the pool. In theory the City can put whatever they want on the ballot as to how to refund this money. The City could put in the ballot language to use some of that money to subsidize lessons.

Kyle Horne met with representatives from the Florence pool who wondered if the District would be open to allowing them to use some of the Recreation District's pool supplies. Kyle stated that the District is not using them and they could be put to good use at the Florence pool, which is used by both Florence and Canon City residents. The equipment includes the handicap chair lift, pool vacuum, pool ladders, chemicals, lounge chairs, rescue backboard, concession sign and wood benches. The board members agreed to donate the equipment to the Florence pool.

Discussion on Potential MOU with Canon City Schools

If the Icabone Pool site is still to be considered as a location for a future pool, the Canon City School District will need to be reimbursed for the BEST grant expenses related to the area where a future parking lot may be located. According to attorney Dan Slater there is a draft agreement between the school district and the Recreation District "pretty much: in final form. The board briefly discussed the need for a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) or an IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement). Board member Coopper Trahern stated it makes sense to move forward to have this agreement in place.

Update on E-Bikes and E-Motorcycles at District Facilities

A copy of an email from Chief Schick with the Canon City Police Department regarding E-Bikes and E-Motorcycles on the trails and in the parks was included in the board packets. The City is looking at this issue with their attorney. Kyle stated that the Recreation District has been receiving more complaints. It is a public safety issue. The City, County and Recreation District need to be consistent with their policies concerning their use, and enforcement mechanisms need to be included. Attorney Dan Slater said the City is actively looking at an ordinance, but he spoke to an attorney with Fremont County who is not sure the commissioners would want to do anything on this.

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, Board President, Cooper Trahern adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/ Dawn Green

Dawn Green, Finance Director

Approved as written or amended:

/s/ Cooper Trahern

Cooper Trahern, Meeting Chair