

Chisholm Trail Recreation Commission

August 12, 2026

129 E. Ross Clearwater, KS 67026

Board Members: Shirley Palmer-Witt - Chair, Landon Doll – Vice-Chair, Sean Phipps, Jessica Kimmel, Jessica Mills

Board Meeting Minutes

August 12, 2026

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Clearwater Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:32pm.

Five commission members were present, constituting a quorum.

Shirley Palmer-Witt, Landon Doll, Sean Phipps, Jessica Kimmel, Jessica Mills

2. Approval of Agenda

Shirley Palmer-Witt made modifications to the agenda of the following:

Old Business – 8b. (no action)

New Business – adding KDOR Ownership Change and Discussion (Fall Fest)

Motion: Landon Doll moved to approve the agenda as modified. Jessica Kimmel seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

3. Public Comment

No members of the public were present for public comment.

3. Consent Agenda

The Commission reviewed the consent agenda, including previous meeting minutes.

Motion: Landon Doll moved to approve the consent agenda. Sean Phipps seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

4. Claims and Warrants

The Commission reviewed the claims and warrants. No additional questions or discussion were raised.

Motion: Landon Doll moved to approve the claims and warrants. Jessica Kimmel seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

REPORTS

5. Recreation Director's Report

Recreation Director Michael Harris presented his staff report.

Harris provided an update on youth volleyball registration. Registration totaled just under 50 participants. Third- and fourth-grade volleyball consists of three teams with eight, eight, and seven players. Fifth- and sixth-grade volleyball consists of two teams of nine players each.

Harris also discussed ongoing improvements to the Clearwater Recreation website and his plans to improve the Commission's communication and marketing efforts.

6. City Report

The Commission discussed the upcoming September 9 meeting and the need to have at least three commission members present to establish a quorum for the Recreation Commission budget hearing.

The budget hearing is scheduled for **September 9, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.**

7. Commission Member Comments

Youth Volleyball and Cheer Scheduling

A concern was shared regarding conflicts between youth volleyball and youth cheerleading. Some families have indicated that children may eventually have to choose between the two activities because of overlapping schedules.

Volleyball games are currently played primarily on Saturdays in Mulvane. The Commission discussed the possibility of working with Mulvane and Haysville to explore later Saturday volleyball games or other scheduling alternatives that could allow participants to participate in both cheerleading and volleyball.

Harris will explore scheduling options with the other communities during future league discussions.

Youth Flag Football

The Commission discussed community interest in expanding flag football beyond the current Pre-K/Kindergarten offering.

Members noted that tackle football currently begins at a young age and that some parents would prefer a flag football option through approximately fourth grade before transitioning to tackle football.

Harris will explore flag football offerings in surrounding communities and opportunities to potentially develop an expanded program involving multiple communities.

Youth Basketball

The Commission discussed the upcoming basketball registration period. Harris will contact Haysville regarding league dates and registration information so Clearwater can begin promoting basketball registration.

Meet the Director Event and Marketing

Harris reported that the recent Meet the Director event had approximately four parents and nine to ten children attend.

He stated that earlier promotion would likely have increased attendance and identified advance marketing as an area of focus moving forward.

Harris plans to increase use of Facebook, Instagram and the Recreation Commission website and to monitor engagement with those platforms. The Commission also discussed distributing printed flyers through Clearwater schools as an additional way to reach families.

Registration for the upcoming Mighty Tikes event had already received three registrations shortly after promotion began.

Baseball/Softball League Update

An update was provided regarding baseball and softball league discussions with neighboring communities.

Topics being considered include potential rule changes, uniform requirements and improved league governance/enforcement procedures. A follow-up league meeting is anticipated in January.

OLD BUSINESS

8. Recreation Center Feasibility Study

The Commission revisited the possibility of conducting a feasibility study for a future recreation center.

Previous discussions had included potential feasibility-study providers as well as contacts through Wichita State University. The Commission discussed the importance of determining whether a future facility would be financially sustainable and supported by the community before proceeding with detailed construction planning.

Harris stated that he believes a feasibility study should precede significant design or construction work. He also supported eventually conducting a community survey but recommended first strengthening recreation programming so residents have a clearer understanding of what activities a future facility could accommodate.

Harris recommended allowing approximately one to two months to become established in the position and continue developing programs before making the feasibility study a major priority. The Commission also discussed a previous community survey concerning recreation amenities and the importance of keeping future survey questions focused and realistic.

Action: No formal action taken. Harris will continue gathering information and contacts and revisit the feasibility study after becoming further established in the director position.

9. Personnel Policy and Guidance Manual

The Commission received updated copies of the Personnel Policy and Guidance Manual incorporating previously requested revisions.

Because members had not received the revised document with sufficient time for review, the Commission agreed to review the materials and return the item to the September meeting.

Action: No action taken.

10. City Park Ball Field Improvements

The Commission reviewed the proposed improvements to the City Park ball field.

The original project estimate was approximately **\$72,500**. Changing the project from seed to sod increased the proposal to approximately \$95,000. A proposed private well could not be installed on city property without the City obtaining the necessary state permits.

Public Works offered an alternative allowing the irrigation system to connect to existing **Well No. 4**, located near the horseshoe pits. Whitney Turf estimated this change would reduce the project cost by approximately \$5,000, bringing the estimated project total to approximately **\$90,000**.

The City has authorized up to **\$17,500** toward the additional cost associated with installing sod. The proposed agreement between the City and Recreation Commission was reviewed. Under the agreement:

- The Recreation Commission will control scheduling and use of the City Park ball field.
- The Recreation Commission will retain rental fees and other revenue generated by the field.
- The Recreation Commission will be responsible for the playing surface, grass/turf, irrigation system, temporary fencing, applicable electrical expenses and fence-line maintenance.
- The City will remain responsible for the permanent chain-link fencing and stadium lights.
- Improvements requiring City funding, labor, equipment, materials or future maintenance responsibilities require prior City Council approval.
- Either party may terminate the agreement with 60 days' written notice.

The Commission discussed field dimensions, temporary fencing, irrigation, opportunities for multiple age groups to use the improved field, and the availability of the varsity field for older teams.

The Commission also discussed the importance of improving the field's drainage and overall playing condition.

Motion: Sean Phipps moved to approve the agreement with the City regarding Recreation Commission management and maintenance of the City Park ball field. Jessica Mills seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

11. Appointment of Board Secretary

The Commission considered formally appointing the Recreation Director as Secretary of the Clearwater Recreation Commission.

The Secretary is responsible for maintaining records of Commission meetings, correspondence and Commission records.

Motion: Landon Doll moved to appoint **Michael Harris** as Secretary of the Clearwater Recreation Commission. Shirley Palmer-Witt seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

Harris was also informed that approved Commission minutes should be provided to the appropriate City and school district representatives and posted to the Recreation Commission website.

12. Emprise Bank Authorized Signers

Due to changes in Commission membership and staffing, the Commission discussed updating authorized signers on its Emprise Bank accounts.

Carol and Layne are no longer associated with the Commission and need to be removed. State requirements also require the Commission Chair to be an authorized signer.

The Commission discussed adding Recreation Director Michael Harris and an additional current Commission member to ensure adequate signer availability.

Motion: Landon Doll moved to remove **Carol B. and Layne Pike** as authorized signers and update the authorized signers to include **Michael Harris** and Jessica Kimmel along with Shirley Palmer-Witt and Landon Doll currently authorized. Sean Phipps seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

13. Emprise Bank Credit Cards

The Commission reviewed its Emprise Bank credit card account. Amanda Germann and Carol B. were listed as existing cardholders, with Carol also serving as designated agent.

Because they are no longer associated with the Commission, updated authorization is required.

Motion: Jessica Kimmel moved to remove Amanda German and Carol B. and authorize **Michael Harris and Shirley Palmer-Witt** as cardholders and designated agents for the Clearwater Recreation Commission's Emprise Bank credit card account. Jessica Mills seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

14. KPERS Designated Agent

The Commission discussed changing its Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) designated agent.

Historically, the Recreation Director served in this role. Because the City will now handle payroll activities for Recreation Commission employees, the City needs the ability to verify rates, enroll employees and administer required KPERS information.

Motion: Landon Doll moved to designate **Courtney Zollinger** as the KPERS designated agent for Clearwater Recreation Commission employees. Jessica Kimmel seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

15. Kansas Department of Revenue Account

The Commission discussed updating authorized individuals for its Kansas Department of Revenue account.

The account is used to report employee income tax withholding and remit withheld Kansas income taxes. Because previous authorized individuals are no longer associated with the Commission, updated authorization is required.

Motion: Jessica Mills moved to authorize **Shirley Palmer-Witt, Michael Harris and Courtney Zollinger** as designees for the Clearwater Recreation Commission's Kansas Department of Revenue account. Jessica Kimmel seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

16. Clearwater Fall Festival

The Commission held an extended discussion regarding the future of the Clearwater Fall Festival.

A Fall Festival Committee representative (Valeen Palmer) provided information regarding the current structure and workload of the committee. The committee currently has approximately six consistently active volunteers and faces significant difficulty recruiting additional volunteers. The current committee president has indicated that 2026 will be her final year serving as president. Without additional leadership and volunteers, there is concern that the festival may not continue in its current form in 2027.

The Commission discussed:

- The significant amount of planning and coordination required throughout the year.
- Recruiting individuals or organizations to take responsibility for individual festival activities rather than asking volunteers to manage the entire event.
- Difficulties recruiting volunteers from local organizations, churches, schools and athletic programs.
- Potential opportunities to recruit college athletic programs and other outside groups.
- The possibility of the Recreation Commission becoming more involved in coordinating or supporting the festival.
- Potentially moving carnival activities to the Sports Complex or expanding the street footprint.
- The importance of maintaining the carnival relationship with WEEE Entertainment.
- Opportunities to incorporate additional recreation activities, tournaments and events if portions of the festival were relocated to the Sports Complex.
- The potential community impact if the festival were discontinued.

Harris indicated that he plans to attend an upcoming Fall Festival Committee meeting to learn more about the event and its operational needs.

The Commission expressed interest in exploring ways to support the festival without placing the entire responsibility on one individual or organization.

Action: Discussion only. No formal action taken.

17. Field No. 3 Repairs

The Commission discussed potential improvements to Field No. 3.

Whitney Turf identified concerns with the transition between the dirt and grass, particularly between second and third base. Wind and rain can cause material to collect near the third-base dugout.

A complete long-term correction would require significant reconstruction, including raising portions of the field and potentially modifying backstops and dugouts.

A temporary or "Band-Aid" improvement could be completed for approximately **\$6,000**. This would include sprinkler adjustments, cutting back sod near the transition and adding material to raise portions of the field.

Harris recommended against spending approximately \$6,000 on a temporary solution. He recommended allowing him to experience a full season with the facility and reassessing whether a larger, permanent repair would be a better investment.

Commission members generally agreed that completing the City Park field project should take priority and that Field No. 3 could be revisited later.

Action: No action taken. Field No. 3 improvements will be reconsidered at a future date.

18. 2026-2027 Budget

The Commission reviewed the proposed 2026-2027 budget.

The Commission previously approved exceeding the Revenue Neutral Rate while remaining within the maximum three-mill levy.

Previously identified priorities include:

- Continued flexibility for special events and new recreation programs.
- Continued Rec Thursday programming.
- Christmas Light Tour.
- Easter Egg Hunt.
- Equipment purchases, including the recently purchased field drag.
- New computer, already purchased.
- Potential scheduling software.
- Temporary fencing, already purchased.
- City Park ball field improvements.
- City administrative/financial services agreement.

Approximately **\$1.1 million** is projected to remain in carryover funds before accounting for additional approved commitments.

The budget will be adjusted to remove the proposed \$6,000 Field No. 3 project and include approximately \$15,000 for Whitney Turf maintenance.

The Revenue Neutral Rate and budget hearings are scheduled for **September 9, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.**

The Commission also discussed potential scheduling software for recreation leagues. Harris will evaluate available systems and determine whether paid software would provide sufficient benefits over free alternatives.

Action: Budget hearing remains scheduled for September 9, 2026.

19. Director Goals and Expectations

The Commission reviewed proposed goals, expectations and the job description for Recreation Director Michael Harris.

The documents will also serve as a framework for Harris's anticipated **90-day evaluation in November 2026**.

Discussion included communication expectations, responsiveness to residents and partner organizations, preparation for Commission meetings, professional standards for recreation

personnel and officials, relationships with USD 264 coaching staff, and expectations surrounding office and event hours.

Harris discussed the unique scheduling requirements of recreation administration. During busy seasons, particularly baseball and softball, a significant portion of his work will occur outside traditional office hours and at recreation facilities.

The Commission agreed that responsiveness and accessibility are more important than requiring the Director to maintain a traditional 40-hour office schedule. Harris will use the Recreation Commission's official phone for Commission business and will remain accessible through phone, text and email.

Motion: Jessica Kimmel moved to approve the Recreation Director goals and expectations and Director of Recreation job description. Jessica Mills seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

20. Special Meetings and Regular Meeting Time

The Commission discussed the ability to hold special meetings when time-sensitive matters arise between regular monthly meetings.

Harris noted that certain purchases or operational decisions may require Commission approval and cannot always reasonably wait until the next regular meeting. Special meetings may therefore be called when necessary rather than automatically scheduling two meetings every month.

The Commission also discussed moving its regular meeting time from 6:30 p.m. to **6:00 p.m.**

Motion: Landon Doll moved to move regular Clearwater Recreation Commission meetings to **6:00 p.m.** Jessica Kimmel seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

The Commission intends for the new time to begin with the September meeting, subject to confirmation regarding the previously advertised September 9 Revenue Neutral Rate and budget hearings at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Sean Phipps moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:43pm. Jessica Mills seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43pm.

Submitted by:

Michael Harris

Secretary / Director of Recreation

Clearwater Recreation Commission