

MINUTES
MONTICELLO CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
Monday, March 9, 2026 – 5:00 p.m.
Monticello Community Center

Present: Lloyd Hilgart, Charlotte Gabler, Kip Christianson, Lee Martie
Absent: Tracy Hinz
Staff: Rachel Leonard, Sarah Rathlisberger, Angela Schumann, Tom Pawelk, Josh Berthiaume, Beth Green, Sara Cahill, and Jennifer Schreiber
Other: Hayley Wenda-Zilka (Monti Club JO Volleyball), James Martin (Lacrosse Club), Jon Salmon (Baseball), Craig Grams (Center Court Club Basketball Association), Luke Thielen (Great River Soccer Club)

1. Call to Order

Mayor Lloyd Hilgart called the special meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Bertram Chain of Lakes Athletic Park

Park & Recreation Director Tom Pawelk presented an overview of the Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Athletic Park, including its vision, completed improvements, updated feasibility findings, and future development options. The park is a joint effort between the City of Monticello and Wright County, with the City managing active recreation and the County managing passive areas. The long-term vision prioritizes community recreation with tournaments as a secondary use.

Tom Pawelk reviewed the alignment between the 2016 master plan and the 2023 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, noting continued priorities such as field development, amenities, trail connections, and interest in a potential indoor facility. An updated draft master plan includes proposed changes such as pickleball courts, a shared maintenance facility, and a potential indoor recreation facility, pending Council adoption.

It was further noted, that since 2016, approximately \$5.5 million in infrastructure improvements have been completed. The feasibility report emphasizes continued investment in core infrastructure to support future phases. Phase One, estimated at \$4.5 million, includes grading, infrastructure, and amenities, with additional phases adding fields, parking, and expanded features.

Tom Pawelk outlined governance roles and proposed forming an Athletic Park Subcommittee to guide planning and implementation. Council discussed phasing strategies, impacts to field availability during construction, and the need to balance flexibility with permanent facilities.

Discussion included long-term capacity concerns and the potential need for partnerships to meet growing demand. Council and staff reviewed funding options, including bonding against the voter-approved sales tax to accelerate development, noting tradeoffs between faster completion and temporary field closures.

James Martin, Lacrosse Club, expressed support for accelerated development and emphasized the importance of visible improvements to build community support, attract sponsorships, and create opportunities for tournaments and economic activity. Other members of the athletic youth associations noted agreement. The City Council spoke in support of visible progress of park projects, while emphasizing the need to balance capital investment with long-term operational costs.

Staff will return with additional analysis comparing phased development and bonding options, including impacts on funding, timelines, and operations.

3. Adjournment

By consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Recorder: Jennifer Schreiber _____

Attest: _____
City Administrator