

BEAUFORT COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Burton Wells Recreation Center
Thursday, May 1, 2025
2:30 PM

Board Members Present:

Ron Campbell, *Northern Beaufort County*
Alan Arseneau, *Southern Beaufort County*
Bruce Yeager, *Southern Beaufort County*
Phil Kiser, *Southern Beaufort County*
Elizabeth "Buffy" Camputaro, *Northern Beaufort County*

Board Members Absent:

Mark Rennix, *Northern Beaufort County*
Carlos Cave, *School District Administration ex-officio*
Jonne Hayes Sr., *Northern Beaufort County*

Staff Members Present:

Heather Clint, *Administrative Manager, Parks and Recreation*
Shane Stager, *Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation*
Darrell Ketola, *Athletics Supervisor, Parks and Recreation*
Scott Schnee, *Athletics Supervisor, Parks and Recreation*
Alexander Hunt, *Athletics Manager, Parks and Recreation*
Brock Vaughn, *Recreation Manager, Parks and Recreation*
Antoinette Binette, *Aquatics Manager, Parks and Recreation*
Evan Christian, *Athletics Manager, Parks and Recreation*
Robert Rozek, *Athletic Supervisor, Parks and Recreation*
Marisa Freeman, *Senior Manager, Parks and Recreation*
Ted Sochaski, *Athletics Supervisor, Parks and Recreation*
Eric Brown, *Director, Parks and Recreation*
Audra Antonacci – Ogden, *Assistant County Administrator, Beaufort County*

Guests Present:

Joe Mack, *Citizen*

Bonnie Gordon, *Citizen – Friends of Burton Wells*

Rob Wells, *Citizen*

Scott Whitehead, *Citizen*

Larry Scheper, *Scheper Tennis Academy*

Janice Johnson, *Scheper Tennis Academy*

Sailey Johnson, *Beaufort Water Festival*

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by **Bruce Yeager**.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were completed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Bruce Yeager asked for a motion to approve the agenda. **A motion was made to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded, and the agenda was approved.**

PRESENTATION: Friends of Burton Wells:

Bonnie Gordon thanked everyone for the invitation to come and speak with the board. The mission of the Friends of Burton Wells Regional Park organization is to support Burton Wells, the over 300 acres of property north of the Broad. They would like to be a community liaison between Parks and Rec and the community. In their opinion, there is so much room to improve programs. When the community held a meeting, they became aware of things that the community feels can be done at the Burton Wells location. The Friends of Burton Wells would like to be that buffer between the two entities. The Friends of Burton Wells see how much growth potential there is with the Master Plan in its original form. The Friends of Burton Wells would like to work hand in hand growing our programs and help with donation of funds to programs and centers. **Bruce Yeager** commented that there was a similar organization, People for Parks, on Hilton Head that spearheaded fundraising that went into Crossings Park. **Bruce Yeager** stated that Friends of Burton Wells need to work complimentary with Parks and Recreation. He also stated that this is just an advisory board and capital project decisions are made by the County Council and Elected Officials. **Eric Brown** explained that while it would be great to host the different tournaments our focus is providing recreation for the people of Beaufort County with our in-house sports. **Eric Brown** also stated that the travel community is for a small percentage of participants. We are expecting to host the Baseball Tournaments in the future. **Bonnie Gordon** stated that the travel portion of what they are discussing is small, what they are interested in is the Buckwalter facility and the impact it has on the Bluffton community. The people in Beaufort would like to have a facility like that as well. They would like to have something comparable. **Bruce Yeager** explained that the priority of the board is to provide accessibility to recreation for the people of Beaufort County, and that we probably needed better PR as to what is available at the Burton Wells facility. **Eric Brown** said he would meet with the group to come up with a way for the Friends of Burton Wells and Parks and Recreation to work together to make recreation better in the community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Mack, a Beaufort County citizen, came before the board with suggestions and concerns about land. Bruce Yeager stated that he did appreciate his comments, but the PAR Board deals with properties that the county already owns. Acquiring more land is a county decision, not a PAR decision.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY 9th MINUTES

Bruce Yeager stated that we did not have a quorum at the last board meeting to approve the January 9th meeting. He asked for a motion to be made to approve the minutes. **A motion was made. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved.**

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MARCH 6th MINUTES

Bruce Yeager asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 6th meeting. **A motion was made. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved.**

FEE WAIVER / REDUCTION REQUESTS

Scheper Tennis Academy

Janice Johnson spoke on behalf of Scheper Tennis Academy. Larry Scheper has taught tennis to many kids in Beaufort. **Janice Johnson** explained that she has worked with Larry Scheper Tennis Academy since 2009. Last year a tournament was held for one day and the number of participants was larger than expected and they had to scale down the tournament to accommodate the turnout. There were fees associated with the tournament to reserve the courts. This year's tournament will be on the 14th and 15th of June. It is a USTA sanctioned event. **Janice Johnson** asked if since Scheper Tennis is 501C3, the fees can be waived.

Bruce Yeager asked if the kids participating in the tournament are paying a fee. **Janice Johnson** stated that they were. But the fees were sucked up by the court reservation fees. Scheper Tennis is requesting all 6 courts for 2 days. **Phil Kiser** asked if this event would be different than the pickleball tournament that was held at the Burton Wells pickleball courts last year. **Bruce Yeager** stated that it was. The money raised from that event was given to Family Promise in the amount of \$12,687.00 and over 1,000 pounds of food was donated to Second Helpings. **Bruce Yeager** also stated that Beaufort Tennis had come to us in the past also looking for a fee waiver for a USTA tournament, that request was denied. **Bruce Yeager** mentioned that a 2-day tournament with 6 courts would cost a total of \$1,080.00. If we have the availability, we could approve a one-time fee reduction of 50%. In the hopes that this will help with the growth of the tournament in the future. **Bruce Yeager** also asked if the insurance for the event was going to be carried by Scheper Tennis. **Larry Scheper** stated that it was. **Alan Arseneau made a motion** for a one-time fee reduction for the 2-day event. **The motion was seconded, and the motion was passed.** **Bruce Yeager** asked that they return and give the board a report on the tournament.

Beaufort Water Festival

Sally Johnson, sports coordinator for the Beaufort Water Festival, stated that last year they did not pay a fee to hold the pickleball tournament and would like to know if it can be waived again. **Bruce Yeager** stated that he did not recall issuing a waiver for the event last year. Sally Johnson stated that in the past they have not been charged to use the facility since they are advertising Parks and Recreation. **Bruce Yeager** asked if they were a 501C3. **Sally Johnson** stated that she did not know but believed that they were. **Bruce Yeager** asked how many teams there were in the tournament last year and the number of courts used. **Sally Johnson** replied that there were 20 – 30 teams and all the courts were used. **Bruce Yeager** also asked about trash clean-up as well as port-o-lets for that day as the Burton Wells facility is closed on Saturday. He also asked if they were taking care of the insurance for the event. **Sally Johnson** replied that they are handling all of that. **Bruce Yeager** noted that this was the first time a request like this by the Beaufort Water Festival has been made before the board, but he is aware that things have been approved, circumventing the board by staff that are no longer with Beaufort County and that the Beaufort Water festival is a philanthropic organization. He asked for a motion to be made. **Buffy Computaro made a motion** to grant the fee waiver for this tournament while leaving 1 court open. **Phil Kiser seconded the motion and the motion was passed.** **Bruce Yeager** also asked that they return to give the Board a recap of the tournament.

DEPARTMENT REPORT

- **Operations**
 - Patron Check-Ins:
 - Buckwalter Recreation Center
 - March 2025: 4793
 - April 2025: 3357
 - Burton Wells Recreation Center
 - March 2025: 510
 - April 2025: 442

- Charles Lind Brown Recreation Center
 - March 2025: 323
 - April 2025: 289

Bruce Yeager noted the difference in the check ins between Burton Wells Recreation center and the Buckwalter check ins. He stated that it might be since Burton Wells was rural compared to Buckwalter. **Heather Clint** commented that might be the case with Burton Wells but did not explain the Charles Lind Brown Center, since it was downtown. **Eric Brown** commented that we also needed to look at the number of people in Bluffton with around 80,000 residents compared to Burton Wells with 20,000 residents. **Heather Clint** also mentioned the other Beaufort County Departments that utilize our facilities. Human Resources held a blood drive at Burton Wells Recreation Center on March 18th. County Council held a meeting on March 24th at the Buckwalter Recreation Center. The library hosted their annual meeting on April 22nd at the Burton Wells Recreation Center, showcasing the newly installed Book Box. The Beaufort County annual Earth Day Clean Up luncheon was held at the Buckwalter Recreation Center on the 24th of April. 51 bags of trash were collected from 170 by the PAR staff. County staff collected 9000 pounds of trash along 40 miles of roadway. There was a total of 200 county employees and 500 external volunteers in total.

- **Athletics**

Current League – Spring

- Bluffton Youth (2024 and 2025 Registration Numbers)

Soccer	2024: 1117	2025: 1045	(-72) Registration Closed
Baseball	2024: 486	2025: 498	(+12) Registration Closed
Softball	2024: 219	2025: 207	(-12) Registration Closed
Flag Football	2024: 387	2025: 398	(+11) Registration Closed
Lacrosse	2024: 89	2025: 72	(-17) Registration Closed
Diamond Youth Softball	2024: -	2025: 34	(+34) Registration Closed
Dixie Boys Baseball	2024: 43	2025: 41	(-2) Registration Closed

- Bluffton Adult (2024 and 2025 Registration Numbers)

Adult Softball – Bronze	12 teams	14 teams	(+2) Player registration ends 5/4/25
Adult Softball – Coed	7 teams	3 teams	(-4) Player registration ends 5/4/25
Adult Softball - Gold	7 teams	5 teams	(-2) Player registration ends 5/4/25
Adult Softball - Silver	8 teams	8 teams	(-) Player registration ends 5/4/25
Adult Softball - Senior	4 teams	-	(-4)

Upcoming Summer Sports

- Bluffton Youth

Basketball	2024: 486	2025: 187*	(-299) Registration 4/1/25 – 5/16/25
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- Bluffton Adult

Adult Kickball	2024: 82	2025: -	(-) Registration 6/1/25 – 6/30/25
Beach Volleyball	2024: 52	2025: -	(-) Registration 6/1/25 – 6/30/25

Alan Arseneau mentioned that he understood that we were having a hard time getting umpires. He asked if **Evan** thought it would get better now with kids getting out of school for the summer and if we were having the problem with soccer as well. **Evan Christian** stated that it was not as bad for soccer, **Darrell Ketola** has had to officiate some games. Evan had a conversation with Mike, with BYS, were as Mike would take control of the scheduling. We would still take care of the umpiring. **Bruce Yeager** stated that this needs to be fixed. If umpire rates need to go up, then registration fees will need to also increase to take care of the issue. **Bruce Yeager** asked what the official pay rate was currently. **Evan Christian** stated that it depended on the ages, it ranges from \$28.00 for the younger kids and goes up to \$45.00 for the older kids. This is for one umpire. It does go down for 2.

Current League - Spring

- Beaufort Youth

Soccer	2024: 606	2025: 570	(-36) Registration Closed
Baseball	2024: 329	2025: 312	(-17) Registration Closed
Softball	2024: 75	2025: 111	(+36) Registration Closed
Flag Football	2024: 143	2025: 158	(+15) Registration Closed
Softball (13 – 15)	2024: 11	2025: 10	(-1) Registration Closed
DBB (13 – 15)	2024: 68	2025: 51	(-17) Registration Closed

- Beaufort Adult

Indoor Soccer	2024: -	2025: 43	(+43) Registration Closed
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Alex Hunt mentioned that this was the first time that there were enough teams in softball to stay in Beaufort and not travel to Bluffton. **Shane Stager** mentioned that we talk about how much visibility the Burton Wells center gets with the 1,200 participants we have in our programs. **Bruce Yeager** stated that it is a great facility and any way to make it more at the top of people's minds is a good thing. **Ron Campbell** mentioned that Burton Wells was built before Buckwalter and things that were supposed to be added are just now being added. He mentioned that the money was allocated but was never used. **Shane Stager** replied that Buckwalter started out as a 2-gym facility. **Bruce Yeager** stated that it would be interesting if **Carlos Cave** was here to get his input with the growth of the student population. **Alex Hunt** stated that the increase in the numbers is making it so the seasons would have to be longer or play less games. **Bruce Yeager** asked if the Old Burton Wells field was being used for games. **Alex** replied that they are being used for practice and rentals since there are no restrooms at the field.

Upcoming Summer Sports

- Beaufort Youth

Basketball	2024: 279	2025: 50*	(-95) Registration 3/31/25 – 5/16/25
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- Beaufort Adult

Baseball	2024: 29	2025: 71	(+42) Registration 4/28/202 5/16/25
Basketball	2024: -	2025: 7	(-7) Registration 4/1/25 -5/9/25
Softball	2024: 164	2025: 1	(-163) Registration 5/1/25 – 5/31/25
Kickball	2024: 58	2025: -	(-58) Registration 6/2/25 – 7/11/25

New Programming and Upcoming Tournaments (Sports)

- Sports Tourism
 - Softball tournament at OFP on May 3rd
- Diamond Youth Baseball District Tournaments
 - Rookie and AA in Bluffton June 12 -15
 - Ozone in Beaufort June 18 - 13
- Diamond Youth Softball District Tournaments
 - 8U and 10U in Bluffton June 6 – 8
 - 6U and 12U in Beaufort June 11-13
- Adult Indoor Soccer League (Started ¾)
- Beaufort Lacrosse League (33)

Bruce Yeager asked if the tournaments that are coming in are paying the fees. **Alex Hunt** said that they were. **Bruce Yeager** commented that our fees must be ok and are probably too low.

- Senior Program Update

Centers:

- Bluffton Center
- Booker T Washington
- Burton Wells Center

- Dale Center
- Lind Brown Center
- Port Royal Center
- Scott Center
- St. Helena Center

Meals:

- Meals served and delivered for March / April
 - Home Delivered Meals (HDM): 1,635
 - Group Dining: 1,554

Marisa Freeman stated that May kicks off Older Americans Appreciation Month. All the centers went to an event that was put on by South Carolina Department on Aging, in Columbia. We will also be holding an event where all the centers will come together on May 13th here at the Burton Wells Recreation Center. Booker T is closed for remodeling. Our 3 new vehicles have arrived.

Bruce Yeager asked about participation. **Marisa Freeman** stated that some of the centers are full and at the ones able to accept new participants they are being added. The Charles Lind Brown Center is rapidly growing.

- **Aquatics**

Battery Creek:

- Pool Hours:
 - Monday – Friday: 8am – 1pm / 2pm – 7pm
 - Saturday: 8am – 1pm (Lap Swim)
 - First Saturday of the month: Inflatables 11am-4:30pm
- Youth School Swim Lessons
 - Monday – Thursday: 9am – 1pm
- Programs:
 - FINS: Monday – Friday: 4pm – 7pm
- Patron Check Ins:
 - March: FINS: 407, public: 726 total 1,133
 - April: FINS: 280, public: 1,141 total 1,421

Beaufort Pool: * Temporarily closed due to pool pump failure *

- Pool Hours:
 - Monday – Friday: 8am – 1pm / 2pm – 7pm
 - Saturday: 8am – 1pm (lap swim)
 - First Saturday of the month: Inflatables 11am-4:30pm
- Youth School Swim Lessons:
 - Monday – Thursday: 9am – 1pm
- Programs:
 - ISR (Infant Swimming Resource) Monday – Friday: 2:15 pm – 6:15 pm
 - Water Aerobics: Belinda Flohr: Monday 2:15 – 6:15, Wednesday & Friday 10 am – 11:15 am
- Patron Check Ins:
 - March: 1,605
 - April: 986

Bluffton Pool:

- Closed for construction

Alvin Settles Pool:

- Closed for the season.
- Scheduled to open May 24, 2025

Classes offered:

- **Group and Private Swim** (Children & Adults): Year-round – sign up online
- **Stroke Improvement:** Year-round – sign up online
- **CPR:** By appointment
- **Lifeguard Classes:** Just finished at Battery Creek.
****Can now register and pay online****

Shane Stager introduced **Brock Vaughn** as our new Recreation Manager.

- **Recreation**

- **New Programs:**

- Pickleball – Starting in May on Mondays at the Charles Lind Brown Center.
- Kid's Jam Fitness – On Fridays at the Charles Lind Brown Center.
- Tone It Thursday Fitness – 18 and over at the Charles Lind Brown Center
- Table Tennis Club – Wednesdays at the Burton Wells Recreation Center
- Beginner art classes – beginning in August – TBD
- Wrestling Club – Starting in June at Multiple Centers

- **Other Classes:**

- Karate, Bridge, Zumba, Urban Line Dance, Salsa, Bachata, Gentle Chair Yoga, Country Line Dance, Jungle Body

- **Camps:**

- Spring Break Camp – Recap
 - Bluffton Center – 22 campers
 - Burton Wells Recreation Center – 11 campers
- Summer Camps
 - Bluffton Center – 97% capacity
 - Burton Wells – 53% capacity
 - Charles Lind Brown – open
 - Scott Center - open

- **Upcoming Events:**

- 2nd Annual Unity in the Community – Charles Lind Brown Center June 21st
- Movies with the Beaufort City Police – Charles Lind Brown Center on June 25 and July 30
- Back to School Bash – Charles Lind Brown Center on August 8th
- Trunk or Treat – Charles Lind Brown Center TBD
- Holiday Party – Burton Wells Recreation Center on December 12
- Unity in the Community – Scott Center TBD

ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE

- **Director's Report**

- Director's Report given by Eric Brown, Director.

Eric Brown stated that we are meeting with DHEC about the opening of the Bluffton Pool. We are hoping to have the pool open in the next couple of weeks.

- **Partnership & Facility Updates**

- **Facility Updates:**

- Bluffton Pool (renovations)
 - Planned to open in May, construction is virtually complete
- Beaufort Pool (temporarily closed)
 - The pump will be replaced, tentative re-open 5/9
 - Alvin Settles opening early to accommodate
- Southside Pickleball (partially closed for renovations)
 - Grand Opening planned for 5/9 at 3pm
- Agnes Major Center, Wesley Felix (new construction planning)
 - Community meeting for Agnes Major 5/8 at 6pm
- Booker T Washington Center (renovations)
 - Renovations underway
- Charles Lind Brown (renovations)
- Bluffton Center (renovations and planning)
 - Tentative plans for May closing of the Senior Center
- Shell Point Park (partially closed for renovations)

- **Misc. Updates**

- FY26 Budget submitted
 - FY25 – 1.492M
 - FY26 – 1.425M (57K reduction)
- FY25 Budget status
 - Revenue - \$1.1M Budgeted, \$900K current
 - Expenses (non-personnel) – 1.492M budgeted, 1.25M expended
- Special Events application changes underway
- Fee schedule evaluation underway

Bruce Yeager asked what the new facilities at Agnes Major and Wesley Felix would be. **Eric Brown** replied that there would be new community centers that would hold programs such as summer camps, after care programs etc. The St. Helena senior program is currently in a rented location. With the new center they will have a permanent location. Also, Scott Center will be starting renovation after summer camp in August. **Bruce Yeager** asked if we own the buildings that will be renovated. **Eric Brown** replied that we do not own Booker T, Dale or Scott Center but we have a long-term lease on the buildings for the next 25 years. **Audra Antonacci-Ogden** came up and reintroduced herself and explained her position. **Shane Stager** spoke on the Misc. Updates. **Bruce Yeager** stated that the board would like to have a meeting about the special events fees and the fee schedules. **Bruce Yeager** asked **Heather** to reach out to the board when the new fees are decided upon. **Phil Kiser** asked why there are 2 separate departments, Passive Parks and Parks and Recreation. **Audra Antonacci-Ogden** stated that they are different departments. Passive Parks, such as Widgeon Point as well as other areas throughout the county. They were purchased through Rural and Critical. They provide no programming where Parks and Recreation provide athletics and programming.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ron Campbell is retiring from the board. **Bruce Yeager** thanked **Ron Campbell** for his service. **Ron Campbell** has served on the board for many years. **Bruce Yeager** stated that the next meeting is July 10th, 2025, at Buckwalter Recreation Center in Bluffton at 2:30. **Bruce Yeager** asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. **A motion was made. The motion was seconded and the motion passed.**

ADJOURN

Meeting was Adjourned.