

BEAUFORT COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

County Council Chambers, Beaufort
Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 2:30 PM

Board Members Present:	Bruce Yeager, <i>Chairman, Southern Beaufort County</i> Carlos Cave, <i>School District Administration ex-officio</i> Alan Arseneau, <i>Southern Beaufort County</i> Jonne Hayes, <i>Southern Beaufort County</i> Christian Kata, <i>Northern Beaufort County</i> Phillip Mansker, <i>Northern Beaufort County</i> Mark Rennix, <i>Northern Beaufort County</i>
Board Members Absent:	Ariel Perry, <i>Military ex-officio</i> Phil Kiser, <i>Southern Beaufort County</i>
Staff Members Present:	Eric Brown, <i>Director, Parks and Recreation</i> Shane Stager, <i>Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation</i> Heather Clint, <i>Administrative Manager, Parks and Recreation</i> Antoinette "Anny" Binette, <i>Aquatics Manager, Parks and Recreation</i> Marisa Freeman, <i>Senior Program Manager, Parks and Recreation</i> Evan Christian, <i>Athletic Manager, Parks and Recreation</i> Scott Schnee, <i>Assistant Athletic Manager, Parks and Recreation</i> Roderick Sawyer, <i>Athletics Supervisor, Parks and Recreation</i> Raymond Hines, <i>Athletics Supervisor, Parks and Recreation</i> Faranica "Vedah" Reynolds, <i>Assistant Recreation Manager, Parks and Recreation</i> Brandon Whitener, <i>Recreation Coordinator, Parks and Recreation</i> Natasha Dortch, <i>Fiscal Technician II, Parks and Recreation</i>
Visitors:	Scott Whitehead Michele Lami

Call to Order

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

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Introductions

Bruce Yeager introduced **Phillip Mansker**, the newest board member from Northern Beaufort County.

Approval of Agenda

Bruce Yeager asked the board members to approve the agenda. **A motion was made to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded. The agenda was approved.**

Public Comment

Bruce Yeager asked if there were comments from the public. No comments were made.

Review and Approval of Minutes of March 5, 2026

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

Department Reports

- **Operations**

Heather Clint went over the footfall counts at each facility. The March footfall count for Burton Wells was not available because the machine was not working during that timeframe. All numbers were reduced by 30% to account for patrons utilizing the entry door to exit. **Jonne Hayes** inquired whether there is a way to count the number of cars entering the Burton Wells and Buckwalter parking lots to gauge the number of patrons who utilize the outdoor facilities, to include the walking trail. **Heather** responded that each facility's footfall counter would count each patron who enters the indoor facility while utilizing the outdoor areas; otherwise, there currently is no way to count without investing in technology.

Footfall Total:	Mar 2026	Apr 2026
Buckwalter	12,293	10,737
Burton Wells	N/A	1,233
Charles Lind Brown	N/A	N/A

Patron Check-In:	Mar 2026	Apr 2026
Buckwalter	4,724	3,683
Burton Wells	764	648
Charles Lind Brown	191	132

- **Athletics**

Evan Christian discussed the statuses of the current and upcoming Bluffton leagues. Adult softball is on its second week. Senior softball will be finishing up their tournament the following Wednesday.

- **Bluffton Current Leagues**

Spring Youth Sports	2025	2026	Margin	Season Start/End
Baseball	498	489	-9	Started Mar 16
Softball	207	195	-12	Started Mar 16
Flag Football	398	460	+62	Started Apr 6
Female Flag Football	-	31	+31	Started Apr 7
Lacrosse	72	74	-2	Ended Apr 25
Soccer	1045	944	-101	Started Apr 6

Spring Adult Sports	2025	2026	Margin	Season Start/End
Softball – Senior	4 teams	4 teams	-	Playoffs started May 6
Softball	32 teams	31 teams	-1	Started Apr 20

- **Bluffton Upcoming Leagues**

Summer Youth Sports	2025	2026	Margin	Registration Start/End
Basketball	455	294	-161	Ends May 15
Diamond Softball (13-16)	37	20	-7	Started Apr 29
Dixie Baseball (13-16)	41	31	-10	Started May 5

Summer Adult Sports	2025	2026	Margin	Registration Start/End
Co-Ed Kickball	10 teams	-	-	Started May 4
Co-Ed Beach Volleyball	10 teams	-	-	Started May 4

Evan Christian then went over the new sports and tournament updates. Top Gun Softball will be returning in the fall with 4 tournaments; some will be between Beaufort and Bluffton, whereas others will be exclusively in Bluffton. The 12u and 15u girls softball state tournaments will be June 20-24. Bluffton will be hosting the district tournaments for 8u division baseball and 6u softball.

Jonne Hayes stated the Beaufort County School District is starting female flag football as a club this fall with sanctioning from NFHS and pending sanction from the state. With Parks and Rec adding flag football into the sports lineup as well, flag football is expected to gain momentum within the district. **Bruce Yeager** asked if the field dimensions for flag football are the standard football field or smaller. **Jonne Hayes** responded that it is a standard field divided into 3 fields, sideline to sideline. All 6 high schools have teams. The schools currently have a grant through the Carolina Panthers to dress a total of 25 players on each team, even if the rosters may list more. There is a total of 7 players from each team on the field at a time.

Brandon Whitener went over Beaufort hosting basketball clinics for the first time on May 30, June 6, and June 13 for 7–14-year-olds; the younger kids have their sessions in the morning, and the older group will be in the afternoon. Several of the local middle and high school coaches are volunteering to assist with the program, which leads up to the start of the summer basketball program.

The Top Gun travel softball will be on Aug 15, Sep 19, Oct 17, and Nov 14 on Oscar Frazier. Fall sports begin after Labor Day so there is no conflict with Parks and Recreation. Most of the teams will be traveling within the region; Walterboro, Bluffton, and Beaufort. There are likely to be some teams from Georgia and Florida as well. **Brandon** then covered Beaufort's upcoming and current leagues.

○ Beaufort Current Leagues

Spring Youth Sports	2025	2026	Margin	Season Start/End
Baseball	312	316	+4	Started Mar 17
Softball	111	104	-7	Started Mar 17
Flag Football	158	214	+66	Started Apr 6
Soccer	570	598	+28	Started Apr 6

Spring Adult Sports	2025	2026	Margin	Season Start/End
Indoor Soccer	44	47	+3	Playoffs ended Apr 28

○ Beaufort Upcoming Leagues

Spring/Summer Youth Sports	2025	2026	Margin	Registration Start/End
Diamond Softball (13-16)	13	14	+1	Ended Mar 6
Dixie Baseball (13-15)	51	39	-12	Ended Apr 10
Basketball	128	88	-40	Ends May 8

Brandon stated the adult team registration for baseball concluded at the end of April; their meeting will be coming up soon to get the games started after Memorial Day. Registration remains open for individual players.

Summer Adult Sports	2025	2026	Margin	Registration Start/End
Kickball	76	1	-75	Ends Jun 21
Co-Ed Softball	159 (7 teams)	3 (0 teams)	-156	Ends May 31
Baseball	105 (6 teams)	44 (5 teams)	-61	Ends Jun 10

- **Senior Program**

Marisa Freeman went over the Senior Program highlights from March and April. There were outings to Tybee Island, Donnley Wildlife Refuge, and Edisto Memorial Garden. Recreation held a Senior Day event for Beaufort County at Buckwalter. It was an amazing event with a great turnout involving 36 vendors, dancing, and food.

Meals delivered and served for March and April:

Home Delivered Meals: 4,220

Group Dining: 3,528

- **Aquatics**

Antoinette Binette went over the updates for aquatics.

- Group and Private Swim (children and adults): year-round 2:30-6:30pm
- Fins: Swim Team: Bluffton Pool Mon-Fri 5-8pm
- Infant Swim Resource: call Christian
- Water Aerobics:
 - Battery Creek: Tues & Thurs 5:30-6:30pm
- School Swim Lessons: Mon-Thurs (closed) 9:30am-2:00pm
 - Battery Creek: done for the school year
 - Beaufort: ongoing
 - Bluffton: done for the school year

Check-Ins	March	April
Battery Creek	762	969
Beaufort	1,336	1,090
Bluffton	2,475	1,782

Aquatics has attempted to open the Alvin Settles outdoor pool on Saturdays in May from 2pm to 7pm but rain has forced it to remain closed. The pool will be open full-time on May 23.

Alvin Settles Outdoor Pool hours starting May 23:

- Tues – Sat: 11am-7pm
- Sun: 1pm-7pm
- Mon: closed
- Holidays: 11am-5pm

Any stated the public is not thrilled with the pools being closed during the school swim lessons from 9am to 2pm because of the contract with the school requires it. **Eric Brown** added that residents are not allowed go on school campus, so the pools become school campus during that time.

- **Recreation**

Faranica Reynolds went over the Recreation updates.

Program/Classes	Max Participants	Total Participants	Event Date
Pottery – Intro to Wheel Throwing	20	20	Apr 20
Pottery – Mug Workshop	20	16	May 4
Beginner Watercolor	20	13	Apr 1
DIY Kokedama Planter	24	20	May 13
Various Pickleball	32	25	May 9
Fencing Demo	N/A	35	Mar 30
Senior Day	300	279	Apr 1

Summer camp is due to start the first week of June. **Bruce Yeager** asked if the determining factor for the allotted number of signups was the number of counselors hired or if it would be a capacity issue. **Vedah** replied it is a capacity limit. With the Bluffton Center being closed for renovations, Buckwalter's space will be utilized. The All-Around Athletes summer camp signups were extended to alleviate the extensive waitlist.

Camp	Max Participants	Total Participants	Registration
Spring Break – Bluffton	30	30	Closed
Spring Break – Beaufort	20	15	Closed
Robotics	14	14	Closed
Summer Camp – Bluffton	90	90	Full – wait list at 70
Summer Camp - Beaufort	60	15	On-going

A question was asked if the 70/30 programs comprised of people coming to Parks and Recreation to propose programs and workshops for the local community. **Vedah** confirmed the information, stating the people who propose the programs become an independent contractor. All participants are required to sign waivers for the programs. Once the contracts are generated, Recreation handles marketing and manages registrations.

Other Program Highlights	70/30 Programs	
- Mini Murals - Beginner Weightlifting - Game Club - Book Club - Movie Nights – Buckwalter & Burton Wells - Plant Care & Propagation - Low Country Volleyball Clinic	- Palmetto Karate - Public Tennis Clinic - Low Country Volleyball - 1LoCo Basketball - 1LoCo Baseball - AR Workshop – Bluffton - Country Line Dance	- Kokedama Planter - Schepper Tennis - Plant Care & Propagation - Sound Healing Meditation - Unity Drum Circle - Intro to Sewing - Soccer Shots

Director's Report

Eric Brown went over personnel staffing and facility/CIP updates.

- Personnel Updates
 - Admin
 - None – all positions currently filled
 - Recently filled: PT Admin Specialist
 - Aquatics
 - Open: 2x PT WSI; 1x FT WSI

- Athletics
 - Open: 1x PT Recreation Leader (officials); 2x PT Recreation Aides
 - Recent Hires: 1x FT Athletics Supervisor (Raymond Hines)
- Recreation
 - Open: 2x PT Recreation Aide
- Grounds
 - None – all positions currently filled
 - Recent Hires: 2x FT Maintenance Tech
- Seniors
 - Open: 1x Recreation Leader II; 1x Bus Driver

Eric stated the BRACE project was approved by County Council to create four fields for football and soccer to include artificial turf, restrooms, and parking. The project is mostly funded by impact fees. Newspapers state the Council approved 15 million, but it is 10 million. They approved the shortfall because the plan was to complete the project in phases. A question was posed about whether the fields will be lined for lacrosse and other sports. **Eric** replied that the fields will be lined for multiple sports as they are multipurpose fields.

He is working with **Shane Stager** on an A&E to present to County Council so Parks and Recreation can potentially get a baseball stadium like Shipyard Park. Buckwalter sits on 143 acres. There was originally a provision for a baseball complex, but there is not enough room because it is predominantly wetlands.

Bruce Yeager asked if there were any talks about reconfiguring MC Riley, considering it has drainage issues. **Eric** replied that they worked with the town of Bluffton and they came up with something but were unable to add something that would support large tournaments due to the space. They did look at how they would be able to beautify it and make it more player friendly. They are working on capitalizing all impact fees to use them to fulfill the needs of the parks.

Jonne Hayes asked what type of infields will be used for the turf fields. When the school districts began to install rubber infields, they needed to change direction because a student had an allergic reaction to rubber. **Eric** stated they have not gotten that far just yet. The State of Florida does not use rubber on the infield because it would become too hot in the summer. **Jonne** added that those 2 stadiums with the rubber infields also have a protective coating that acts as a coolant. They're sprinklers connected to all the facilities that water the chemical that aids with the cooling.

- Facility/CIP Updates
 - BRACE (Buckwalter Recreation Athletic Complex Expansion)
 - County Council approved both sections on Apr 27, 2026
 - Senior / Community Centers
 - Scott Center – pending funding
 - Bluffton Center – elevator installed
 - Estimated completion Summer 2026
 - Agnes Major Center, Wesley Felix
 - Construction underway

Eric stated the Charles Lind Brown facility will be shutting down soon because of some electrical issues that need to be resolved. A switch has been ordered for Public Facilities to install so the air conditioning can run efficiently

- Charles Lind Brown
 - Construction is mostly complete with new floors, bleachers, electric baskets, and paint
 - Some electrical/ADA work is still outstanding
- Charles Lind Brown Awning / restroom improvements
 - Funding identified; work to start later this year
- Port Royal Playground Parking Upgrades
 - Construction complete

Eric and **Shane** have been doing some research for the Port Royal Playground. They are working on some renovations because of the wear and tear, making sure the playground lasts another 15-20 years. Playgrounds typically have a lifespan of 15-25 years.

- Port Royal Playground Splashpad
 - Construction underway
 - Estimated completion Summer 2026
- Old Burton Wells Baseball and Restroom Improvements
 - GO bond project approved for FY26; initial assessment ongoing
 - Initial focus on restrooms and drainage improvements

Eric stated RISE standards for respect and integrity, with the standard of excellence. The main leadership training course for the leadership team of Parks and Rec will be meeting on May 20 at Buckwalter. **Heather Clint** and **Anny Binette** put together the program. Some of the board members may come to be spectators at the event. Last year, the team had someone from HR come in to do some training. The participants read a book every year prior to the event. This year, they are reading The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace.

- Training & Misc. Updates
 - Training
 - 3x Aquatic staff earned Certified Pool Operator certifications (Apr)
 - Recreation attended “Creating Equitable Experiences” workshop (Apr)
 - Management will attend “Point of Distribution” (POD) training in May
 - Annual RISE retreat in May
 - Misc.
 - MOA amendment in progress for use of St. Helena Elementary for summer camp
 - 30+ PAR staff participated in Earth Day cleanup around Beaufort County

Jonne Hayes took a moment to recognize **Eric Brown** and **Shane Stager** for going to USCB to speak in his sports management class. **Eric** stated he thinks it would be great if **Jonne** and his directors worked with the Parks and Rec’s North team to assist each other in building up the flag football community in the area.

Bruce Yeager stated he has received some complaints about lights on some of the fields. **Eric** stated that he and **Shane** have work orders in; Jason, the Assistant Director for Public Facilities, has notified Eric and Shane that they are working on fixing them.

Eric stated that although there is no official completion date for BRACE, the scope of work stated it will take 18 to 22 months from when the project gets started. BRACE will be creating four multipurpose fields, however, none of them will be for baseball. He stated renovations of the fields and facilities is something he has been working on since his arrival at Parks and Rec. Every year, he provides a list to the County Administrator on things that Parks & Rec would like to put funding into for improvements. **Jonne Hayes** stated he has seen more results this past year than he has seen in previous years.

Announcements

Bruce Yeager stated the next meeting will be on Thursday, July 9, 2026, in Bluffton.

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion was seconded. The meeting was adjourned.