Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District
Board of Directors Meeting
M I N U T E S

Wednesday, June 18, 2025, 6:30pm

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District • Activity Room 3
4201 Guardian Street, Simi Valley, CA 93063 • (805) 584-4400

A video recording of tonight's meeting is available on
the District Website at www.RSRPD.org.

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE- Chair Abele called the meeting to order at 6:31pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Director Gray's Dad and Navy Veteran, Tim Gray.
2. ROLL CALL – Directors Cofield, Gray, Lundstrom, Vice Chair Dennert, and Chair Abele were in attendance. Staff in attendance included: Laura Ballantoni, Kris Barella, Alex Barsky, Dave Demaio, Richard Lemmo, Jeannie Liss, Lee Martin, Zach Miller, Wayne Nakaoka, Dan Paranick, Theresa Pennington, Alexis Ploeger, Jennifer Santos, Jonathan Schwartz, Alex Stumfall, Gina Viecco, and District Counsel Ryan Guiboa.

   Guests attended tonight's meeting in-person and via Zoom. Those who made public comments are listed under the appropriate Item below.
3. AGENDA REVIEW – District Manager Dan Paranick announced tonight will be Director Gray's last meeting serving on the Board. He will be moving out of the boundaries of his District. The Board agreed to hear Item 9.e before Item 9.a.
4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

   Elaine Freeman and Kate O'Brien from the Rotary Club presented the Paul Harris Fellowship Award to Vice Chair Brian Dennert and District Manager Dan Paranick. The recipients do not need to be a Rotarian, just a contributor and good steward in the community. They thanked both recipients for their dedication and always showing up for the community. Dennert and Paranick thanked the Rotary, it is an honor to receive this award, and they will work hard to continue being good stewards in the community.

   Glenn Lipman representing Long Ball Academy is advocating for baseball practices on softball fields. He compared this request to playing pickleball on tennis courts. Tennis courts are not designed for pickleball but that has not stopped them from sharing. It is especially helpful to allow practice with lights during Daylight Savings.

   Allegra Reid lives near Frontier Park and is concerned about the upgrading of parks. She feels there should be a more equitable disbursement of funds between Simi Valley and Oak Park. The play equipment at Frontier Park is in desperate need of upgrading.

   Roger Powell, a golfer at Simi Hills, feels some of the changes in pricing are over the top. He is concerned about the booking in advance and cancellation fees. There are many seniors who play on Fridays, and they do not want to see this change to a weekend rate. This was tried before and did not work out.

   Jerry Hayes owns a local business and has been playing at Simi Hills since it opened. They are used to rate increases of a couple bucks per year, but they have heard this year there will be a $7 increase which is concerning. They are also against making Fridays a weekend rate. Out of 10 local courses the checked, only Rustic Canyon charges weekend rates on Friday.

   Emma Shen has an issue with the use of the tennis courts on Royal Avenue. People were playing

pickleball on the designated tennis courts, she asked them to leave, and they would not. She is requesting the District please put up clear signage for the 2 courts on the far-right side, she does not want to have confrontations with anyone.

Ranbir Jain completed 3 weeks of auditing the Board meetings. Thanks to Director Dennert for the opportunity and Lemon Park is his favorite.

5. CONSENT AGENDA (Matters under the Consent Agenda are considered routine and shall be acted upon without discussion by one motion approving the Consent Agenda. If discussion is desired, the item may be removed from the Consent Agenda upon a Director's request.)

   a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors on June 4, 2025 – Chair Abele requested this item be pulled for Discussion.

   b. Approval of 5/31/25 Accounts Payable Check Register and 5/30/25 Payroll Check Register.

   c. Approval of Resolution No. 2096 Establishing the 2025/26 Appropriations Limitation in Accordance with Article XIII B of the Constitution of the State of California – Staff report was provided by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration.

   d. Approval of Award of Contract for Simi Hills Golf Course Golf Cart Fleet Lease Agreement – Staff report was provided by David Melody, Golf Course Manager.

   e. Approval of Notice of Completion and Final Acceptance for the Oak Canyon Community Park Asphalt Resurfacing Project – Staff report was provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance.

   f. Approval of Notice of Completion and Final Acceptance for the Simi Hills Golf Course Asphalt Parking Lot Renovation Project – Staff report as provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance.

   g. Approval of Notice of Completion and Acceptance for the Rancho Simi Community Park Pickleball Courts Resurfacing Project – Staff report was provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance.

   Motion: Director Gray moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 5.b through 5.g. Director Cofield seconded. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

   Ayes: Abele, Cofield, Dennert, Gray, Lundstrom
   Noes:
   Absent:
   Abstain

   Discussion: Chair Abele requested the first sentence from his board member comments be deleted, he did not attend the 55+ Community Games.

   Motion: Vice Chair Dennert moved to approve Consent Agenda Item 5.a; amended as requested by Chair Abele. Chair Abele seconded. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

   Ayes: Abele, Cofield, Dennert, Lundstrom
   Noes:
   Absent:
   Abstain: Gray

6. PRESENTATIONS

   a. Presentation of the Part-Time Employee of the Month for May 2025 to Alex Stumfall, Computer Technician – Staff report was provided by Theresa Pennington, Director of

Administration. Alex has been with the District for 6 years as a Part-Time Employee and was promoted to Full-Time Computer Support Specialist just this month. Alex thanked everyone, especially Lee Martin, Dan Paranick, and Theresa Pennington, you don't quit a great boss. He's excited to start his new position. Lee Martin has worked with Alex for 6 years; he does a great job. The District will be in good hands with Alex, and he will be able to bring them into the future. The Board thanked Alex for doing a great job with meetings and incorporating Zoom. They thanked him for keeping them connected and helping with the technology. He is a great guy, and they are happy seeing him progress.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE
8. CONTINUED BUSINESS – NONE
9. NEW BUSINESS – Item 9.e was heard before Item 9.a.

   a. Adoption of Preliminary District Operation and Capital Improvement Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/26 – Staff report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. Paranick provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan and Operating Budget Summary. Based on previous direction from the Board, the following projects were added: Frontier Park playground, Deerhill Park hydration station, RSCP Sports lighting, Indian Springs and Mae Boyar resurfacing of tennis courts, Indian Springs playground, Train Depot ADA access lift, and security cameras.

   Chair Abele called a Recess at 7:39pm; Abele called the meeting back to order at 7:46pm.

   Dennert asked if the District can accept Steven Hoffman's donation for the hydration station at Deerhill Park. Paranick replied, yes, no problem.

   Abele asked where the money to fund the items added to the Budget came from. Paranick replied, there is a reserve fund within the General Fund, the funds were deducted from the reserve. Abele questioned the $275,000 for staffing the Activity Center, as it seems low. Paranick replied, this amount would allow the District to hire a Recreation Supervisor first and build the staff from there. He estimates approximately $650,000 for complete staffing, this amount is slightly less than at Oak Park. Abele asked if the Budget could be presented in a more transparent manner. Paranick replied, yes, this format is how it has always been done, some changes were made but not totally revised.

   Lundstrom asked if staff will need direction by the Board to hire the Recreation Supervisor position. Paranick replied, yes, as Abele has requested this be brought to the Board.

   Chair Abele opened Public Comments at 8:11pm.

   Elaine Freeman thanked the Board for voting to approve the Equestrian Center. She is happy to see the Activity Center project is still a priority and would like to see it move forward.

   Lundstrom and Gray appreciate staff adding the Gantt chart to the Budget, it is helpful with reviewing the projects. He appreciates the hard work by Paranick and Pennington in drafting the Budget. He is looking forward to a more transparent budget format in the future. They are happy to see the Budget move forward.

   Cofield thanked staff for preparing the Budget. She would like to see accurate numbers applied to the projects directly and not held in other funds. She has some concerns about the timing of projects.

   Dennert thanked Paranick and Pennington for the work on the Budget, he is in favor of a more transparent format in the future. He would like to review any future playgrounds; he wants to discuss playground designs with staff. He would like to see Paranick and Lundstrom work with the Oak Park community to discuss the budget shortfall. He is

requesting an Agenda item before October to discuss Oak Park's budget.

Abele would like to expedite RSSCC Phase 4. It is a highly used park and important in the community. He wants to see the bids on this project before moving forward with the Activity Center Phase 3 project. Dennert suggested Board members reach out to City Council to request moving the RSSCC Phase 4 project faster. Abele is puzzled by the roof and HVAC for RSSCC not being included in the Budget as these were originally planned for 2022/23. Nakaoka replied, there are currently no leaks in the roof and the HVAC is still working. Staff have been easily able to repair any issues with these items; they would like to hold off on replacing these items for as long as possible.

Abele stated he will be voting no on the Preliminary Budget due to the Activity Center Phase 3 not being deprioritized. He feels this project is not being requested by the community and there are other projects that should be completed first. Gray feels the Activity Center would serve many people in the community. Younger people are constantly saying there is nothing to do in Simi Valley; the Activity Center is a great opportunity to provide for this age group. He will continue to advocate for the Activity Center and its completion for the community.

Motion: Director Gray moved to approve the 2025/26 Preliminary Budget with changes as directed by the Board. Director Lundstrom Seconded. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Dennert, Cofield, Gray, Lundstrom
Noes: Abele
Absent:
Abstain

b. Approval of Publication of Legal Notice Allowing Public Inspection of Preliminary Budget and Specifying Date and Time of Public Hearing on District's Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/26 – Staff report was provided by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration. The publication informs the public that the Preliminary Budget has been approved and can be inspected. The notice also specifies the date and time of the 2 public hearings.

   Dennert is open to having a Budget meeting in Oak Park (OP), he suggested discussing their revenue at this meeting. Abele is open to the meeting in OP, only if Zoom is available. Lundstrom is in favor of holding a meeting in OP; their community needs to see the Board.

   Chair Abele opened Public Comments at 8:49pm; hearing none, Abele closed comments.

   Motion: Director Lundstrom moved to approve the publication of the Legal Notice allowing public hearings, to include a meeting in OP in August. Vice Chair Dennert seconded. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

   Ayes: Abele, Cofield, Dennert, Gray, Lundstrom
   Noes:
   Absent:
   Abstain

c. Approval of Pay and Benefit Changes for: (1) Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Middle Management Association, (2) Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Employee Association, (3) Maintenance and Grounds Association, and (4) Unrepresented District Employees – Staff report was provided by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration.

   The Board members thanked staff for negotiating the agreements. They appreciate staff's work and feel the deserve the increase. Pennington thanked the Board on behalf of staff.

Motion: Director Cofield moved to approve the indicated changes and authorize the District Manager to sign the Letters of Agreement on behalf of the District. Director Lundstrom seconded. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Cofield, Dennert, Gray, Lundstrom
Noes:
Absent:
Abstain

d. Approval and Adoption of Full-Time Employee Classification Schedules by Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors – Staff report was provided by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration. The pay range schedules have been updated to reflect the approved Cost of Living increase of 3.5%.

The Board thanked staff for their work and hope they feel appreciated by the Board. Abele thanked all the employees for an excellent job; they make the District and Board look good. Based on his analysis of the Budget, Abele felt that there was clearly room to increase the Flex Benefit further.

Motion: Director Gray moved to approve and adopt the FT Employee Classification Schedules. Director Cofield seconded. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Cofield, Dennert, Gray, Lundstrom
Noes:
Absent:
Abstain

e. Authorization to Solicit Public Bids for the Arroyo Simi Equestrian Center Renovation Project – Staff report was provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance. Plans and specifications for this project were prepared in-house by District staff. No City or County plan check or permitting was deemed necessary since there were no substantial changes to the underlying entitlement permit.

Cofield asked about a $10,000 difference in the budgeted amounts. Paranick will verify and update as needed.

Chair Abele opened Public Comment at 7:22pm.

Elaine Freeman stated this facility was used extensively until COVID. Within the Bridal Path area alone there are approximately 1,000 properties with equestrian features. The center will be run by the Equestrian group and will be used again once improvements are completed.

Chair Abele read 18 Comment Cards; all were in favor of the proposal. Abele closed Public Comments at 7:26pm.

Abele previously had concerns but will be supporting this project. He is happy to see it come in under budget. His one concern is this got bumped ahead of other projects and does not want that to be a precedent.

Gray supports this project and appreciates the club showing up and working with the District. It is fantastic when other groups work together. Good job by Nakaoka, finding cuts, thank you.

Motion: Director Gray moved to authorize staff to solicit bids for the Arroyo Simi Equestrian Center Renovation Project. Vice Chair Dennert seconded. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Cofield, Dennert, Gray, Lundstrom

Noes:
Absent:
Abstain:

Item 9.e was heard before Item 9.a.

f. Discussion and Direction Regarding the Process to Fill the Vacancy on the Board of Directors Resulting from the Resignation of Board Member Josh Gray – Staff report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. The Board has the option of calling for a special election or appointing a Director to fill the empty seat. Director Gray recused himself for this Item.

Abele, Cofield, Dennert, and Lundstrom feel the cost is prohibitive for holding a special election. They agree appointing a new member of the Board is the best way to fill the empty seat.

Legal Counsel added they Board has 60 days to appoint a new Director, or the County will take over. Interviews must be conducted during a public open session meeting.

The Board requests applicants submit a resume with cover letter, complete a short application, and submit written referrals or a certain number of signatures within the District boundaries.

The Board discussed the interview process. They suggested submitting their questions to staff, so as not to repeat others. They suggested Wednesday, August 13, 2025, for the special meeting and plan to select a candidate to fill the empty seat at this time.

There was no action taken by the Board tonight.

10. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS AND DISTRICT MANAGER

District Manager Dan Paranick reported Oak Park has received a $1.2M grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Medea Creek. He met with the baseball community and had a good discussion regarding field availability and allowing other teams use of the fields. He and Miller will meet with the School District to finalize the Pool Agreement. Laura Ballantoni and staff are working on the 4th of July Fireworks event at RSSCP. Designer Tom Evans is working on the BMX track plans and has reached out to the other parties involved. Paranick will be on vacation in early July. Congratulations to the District's Computer Technician, Lee Martin, who is retiring after 20 years of service.

Upcoming events: Deerhill Pickleball re-opening will be tomorrow in Oak Park and the Rotary employee appreciation lunch will be held June 26, 2025.

Future Agenda Items: MRCA Final Budget, Accrued Pension Liability, Budget Public Hearings, Men's Golf Club MOU, OPUSD Joint Use Agreement, Director Gray appreciation, Investment policy update, Bids for RSSCP field lighting, and consultant for pool design.

Committee Activity: The Historical Society meets the 1st Monday of the Month.

Chair Abele noted Juneteenth is tomorrow and while it marks the end of legalized slavery, human trafficking continues today. Abele noted during the November 20, 2024, elections there were 3 Bond Measures that failed in Santa Paula and Ventura. He would like the new positions for the Activity Center to be placed on an Agenda. He, Richard Lemmo, and Pool Manager Erin Pierik attended the Ranch radio interview. They promoted Dive-in Movies, Music in Park in SV and OP, Family Campout, and Wheels in Motion. He gave a shout out to his daughter Jackie for completing the 4-day Taco 200 marathon. He will miss Gray on the Board; he has an interesting style that he appreciates. Some of his memorable accomplishments include the ASC programs, the Districting process, and the Mental Health Initiative.

Vice Chair Dennert was notified that Coyote Park was looking a bit dry, if staff could check

that out, he would appreciate it. He had a field trip with his students to Rancho Simi Duck Pond; Chief Rosales stopped by and provided some great stories. He thanked Abele for his comments regarding Juneteenth. He will miss Gray on the Board and provided him with an honorary ASC T-Shirt.

Director Cofield was able to bike Runkle Cyn and Las Lajas. She has connected with the Historical Society to find a good time for them to meet. She is out of town and unfortunately will miss Lee's retirement and the pickleball re-opening. She thanked Gray for his service on the Board, they will continue the work with the Mental Health Initiative, we will miss you.

Director Lundstrom attended Movies in the Park at Rancho Madera Park with about 70 families, the axe throwing was fun. Happy belated Father's Day to the Dad's. He is working with Paranick to establish protocols for communication between the OP MAC and District Board. He will miss having Gray on the Board but will enjoy having him as a new neighbor.

Director Gray thanked everyone for the kind words. He will still walk to Sacramento if the ASC funding is threatened. This is a bittersweet moment, stepping away but he had to take this opportunity for his wife. As a kid growing up in Simi Valley the park programs shaped who he is, he even married the love of his life at Strathearn Park. The accomplishments made during his time would not be possible without staff. Thanks to the leadership team led by Paranick, and Department Heads Miller, Nakaoka, and Pennington. He thanked his fellow board members and the residents of Simi Valley. He is leaving not leaving by choice and will always be a champion for Rancho Simi.

11. CLOSED SESSION – Chair Abele announced Closed Session at 10:18pm.

    a. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)

    SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE TO LITIGATION

Claimant:	Byron Keister
Date Claim Received:	May 21, 2025
Agency Claimed Against:	Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District

    b. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)

    SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE TO LITIGATION

Claimant:	Ashley Kukucka
Date Claim Received	May 27, 2025
Agency Claimed Against:	Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District

    Chair Abele called the meeting back to open session at 10:32pm.

    Reportable action: The Board voted unanimously to accept both claims.

12. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Abele adjourned the meeting at 10:34pm.

Dan Paranick, District Manager/Clerk