



Peninsula Metropolitan Park District

PO Box 425 – Gig Harbor, WA 98335
 253-858-3400 – info@penmetparks.org
www.penmetparks.org

STUDY SESSION MINUTES

March 03, 2026, 5:00 PM

PenMet Parks District Headquarters - 2416 14th Ave NW, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Call to Order Time: 5:00 pm

Commissioner Roll Call:

	Present	Excused	Comment
William C. (Billy) Sehmel, President	x		
Kurt Grimmer, Clerk	x		
Steve Nixon	x		
Maryellen (Missy) Hill	x		
Laurel Kingsbury	x		

Quorum? Yes

ITEM 1 Board Discussion

1a. Recreation Center Operations Update

Director of Recreation Services, Tracy Gallaway, introduces staff contributing to tonight’s presentation, including Rec Center Supervisor, Gina Shaw; Facility Rental Coordinator, Aiden Krug; Director of Finance, Jessica Wigle, also acknowledging Recreation Manager, Brycen Toney, and Rec Center Assistant Supervisors Lindsey Dumovich and Luke Genna-Duncan.

Primary focus on June to December 2025, with a few brief highlights on first part of 2026; key takeaways throughout the process emphasize good planning going in, a lot of learning in real time, staying nimble and adjusting as we keep growing and moving forward.

Areas of Focus for 2025-2026 include:

Raising awareness and driving attendance to facility, while seeking ongoing partnership opportunities; next priorities in 2026 are Outdoors for All Foundation partnership and after school transportation options for middle schoolers. Some strategies include promotions, free drop-in days; large scale rentals; exploring bus service with Pierce Transit; assessment of weekend hour expansion

Learning about operations and adjusting to meet community needs. Some strategies include surveys about experiences and opportunities for improvements, action planning based on results; additional customer service and emergency operations training; continued strategy and analysis on space utilization, budget and operational efficiencies; assessment of facilities and operations; ongoing conversations and adjustments to meet district, staff and community needs.

Rec Center Data Usage at a glance, for June 1 – December 31, 2025, includes:



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30,115 total annual visits; 3,000 total Special Event participants; 11,955 Mini Golf users; 45,000+ total estimated Campus Visitors.

Tracking by month breaks out usage by type, including drop-in and fitness passes, program participants and spectators, Ben B Cheney track, and rental attendance, as well as pass user groups by age.

Usage takeaways show steady growth since June opening, with increased numbers during July and August for summer camps, a significant increase during Fall and Winter as internal programs and facility rentals began. Lighter usage on sunny days as people head outside. Attendance is still growing and there were nearly 14,000 visitors in January 2026.

Board Question: Are we tracking parking usage related to Cushman Trail access? **Answer:** Not at this time; we are looking at ways to evaluate park system usage as a whole, which will include parking; anecdotally, it does appear to be used regularly.

Programming data, by type, includes:

Group fitness classes, which have been built between July, with 65 participants, and December, which saw 175 participants; total fitness attendance for this time frame was 734.

Multi-Use Court drop-in use current offerings include Youth, Adult, Open All-Age Basketball; Open All-Age Volleyball and working toward offering an Adult session; Pickleball options include Open All-Age, skill-level specific courts, workshop, clinic and upcoming tournament events;

Jarzynka Memorial Fieldhouse has had several open drop-in programs for Youth, Adult, and Open All-Age, for soccer, lacrosse; recently added flag football and whiffle ball field time; additional offerings added at the facility like foosball, ping pong and air hockey for families, and other.

Several programs have relocated to the Rec Center, with great community response to the move, including Kid's Night Out and our Specialized programs, which opens up opportunities for large variety of activities like arts and crafts, turf and field use, and the walking track; they have really been appreciative and embraced this as their home.

Several Senior programs also relocated; Line Dancing began in the Fitness room but grew so fast we moved to the Court and added a new Intro class that also fills up quickly. The addition of a new SAIL class allowed us to offer the program every weekday, often at capacity. Tai Chi expanded with new Sword and Fan classes and a drop-in so they could practice in addition to scheduled classes. On average 250 seniors are in active classes or programs every week; not including seniors using the track, playing pickleball, or other areas.

About half our Sports Programming is now located here, bringing great excitement and energy to the Rec Center. Current offerings include Youth Basketball and Indoor Flag Football, Adult Indoor Soccer, Men's 4v4 Basketball and Junior All Stars Soccer, Basketball and T-Ball; new



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offerings include Adult Indoor Flag Football, Youth Indoor Soccer and Volleyball, Adult Volleyball, Pickleball Leagues and Tournaments and Homeschool P.E.

Tot Time is a new weekly indoor play drop-in program for families with toddlers, which began in January. First session drew over 100 children and caregivers, far beyond expectations. We have expanded and bought more equipment to meet demand. Fun use and great way to fill Jarzynka Memorial turf field.

Board Question: Rotary sponsors a Pre-K book program through Imagination Library, could this be a partnership or promotion opportunity?

Answer: This could be a great opportunity to share options and resources for recreation and other information with the community.

Board Question: Can you share insight on Wednesday program timing?

Answer: Late Start for schools and preschool scheduling creates some alternate timing conflicts, but we are working through them.

We saw multiple facility rentals in 2025, with over 224 hours reserved, new and existing for dance, fitness classes, Harbor Soccer, softball, lacrosse, whiffle ball, youth parties and jiu jitsu, meetings and trainings, basketball, pickleball, cheer, futsal through Harbor Soccer.

Board Question: Do we have any data on whether other sites are seeing lower rentals since Rec Center has grown, or year over year changes?

Answer: Yes, we will compile and bring back; anecdotally haven't seen a noticeable difference. This location also doesn't compete with Sehmel, Arletta, Rosedale since uses and locations are very different

Major full facility rental for South Sound FC soccer club practices and home games; very cool experience to bring affordable entertainment to the community; coming up we have a middle school retreat and graduation party full facility bookings. This is a great offering, but also difficult to close the facility to the public, we are working on planning, best timing, intervals.

Board Question: For full facility rentals, are there set durations, like half-day, full-day? **Answer:** It varies, South Sound FC was later evening and after hours so less impact; youth soccer will be all day 9 – 5, retreats are set for after hours, grad party is afterhours but will include Mini Golf as well; we try to prioritize the afterhours requests to minimize impact.

Question: Would shorter rental times be possible or feasible? **Answer:** We assess, on case-by-case basis; we want to be able to host special events but also want to honor our regular users and day to day activities.

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Board Question: Did we hit the target revenue mark with South Sound FC league? **Answer:** Yes, with both practices and reservations included.

Youth party packages exceeded expectations with 49 parties booked in 2025 over a 5-month period; turf parties by far were most popular, followed by Mini Golf. Existing programming reduced some availability for turf and courts, but we try to create balance.



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Mini Golf saw 11,955 total rounds in the inaugural season from June – October 2025. Demographics showed 44% played by Youth, 40% Adult and 16% Seniors; we did not track where players were coming from, but we have added an option for zip code to try and build that data for future seasons. We saw a dip in September when school started, and weather also had a definite impact. We had great feedback on PNW theming and also ease of the process. We will open earlier this year in mid-March to allow more use; new this year is an online calendar, expanded holiday hours and some seasonal pop-up events.

Board Comment: Thanks to Aiden Krug for a wonderful presentation.

Financial Overview will focus on how we measure performance and how the Rec Center fits into the overall health and performance of the District. This presentation is intended for the Board as well as for the community.

Rec Center performance as a public facility measures include public benefit and customer satisfaction; financial performance Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is cost recovery percentage, or revenue divided by operating expenses vs. Return on Investment (ROI) which is common in the private sector.

Rec Center is a cost recovery capital project, with moderate revenue potential; however, the financial focus is break-even or subsidy analysis. It is not a full revenue generating capital project.

We incurred debt to build the Rec Center; most park districts don't include debt service in the financial evaluation of recreation facilities. Debt service is typically not included when a project is: funded by general obligation bonds, repayment comes from property tax revenue, the capital project is for the public good, the goal is service delivery, not profitability.

If we were looking at a KPI to determine overall financial health, park districts use debt service as a percentage of operating expenses. A common benchmark is 15-20% of operating expenses as debt service; PenMet's budgeted debt service is 10% of operating expenses in 2026 and 12% in 2025, lower than the average benchmark.

2025 operating budget included a detailed budget specifically for the Rec Center, made available to the community within the Board approved budget documents. Revenue budget assumed an April opening, for an estimated total of \$516,820, while actual revenue, with an actual July opening, totaled \$369,480 within that shorter time frame.

2025 expenses were budgeted for full year based on estimated wages, benefits and expenses for an estimated total of \$1,167,898 and budgeted cost recovery of 44%; actual expenses totaled \$872,376 and actual cost recovery of 42%.

2026 budget estimates revenue at \$1,007,263 and expenses at \$1,576,983 for budgeted cost recovery rate estimate of 64%, which is on track with the pro forma estimates. PenMet Parks developed an operating pro forma in 2020 that included cost recovery goals for the Rec Center.



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The pro forma found that the Rec Center would operate at a deficit for the first several years.

The Rec Center's annual operating budget is created as part of the annual budget process. Moving forward, Finance will continue to present Rec Center financial performance from a cost recovery perspective in future Board meetings. The District has taken responsible actions to ensure financial stability through conservative budgeting overall and by increasing operating reserves overall, including 2 years of debt service reserves in the Debt Contingency Fund, and investing those reserves of approximately \$591,000 of interest income earned in 2025, as well as finding alternative revenue sources through grants, etc. The success of the Capital Campaign, which has nearly reached the goal of \$4 million, approximately 13% of the capital cost is also important to note.

Listening, Learning and Adapting, started with surveys following each youth party and a general rec center survey that received 466 responses, with excellent feedback and ratings of 4.4 - 5.9 out of 5. Staff have done great job going above and beyond to create a welcoming, fun, safe environment.

Facility cleanliness, safety and accessibility are taken very seriously. We have daily rounds and weekly meetings with our amazing custodial and maintenance staff to develop and enhance routine and planned cleaning and maintenance projects including marking exits on turf field, safety padding on track poles, accessible push-button assisted doors installed in rooms, panic and alarm buttons at exit doors.

We are very proud of our Staff and have added a second assistant supervisor and additional regular staff, based on need, especially with extended hours and rentals. Initial training is provided on Customer Service, Operational Policies and Procedures, District and Recreation specific equipment, software and other tools. We continue to review, update procedures, streamline processes based on lessons learned and feedback tracked through our Comment/Feedback box, online and surveys.

Board Comment: Might also suggest sending surveys to our rental partners, contractors and third-party programming.

Communication is also a priority focus; we are putting together a system for updates via text email for passholders as well as program attendees; we are also looking for additional ways to evolve communications with visitors like screens, website, text, email, and others.

Ideas for programming, which we love to see, are reviewed through a budget and capacity lens and look at potential ways to incorporate for future schedules. Some examples are common interest meetups like book clubs, afterschool activities, mom and me, family programs and fitness classes, evening and weekend programming for working adults or others, workshops and seminars for adults and seniors.

Board Comment: Pierce County Library has a program for book clubs, reading in the park, would be a great rainy-day opportunity or a 'read-in.'



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Lots of great feedback received for our coffee stand, or Milkman Coffee Roasters; he is a great partner and ambassador to the Rec Center and has introduced his own customer base to us.

Some feedback about start times for classes and how to align them with some of the youth programs; we are looking at ways to coordinate.

Board Comment: Local yoga studios often see higher volume at 10 am vs earlier times.

Board Comment: Google showed some impatient reviews were posted prior to Rec Center opening, but we are up at 5-star consistent ratings since opening. May be worth following up.

We are updating processes as we learn; youth parties are so popular we created a separate application and process from standard party rentals. We continue to look at technology for efficiencies, clear communication. Our sound system was upgraded and expanded to the turf field; we added screens to fitness and meeting rooms and schedules are now shown on lobby screens.

Expanded holiday hours were tested starting with MLK Jr. Day for half day, a little longer for President's Day, will aim to open 9 – 5 for Memorial Day, July 3 and Labor Day. We are also looking at possible expansion for weekends hours to accommodate rental requests, parties or drop-ins, when programming is less heavy.

Board Question: Have we considered staying open later on summer weekends? **Answer:** Traffic dips considerably when weather warms up; we will continue evaluation but are anticipating usage will again drop again in Spring and Fall. We do see some people come in later in the afternoon up to closing at 5, but most comments ask about longer weekend hours.

Question: Would there be room to explore expanded weeknights, as well, and if we don't see a change then shift back? **Answer:** It could be a possibility; increased staffing would be needed to extend hours.

Board Comment: Compliments to the entire team for your work to start up and keep going, attention to the nuances, responsive changes, growth and strong leadership; it has been very emotional to be part of the acquisition and journey, wondering what the final would look like, and it is a pleasure and joy to see the accomplishment and quality of work throughout.

Board Question: I know we don't have data today, but can we gather or quantify a cost per participant our or similar, that might inform discussion on potential District savings from not having to rent spaces for other courts, fields for District programs, balancing with our growing users?

Board Comment: This has been a thrilling experience to see the tremendous performance and attention to detail from staff across the board. Also worth highlighting that we have not even been open for a full year yet, and look at the impact it has made, bringing opportunities to so many seniors, youth, families, singles, young adults. There is a huge list of people who have shared how nice it is to just have a place to come and



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shoot hoops or do other activities. We accomplished so much in such a short time, and it will only grow more. We will continue to fill gaps as we find them and continue to be a beacon of light and hope for community. Sincere appreciation for both the presentation and staff.

Board Comment: Recently I encountered someone known years ago, who commented they saw my picture on the wall and wanted to share how amazing the Rec Center is. As a Kitsap resident, they come and walk the track or trail after work and wished they had something even close to it. This is just one of many comments heard from our community; thank you for standing up this new facility and programs and continuing to learn and adapt as we become even better.

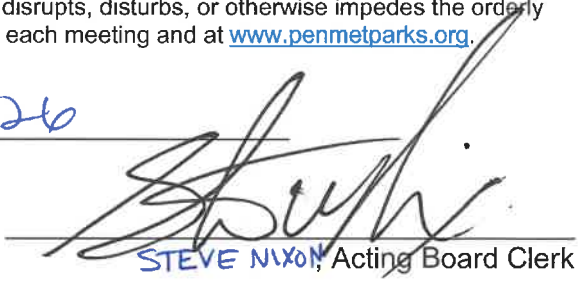
ITEM 2 Adjournment Time: 6:20 pm

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS MEETING PROCEDURES

The Board of Park Commissioners encourages the public to attend its Board meetings. All persons who attend Board meetings must comply with Board Policy P10-106 providing for the Rules of Decorum at Board Meetings. This Policy is to preserve order and decorum and discourage conduct that disrupts, disturbs, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of Board meetings. A copy of the policy is available at each meeting and at www.penmetparks.org.

Approved By the Board on 03/17/2020


Kurt Grimmer, Acting Board President


STEVE NIXON, Acting Board Clerk


Attest: Amanda Walston, Board Secretary