



TUSCALOOSA COUNTY PARK & RECREATION AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Jerry Pate Facility

Tuesday, July 1, 2025, 4:00 pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Elizabeth Winter (*remote*), Brion Hardin (*absent*), Dr. Craig Fairburn, Dr. Tony Johnson, Curtis Travis (*remote*), Gary Falls, Hunter Taylor (*absent*), and Peggy Hogue

PARA STAFF PRESENT: Chief Executive Officer Brian Davis, Adrian Cleckler, Amy Rainey, Christo Sullivan, Heather Shipley, Jennifer LeGrone, John Gray, Maegan Lorimer, Mark Harrison, and Mike Crady

PROCEEDINGS

- Mrs. Winter called the meeting to order.
- June 2025, Special Called Meetings (April 14, April 22, and May 12) approval of minutes.
**Moted by Mrs. Peggy Hogue and seconded by Mr. Gary Falls, the Board unanimously approved the June 2025 Minutes and Special Called Meeting Minutes from April 13, April 22, and May 12.*

VISITORS/GUESTS – N/A

REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS

Chief Executive Officer

Reported by Brian Davis

- Therapeutic Recreation Grant
As suggested by Ambassador Paul Peeples, LeTrice secured a \$16,000 grant for Therapeutic Recreation from the NADA Foundation’s Ambassador Program. Mr. & Mrs. Peeples are “looking forward to hearing how these funds can make a difference in the lives of these special individuals.”
- UA CrossingPoints
PARA partnered with the University of Alabama’s CrossingPoints program for a day of canoeing and kayaking at Lake Nicol. CrossingPoints is a collaborative program between the University of Alabama and the Tuscaloosa City and County School Systems. It serves students with disabilities, ages 18–21, by helping them transition into adulthood. The program focuses on real-world job training, with students spending several hours daily on campus job sites. A key objective of the program is to help employers understand the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. Sixteen students participated – many of them experiencing paddling for the first time. The canoeing trip was a celebration of the program’s end of the semester.
- New Day Car Wash Partnership
The PARA Foundation was selected as the official non-profit partner for the grand opening of New Day Car Wash. The grand opening is scheduled for July 17th, during which all car washes will be complimentary. Customers will receive an on-screen prompt with the option to donate to the designated non-profit partner instead of payment. Donation options usually range from \$5 to \$50.
- West Alabama Mountain Biking Association (WAMBA) Donation
WAMBA donated power poles and solar lights for Sokol Park’s Red Barn parking lot.

- Grapes on the Green Recap
Grapes on the Green saw strong attendance this year with over 250 guests and volunteers, and received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Updates to the layout and tent placement improved the overall flow and experience. The event continues to elevate PARA's brand as professional and community-focused. With solid support from local restaurants and substantial public interest, staff are considering a seasonal expansion. Opportunities for continued improvement are already being explored.
- #2 Green
Work on the #2 green is progressing, though weather delays have impacted the pace. The greens' condition is excellent thus far, and we are currently awaiting direction from Jerry Pate on the final shaping phase. At this time, we remain confident in our ability to complete the project within the planned timeline.

Financial Report

Reported by Mike Crady

- May was a strong financial month for PARA, contributing \$173,272.19 in net activity and bringing the year-to-date (YTD) net position to \$481,912.77. As of May 31, 2025, PARA's unrestricted cash balance rose to \$3,458,337.23—a \$231,853.84 increase—while restricted funds also grew, with the Beer Tax Fund reaching \$144,637.23 and the Veterans Park Fund at \$898,495.76. Interest income has exceeded \$100,000 YTD, and overall revenue continues trending upward, increasing by roughly \$494,000 compared to last year, largely due to higher appropriations. Membership revenue is still ahead of 2024 levels, though it has started to level off, and programming revenue is up 17% thanks to growth in Youth Basketball, Rec Travel, and ARPA tournaments. Although Golf and Tennis are slightly behind projections, improvements in May and rising summer activity in Baseball, Softball, Fitness, and Aquatics are promising. Expenses have increased by about \$125,000 (1.3%) year-over-year due to higher maintenance, supply, professional, and insurance costs. However, PARA has cut over 7,500 part-time hours—saving more than \$40,000—despite a 3% increase in average part-time wages, and full-time vacancies added another \$43,000 in salary savings. Even with new debt for fitness and golf equipment, PARA's financial footing remains solid, with positive cash flow and strategic cost management guiding a stable start to the summer season.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – N/A

OLD BUSINESS

- There being no Old Business to discuss, Mr. Gary Falls inquired about the status of the 2025 Tuscaloosa Toyota Classic. Brian Davis responded that there will not be a golf tournament this year. He noted that a local Tuscaloosa business had previously expressed interest in purchasing the Epson Tour; however, that interest has since been withdrawn.

NEW BUSINESS

- Marketing Presentation
The Board received a marketing presentation regarding the renaming and branding of the recently vacated University of Alabama Practice Facility located at the Ol' Colony Golf Course. PARA Marketing and Public Relations Manager Heather Shipley introduced the proposed name and concept: Iron + Ember. The presentation emphasized the importance of honoring the Jerry Pate Golf Center's legacy while introducing a bold, modern identity that would resonate with future generations. Positioned as more than just a facility, Iron + Ember is envisioned as a destination—a place where individuals can elevate their game on the course, via simulators, or in professional and family settings. The name was inspired by the facility's strength, history, and future potential, overlooking Tuscaloosa's most extensive driving range. Heather shared that following the Board's prior approval to purchase four golf simulators as a new revenue stream, branding efforts began immediately. The Iron + Ember concept blends cutting-edge technology, a family-friendly

atmosphere, and business-class amenities, aiming to create a household brand that reflects PARA's commitment to innovation and excellence in recreation. A promotional video was presented to support the branding strategy and vision.

- Following the presentation, the Board engaged in discussion regarding the proposed branding. Specifically, members expressed concern over the use of the "+" symbol in the Iron + Ember logo, noting it may lead to confusion. The Board requested that the symbol be changed to an ampersand ("&") for clarity and consistency. Additionally, the Board inquired about the continued use of the Jerry Pate name in association with the facility and whether PARA had legal authorization to do so. After discussion, the Board directed PARA staff to meet with Mr. Jerry Pate to discuss the use of his name on the building and to report back with findings. The Board agreed that a formal vote on the Iron & Ember branding and name would be conducted via email once the requested details and clarifications had been received.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Chair Mrs. Elizabeth Winter requested the Board move into Executive Session to discuss leasing real estate property. It was stated that the session would last approximately 30 minutes to an hour.

**At 4:58 p.m., Mrs. Elizabeth Winter adjourned the meeting into Executive Session. Mrs. Winters conducted a roll call, and all members present voted in favor.*

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

**At 5:38 p.m., a motion to end the Executive Session was made by Dr. Tony Johnson and seconded by Dr. Craig Fairburn. Following the close of the Executive Session, Dr. Tony Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Craig Fairburn seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.*

Elizabeth Winter, Board Chair

Brian Davis, Chief Executive Officer