



**Municipal Park Foundation Board Special Called Meeting
Agenda
Wednesday, April 1, 2026
6:00 PM**

1. Call to Order, Roll Call
2. Invocation
3. Civility Pledge and Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of the April Special Called Meeting Agenda
5. Chief Gadsden and Team present to the board regarding controlled burning and training in the park.
 - a. Consideration from the Board on presentation
6. Approval of Budget Version 3.20.26
7. Board Member Comments
8. Adjournment

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Proposal for Annual Prescribed Burns at Town Park

From Shaun R. Gadsden <SGadsden@charlestoncounty.org>

Date Wed 3/25/2026 10:25 AM

To Ashley Blythe [REDACTED]; Town Administrator <townadministrator@townofawendawsc.org>

Cc Brett P. Sims <BSims@charlestoncounty.org>

Katherine and Ashley,

I appreciate the conversation we had yesterday regarding the potential to conduct annual prescribed (control) burns at the park. I wanted to follow up with a more structured outline of the concept and the value it could bring to both the Town and the Fire Department.

This initiative would serve as a cost-efficient and proactive safety measure for the Town while simultaneously providing our personnel with valuable, real-time training opportunities. By conducting these burns annually, prior to the start of peak burn season, we can reduce the buildup of heavy brush and layered debris that accumulates over the winter months. This will significantly decrease available fuel loads, limit overgrowth, and reduce the overall risk of wildfire during the drier summer conditions.

In conjunction with the burns, our crews would also evaluate and maintain existing fire lines throughout the park, as well as along nearby trails. This ensures improved accessibility and defensible space while allowing our firefighters to train in realistic conditions that sharpen their operational readiness.

From a fiscal standpoint, this approach could reduce or eliminate the need for the Town to contract out this type of work. Additionally, our teams are trained to identify and address areas that may otherwise be overlooked, ensuring a more thorough and effective outcome.

We also intend to incorporate regional partner agencies into these operations. This will increase manpower on-site and strengthen interagency coordination, which is critical in the event of a wildfire within our district. These collaborative training environments mirror real-world response conditions and enhance overall preparedness.

If this proposal is supported by the elected body, Deputy Chief Sims and Captain Phillips would coordinate a site visit with both of you to review the park in detail. During that time, we would identify specific burn areas based on existing master plans and mapping data. Following that, our Critical Incident Support Team would develop a formal Incident Action Plan (IAP), and we would begin coordinating timelines and operational logistics.

Ultimately, this program will not only improve safety conditions within the park but will also support healthier vegetation growth, clearer trail identification for citizens, and sustained professional development for our firefighters.

Please let me know your thoughts or if you would like to discuss this further. We are happy to move forward at your direction.

Respectfully,
Shaun R. Gadsden

Shaun R. Gadsden, CFO MIFireE

Head Fire Chief

Charleston County Public Safety Directorate

Awendaw McClellanville Fire Department

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Awendaw Park Budget-3/20/26

Detailed expenses attached

	Actual 2026	Estimated	Proposed 2027
	6/30/2026	6/30/26 FYE	6/30/27 FYE
Revenues			
Vendor Fees	\$12,000.00		
Festival Sponsorships	\$42,000.00		
Festival Donations	\$3,000.00		
Festival Revenues	\$87,000.00		
Total Municipal Park(1)	\$144,000.00		
Expenses			
Planning and Advertisement	\$18,000.00		
Food/Equipment Rental	\$90,000.00		
Misc Expense	\$36,000.00	Loss Awe-fest \$20,000.00	Allocated by Park Board (1) \$5,000.00
Municipal Park Improvements(1)	\$60,000.00	\$25,000.00	Municipal Park Improvements(2) \$65,800.00
Park Maintenance	\$40,000.00	\$18,000.00	Park Maintenance \$46,500.00
Town of Awendaw Park LCWF			
Total Park and Festival Expenditure	\$244,000.00	\$63,000.00	\$117,300.00

Notes:

(1) Funds to be spent on small items without approval from Council

(2) Of the \$60,000 in FYE 26 Improvements, \$25,000 has been allocated to date for Park entrance number 1
Budget assumes remaining \$35,000 is carried over into 2027

(3) Above excludes annual grants as outlined below:

- 2023-\$7,009 for seating and tables
- 2024-\$7,484 for benches and fencing on berm
- 2025-\$9,979 for signage
- 2026-\$7,360(Open-no project yet)

OPERATING MAINTENANCE COSTS					
CATEGORY	ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT COSTS	TOTAL
GROUND MAINTENANCE - DEVELOPED AREAS	MOWING AND TRIMMING	1	LS	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
	FERTILIZER SEED SOIL AMENDMENTS				
	HERBICIDE WEED CONTROL				
	MULCH FOR TREES/BEDS				
	IRRIGATION SYSTEM OPERATION/REPAIRS				
	EQUIPMENT FUEL SMALL TOOLS				
	PEST CONTROL (FIRE ANTS)	1	LS	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
NATURAL AREAS - TRAILS	TRAIL SURFACE MAINTENANCE				
	INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL				
	SELECTIVE TREE BUSH REMOVAL				
	PRESCRIBED BURNS HABITAT MANAGEMENT				
	BOUNDARY AND INTERIOR FENCE MAINTENANCE	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
CUSTODIAL - FACILITIES	RESTROOM CLEANING	1	EACH	\$500.00	\$500.00
	SEPTIC OR SEWER FEES PUMP OUTS				
	SMALL BUILDINGS SHELTERS REPAIR MAINTENANCE				
	PORTA POTTY WASH STATION	2	EACH	\$2,000.00	\$4,000.00
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/RESPONSE		1		\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
LABOR / PERSONNEL	PARK MAINTENANCE STAFF				
	OVERTIME (STORM SPECIAL EVENTS)				
	LABOR BURDEN (BENEFITS PAYROLL TAXES)				
SITE AMENITIES - STRUCTURES	PARKING LOT SWEEPING MINOR REPAIRS				
	TRAIL PARKING LOT LIGHTING				
	BENCHES PICNIC TABLES REPAIR MAINTENANCE				
	SIGNAGE INSTALLATION CLEANING REPLACEMENT				
	TRASH AND RECYCLE RECEPTACLES				
LAKE MAINTENANCE	WATER QUALITY MONITORING/TESTING				
	ALGAE AQUATIC WEED TREATMENT				
	SHORELINE EROSION CONTROL				
	DEBRIS TRASH REMOVAL				
UTILITIES	ELECTRICITY				
	WATER				
	PROPANE OR NATURAL GAS				
TOTAL OPERATING MAINTENANCE COSTS					\$46,500.00