

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Thursday, April 26, 2018

3:30 pm

Unity Park Fieldhouse

56 First Street

Turners Falls, MA 01376

**Present:** Dennis Grader, Chairperson, Barbara Kuklewicz, Vice Chairperson, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation, Jennifer Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper

**Absent:** Albert Cummings

**Meeting Being Taped**

**1. 3:33pm Meeting Called to Order**

**2. 3:33pm Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 26, 2018; (Votes May Be Taken)**

**Motion:** Made by Barbara Kuklewicz to accept the minutes as written; seconded by Dennis Grader.

**Approved:** 2-0

**3. 3:34pm Update On Proposed Changes to State Access Regulations and Potential Affect on Facilities; (521 CMR)**

Last month Jon attended a meeting held by the MA Architectural Access Board regarding regulation 521 Commonwealth Massachusetts Regulations: which pertains to playground surfacing. The wording on the red line document regulation seems to be different than what the original document proposed; that document stated, just "access points" were to be a hard covered surfacing (pour-in-place, rubber tiles) and not "use zones" (zones being those areas that surround and go under playground units). Those in attendance asked the board to change the wording to state this difference and still expressed their concern over the cost of these changes. Also not in the red line document, was that playgrounds would be "grandfathered." Jon got the impression that this regulation would be moving forward. It seems that access points will need to be modified, the federal government is looking to make changes to accessibility and the state of Massachusetts will follow. The changes will come into effect January 1, 2019.

**4. 3:38pm Montague Center Park Improvement Project Update**

At the Annual Town Meeting on May 5, Article 23 – Montague Center Park Master Plan will be voted on at a cost of \$7000. The Montague Center Park Improvement Committee met with the administrative assistant at the Conway School of Design and went through the process, giving the group different concepts to add to the application. Jon felt very good about where the Conway School of Design is going with this design.

**5. 3:42pm Winter Programs 2018 Profit/Loss Statements**

Jon let the Commission know it was a difficult winter financially. We currently have a revenue problem which he feels is due to enrollment.

● **Youth basketball** was down \$842.56; with only three travel teams and the K-2 program. In a typical year we have four travel teams. Expenses incurred with this program are we pay for gym use, referees, and a gym monitor. Equipment, such a basketballs are not necessarily an annual expense; they are purchased only when needed. So, there are not a lot of expenses to cut when it comes to this program. Jon said, as far as fees, we are on the higher end compared to other towns. He is concerned about the future of this program as the numbers are so low at the younger level.

●**Sawmill 10k Race** suffered because of the frigid weather that morning. Typically we have around 160 runners, but this year we had only 80. We did make \$212.52. This is a correction of the profit/loss statement previously submitted.

●**Babysitting** had 11 students registered. This is more of a community service, as we don't usually make much of a profit. Janine Hutchinson is the instructor that has run this program for many years and does this as a volunteer.

●**Open Swim** numbers were down compared to last year, and the loss reflects that. Again, this is another program that is done more as a service for the community and not a money maker. The fees did go up moderately from last year.

Our revolving fund is currently running in the red; it seems to be the new normal, we continue to struggle with our revenue. We can cut some expenses, but we do internal audits once the program/seasons are over and look for areas to save money, and there just aren't many expenses that can be cut. We try to be careful with our fees, so as many people as possible participate in our programs. By the end of the fiscal year our revolving will be out of the red; we will have the revenue of the Summer Playground, adult softball and our cookie dough fundraiser.

**Motion:** Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to accept the Winter 2018 Profit/Loss Statements; seconded by Dennis Grader.

**Approved:** 2-0

6. 3:55pm

#### **Bluefish Swim Team/Profit Loss Statement**

There were 39 swimmers this winter, down about 12 swimmers from last year. The program loss was \$1760.27. Our expenses include pool use and payroll. We would love to have more coaches to work individually with the swimmers but it is not realistic; having more coaches would increase our expenses and fees. Currently the season is broken into two parts; the Pioneer Valley Swim League, which runs October to the end of January, and the Independent season, which runs beginning of February to the beginning of March. Jon is recommending shortening the independent season; it is difficult to find non-league swim teams in our area. He would like to focus on the Mid-Regionals, a multi-team competition we have been doing for years, which is held at the beginning of March. This will decrease our expenses (payroll and pool use) a few hundred dollars. Jon has contacted Michael Muller, owner of Montague Web Works, in regard to starting a website for the Bluefish. Currently the team uses a Bluefish Facebook page and the town's website, but both have their limitations. Jon went on to say that most Pioneer Valley Swim teams are associated with their town's parks and recreation department but also have their own website. He feels this is an affordable investment that he hopes will attract families to our program and give the current families something usable. Barbara Kuklewicz asked the question should the Parks and Recreation department have their own website and have the Bluefish on that site and Jon feels that right now the town's new website is working for us.

7. 4:02pm

#### **Eagle Scout Project Proposal**

Brian Poirier met with Jon in regards to an Eagle Scout project he would like to work on with us. He is proposing to put a Ga-ga pit at Unity Park. Ga-ga is a variant of dodgeball that is played with one ball. It combines dodging, striking, running and jumping with the objective of being the last person standing. The game's popularity has grown and children often learn about the game through summer camps. Dennis Grader added that there is a Ga-ga pit in South Deerfield. Brian and Jon walked around Unity Park looking for an area this pit could be constructed; with an area needed of approximately 24 square feet. At this point there isn't a clear spot at Unity Park, but Jon will go back out to the park and see if he can find a spot that will work.

**Motion:** Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to forward on the Ga-ga pit proposal; seconded by Dennis Grader.

**Approved:** 2-0

**8. 4:08pm**

**Parks & Recreation Director Business**

The Spring Parade is April 28 and our department is the beneficiary of the 5K race. Jon will set up a table at Sheffield, which is the start of the parade.

**9.4:10pm**

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Made by Barbara Kuklweicz to adjourn; seconded by Dennis Grader

**Approved:** 2-0

X \_\_\_\_\_

Albert Cummings, Secretary Date

or

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Print

Date: \_\_\_\_\_