

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, October 23, 2025

6:30 p.m.

Montague Town Hall Annex

One Avenue A

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Barbara Kuklewicz, Chairperson, Ken Danford, Vice Chairperson, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation

Absent: Jeff Singleton

Guests: Miryam Vesset, resident

Meeting is being recorded.

1. 6:35pm Meeting Called to order

2. 6:35pm Montague Center Park Basketball Court Development Plan -

Jon wanted to thank Ken for meeting with Scott Barlow of Barlow Paving in regard to the basketball court plan. However, Jon also met with Sam Urkiel (DPW Superintendent) and Will Stratford (Highway Foreman), and they said DPW could do the paving. Our department would cover the cost of the asphalt. There was discussion about expanding the original size of the court to account for the wearing of the edges around the court. Jon thought putting a few benches around the court would also prevent vehicles from driving across the court. This area is a shared space with the DPW, as they park their vehicles there when mowing the ballfield in addition to using that space to store sand in the winter. Jon did inform the commission that the remaining \$7,991 from the Montague Center Park Project, unfortunately, cannot be used to pay for the basketball court per the wording of the Town Meeting article that partially funded the project. The remaining funds will need to be returned to the General Fund, but Jon did say that we could possibly request that money back through the Annual Town Meeting in May. There was discussion about possibly painting the surface of the basketball court.

3. 6:57pm Summer Program Profit/Loss Statements -

• Summer Camp Participation Statistics

Jon provided the summer camp participation statistics to the commission. Participation was up this summer from the past few years. The camp offers three sites; ages 5 & 6 years old, 7 & 8-year-olds and a 9–12-year-old group. Along with the daily on-site activities, the camp goes to Laurel Lake once a week and does weekly off-site field trips.

Along with camp, the department offered a Soccer Jamboree Clinic that is held weekly at Highland Park in Millers Falls, and Movies in the Park featured three movies this summer. Movies in the Park does not generate any income for the department, but attendance was very strong throughout the summer.

4. 7:04pm FY26 Strategic Plan Review & Adoption

Jon provided a final draft of the plan to the commission, and they made no additional recommendations.

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to adopt the FY 26 Strategic Plan; seconded by Ken Danford.

Vote: Approved 2-0

5. 7:05pm Current Facility Projects Update -

- **Old Blacksmith Shop:** currently waiting for the architect's evaluation to be completed. Jon hopes it will be ready for the next commission meeting. The architect wanted to revisit the site during a rainy period to evaluate the conditions. Ultimately, Jon would like to see some aspects of the shop remain and have a portion utilized as a carport.

- **Skatepark maintenance:** the park will close October 31-November 1 for maintenance.

- **Whale Water Spray Unit:** the new valve and mother board were installed and testing went well. The system should operate at optimum efficiency next summer.

6. 7:12pm Proposed Sawmill 10k Run Changes -

Jon proposed changes to the Sawmill 10k Run, and maps were included in the commission packet. One change request was to include a 2-mile walking route that would be separate from the running route. In years past there have been participants who walked the 10k and to accommodate for time Jon thought of adding a shorter 2-mile walking route. The start and finish will be the same for both groups. Jon will include the timing company we use in the discussion as to how this would be addressed. An additional issue that presented itself last year was that we had a runner who had a child in a wheelchair, and because the building is not ADA compliant, they were unable to enter the building. Jon would like to address this issue by renting a temporary ramp and received an estimate of \$900.

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to accept the Sawmill 10k Run changes; seconded by Ken Danfords

Vote: Approved 2-0

7. 7:18pm Rag Shag Parade -

Jon attended a meeting with the Turners Falls High School band leader, the Veterans Commission, and RiverCulture to collaborate on bringing back the event. The Veterans Committee were the founders and organizers of the event, and due to a significant loss of members, they were not able to implement it in 2024. The route of the parade will switch to starting off at the Second St. Parking Lot, proceeding down Avenue A, then finishing at Peskeompskut Park where “Scared Shrekless” will be shown. There will be refreshments and costume prizes for the participants.

8. 7:20pm Montague Soapbox Race -

As the planning committee works on the race, they are contemplating moving the race back to the end of September/start of October. One reason for this is that the hay used for safety barricades is much easier to obtain in the fall.

9. 7:23pm Open Space & Recreation Plan Update -

• Joint meeting with Conservation Commission

There is a public forum planned for November 18. Jon also informed the commission that there may be two commission meetings planned for December; our monthly meeting and another with the Conservation Commission in regard to updating the plan.

10. 7:26pm Park & Recreation Director's Time-off -

Jon will be taking November 3, the week of Thanksgiving and Christmas off.

11. 7:30pm Current FY26 Operating Budget Balance

There were no questions.

12. 7:32pm Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting requirement -

This week the furnace at the fieldhouse stopped working. Jamrog HVAC has been working on the issue and informed us that they weren't certain the current furnace would last the winter. The furnace is slated to be replaced in 2030. Jon informed town administration of the situation. There was discussion as to how the department would handle the situation if the furnace did not last the winter.

13 7:35pm Adjournment -

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to adjourn; seconded by Ken Danford.

Vote: Approved 2-0

X _____

Jeff Singleton, Secretary

_____ Date

or

Signature & Title: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____