

The Waltham Parks-Recreation Board held their February Board meeting on Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at the Waltham Recreation Department, 510 Moody St, Waltham, MA 02453.

Present were: Wayne Cook, Tom Creonte, Patricia Curtin, John Graceffa, Stacey Tully, Jennie Scafidi, Gary Vallerand and Jerry Walker. Absent was Richard Scanlon.

Also present was Director, Kim Hebert.

Vice Chairperson Jerry Walker called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Vice Chairperson Walker expressed condolences from the Parks-Recreation Board to Sandra Tomasello and her family, after the passing of her husband in early 2023.

The first item on the agenda was to recognize Recreation Supervisor Kara Greeley for being awarded the National Parks and Recreation Association 30 Under 30 Award. As the youngest Recreation Supervisor, it's a great honor! The Recreation Department is proud of her efforts and creative initiative.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2023 Parks-Recreation Board Meeting by Gary Vallerand and seconded by Jennie Scafidi. All were in favor.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2023 Special Parks-Recreation Board Meeting by Gary Vallerand and seconded by Tom Creonte. All were in favor.

The monthly bills were circulated and signed by all Parks-Recreation Board Members.

Director Hebert reviewed the statement of accounts explaining that the accounts detailed the current balances in operational and capital budget accounts. The water bills from this past summer's spray parks, irrigation, water fountain and drinking fountains have been processed. An additional chart showing the water bills for spray parks was also included in the Parks-Recreation Board folder. Director Hebert concluded by informing the Parks-Recreation Board that routine spending continues to occur for seasonal programs and all accounts are in good standing.

Annual Youth Sports Presentations were next on the agenda. Mr. Mike Peterson provided the Parks-Recreation Board with an update on Lou Tompkins Baseball Program. This past season there was over 45 athletes enrolled which created three teams, with the U17 team winning the championship. The program utilized Nipper Maher Park as well as the Babe Ruth Field and had approximately 16 games scheduled this past season. Mr. Peterson is excited for another great upcoming season. The Parks-Recreation Board thanked Mr. Peterson for his time and efforts.

Waltham Youth Football was represented by President Francois Joseph and Cheer Coordinator Jen Vasquezi. During the 2022 season, Mr. Joseph was happy to report that an instructional third grade team was created. Mr. Joseph explained this team was flag football in full equipment. Many teams made the playoffs this past season. One of the bigger expenses, this year was helmet certification and replacement. Each helmet is approximately \$160.00, if it needs to be replaced. There were 170 athletes registered this past season. Ms. Vasquezi noted that approximately 75 athletes participated in the cheer program. A new kindergarten team was also formed. Many

teams made the playoffs and won either on the local level, state level or regional level. Each cheer team had two to three coaches depending on the team's size. The Parks-Recreation Board thanked Mr. Joseph and Ms. Vasquezi for their efforts and time.

The representative from the Waltham Youth Hockey Program was not able to attend. They will present at a future meeting.

The representative from the Waltham Youth Soccer Program was not able to attend. They will present at a future meeting.

The 2023 Proposed Summer Program fees were next on the agenda. Director Hebert noted that the proposed summer 2023 fees were provided as a handout. All programs directed by full time Recreation Supervisors will operate this summer from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and third-party programs will operate from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Director Hebert proposed a \$5.00 increase to most programs. This increase will assist with the rising cost of supplies and employees hourly rates. With the proposed increase, program fees would be comparable to what was approved in 2019.

A motion to approve the \$5.00 increase to summer 2023 program fees was made by Gary Vallerand and seconded by Tricia Curtin. All were in favor.

The 2023 proposed summer staff rates was presented. At this time, all seasonal part time staff have an hourly rate of \$15.00/hr. The State of Massachusetts's minimum hourly rate increased to \$15.00/hr. in January of 2023. In order to recruit and maintain quality and enthusiastic dedicated seasonal part time employees, Director Hebert proposed a \$1.00 increase to all levels of part time staff. If approved, this rate increase would be reflective in the upcoming FY 2024 budget proposal and would be applied beginning July 1, 2023.

A motion to approve a \$1.00 increase to summer 2023 staff rates was made by Gary Vallerand and seconded by Tom Creonte. All were in favor.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - Year 49 was next on the agenda. As a follow up to Councillor Cathyann Harris's request to improve Logan Park, funding for design services was requested. Funding was also requested to remove/replace the black top surface at the McKenna Playground basketball court as well as upgrade the playground with ADA approved surfacing. The infield of the baseball field will be renovated this fall, providing an overall improvement at this location over the next year. A request was made to Director Hebert to follow up with Councillor Harris and the youth that presented, sharing the next step in the process being completed.

A motion to approve the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - Year 49 request was made by John Graceffa and seconded by Wayne Cook. All were in favor.

Next on the agenda was the Pickleball Discussion and Proposed 2023 Online Reservation Policy and Fee. Director Hebert began by stating that with the popularity of pickleball in our community, the Department has received many complaints regarding a lack of resources and balance between regular users and one-time users. With a number of new pickleball only courts

scheduled to be opened in the future, Director Hebert recommended a more formal policy to assist with communication, education, as well as the regulation of these locations. Director Hebert continued by stating that it is proposed to add additional pickleball courts to Nipper Maher Park as well as Monsignor McCabe Playground this spring. The Director also updated that Lowell Field will be under construction, therefore eliminating four pickleball courts that are currently located on two tennis courts. To regulate court use, Director Hebert recommended implementing an online reservations system which is similar to the current picnic permit reservation system. A fee of \$5 for residents and \$20 for nonresidents would be established. Residency verification would also occur through the Recreation Departments reservation software when comparing credit card addresses to home addresses. An additional survey of local communities was also provided which shared that some communities allow residents to self-regulate court use, to other communities which require a seasonal pass be purchased and court attendants are on site during open hours.

A motion to approve the proposed policy, signage, and fees was made with modification stating that “failure to follow all regulations will result in loss of future permits” was made by John Graceffa and seconded by Wayne Cook. All were in favor.

Director’s Report:

Park Ranger Update – Park Ranger Adam Green has been very busy throughout the City’s Parks and Open Space under the care, custody and control of the Parks-Recreation Board with courteous enforcement, invasive removal and trail maintenance. He is also working on a grant to help fund additional work within Prospect Hill Park.

Winter Programs – The Sweet Heart Dance is scheduled for this Saturday from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Parks-Recreation Board is welcome.

Fernald Property – The site walk with the Conservation Commission was held on Monday, January 30, 2023. Approximately 20 individuals attended between the Conservation Commission, Recreation Department Staff, City Council Members as well as neighborhood and community members. NESRA engineering will meet again with Conservation on Thursday, February 16, 2023

Veterans Athletic Complex Turf Replacement – The bid for the turf replacement was opened on January 26, 2023. The base bid was awarded to David W. White and Son, for the lower three fields in the amount of \$2,233,515.00 with an alternate of \$731,0070.00 for field #1 (Nocera Field). The request for funding went to the Mayor for next week’s City Council Meeting. The Mayor and Director Hebert are communicating with the Gann Academy for involvement in improvements to Field #1 (Nocera Field). David W. White was the contractor that installed the turf originally at Veterans Athletic Complex as well as Falzone Field.

Veterans Rink Roof – Recreation Staff met with the designer, Bargmann Hendrie and Archetype, Inc (B &A) for the rink roof renovations. He did a physical inspection of the rink roof today and will have final bid documents to the Purchasing Department within the next week.

Once the roof is replaced Recreation Staff will be working with Waltham Youth Hockey to replace the scoreboard.

Vacation Week – Four vacation week programs are scheduled with over 70 youth enrolled. Staff are all diligently preparing for a fun week.

Outdoor Field permit applications became available on February 1, 2023. Applications will be prioritized and then reviewed and processed. With the closure of Lowell Field, Leary Field and Veterans Athletic Complex as of June 1, 2023, we will strive to accommodate as many groups as possible

Walking path distances – On the Recreation Department web site under the facilities page, now lists the walking path distances for our parks.

Additional Recreation Maintenance Staff – FY 2023 budget, two recreation maintenance staff were approved. These positions had a focus at the Fernald Property. With ongoing attention to this location as well as the other recreation locations. Director Hebert looks towards hiring them in the near future so they can train with the Rink staff and our 510 Moody Street custodial staff.

Fill moved to the Fernald Property– Tested and verified clean fill from the Leary Field Improvement project has been moved to the Fernald Property to be used for a future program.

Budget Preparation – The FY 24 was just released. Preparation is underway to create and present the next fiscal year's budget.

Other Business

No other business was discussed.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tom Creonte and seconded by Wayne Cook, all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly A. Hebert
Director of Recreation