

The Waltham Parks-Recreation Board held their September Board Meeting on Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at the Waltham Recreation Department, 510 Moody St, Waltham, MA 02453.

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

Also present was Director, Kim Hebert and Assistant Director, Ed Kelley II.

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

A motion was then made to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2023 Parks-Recreation Board Meeting by Gary Vallerand and seconded by John Graceffa. 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 are the balances in operational and capital budget accounts. Operating accounts have been updated to reflect up to date account information. The City's Auditors are currently working on also updating the Capital accounts which should be completed by October's meeting. All accounts are in good standing.

The next item on the agenda was Recreation Supervisor Candidates. Director Hebert explained approximately 50 applications were received for the Recreation Supervisor position. Director Hebert and Assistant Director, Ed Kelley reviewed each application while looking for a balance of a variety of recreational skills. Following this process, approximately 20 applicants were invited to the first round of interviews. Of those 20 applicants, only four provided an interview and "proposed diverse recreational schedules" that they could facilitate themselves. Those four applicants were invited to interview #2. Following the second round of interviews, three applicants were selected to be brought forth to the Parks-Recreation Board. One applicant withdrew within the last week.

Director Hebert then explained that currently, the budget allows for one immediate hiring of one Recreation Supervisor and also noted that within the budget, there is a Full Time Position available. After speaking with the Human Resource Director as well as the City Auditor, guidance was given that it is within the Parks-Recreation Board discretion to hire one of the presented candidates to start effective January 1, 2024.

The Parks-Recreation Board met with each candidate and asked a variety of questions.

A motion to approve Makonnen Fenton for the position of Recreation Supervisor, effective immediately, was made by Wayne Cook and seconded by John Graceffa. All were in favor. A roll call was requested:

Roll Call

Wayne Cook	Yes
Tom Creonte	Yes
Tricia Curtin	Yes
John Graceffa	Yes
Jennie Scafidi	Yes
Richard Scanlon	Absent
Stacey Tully	Yes
Gary Vallerand	Yes
Jerry Walker	Yes

8 – Yes 1 – Absent 0- No

A motion to approve Tyler Lechman for the position of Recreation Supervisor, effective January 1, 2024, was made by John Graceffa and seconded by Wayne Cook. All were in favor. A roll call was requested:

Roll Call

Wayne Cook	Yes
Tom Creonte	Yes
Tricia Curtin	Yes
John Graceffa	Yes
Jennie Scafidi	Yes
Richard Scanlon	Absent
Stacey Tully	Yes
Gary Vallerand	Yes
Jerry Walker	Yes

8 – Yes 1 – Absent 0- No

The next item on the agenda was Request: Proposal for Lowell Field Mural Project. Director Hebert summarized the request explaining that Councillor LaCava reached out to the Recreation Department on behalf of Elana Winkler to inquire on working to create a community mural on the Lowell Field Street hockey boards. Within that conversation, it was discussed that the Parks-Recreation Board would need to approve the idea, the Recreation Department would have final decision on the design and be able to assist with the purchasing of the paint. Councillor LaCava then presented the idea of a community mural at Lowell Field.

A motion for preliminary approval of the Proposal for Lowell Field Mural Project was made by Tom Creonte and seconded by Tricia Curtin. All were in favor.

The next item on the agenda was proposed updated League Financial Document. Director Hebert explained that each youth group that presents to the Parks-Recreation Board is asked to complete a financial document of this past season's financial breakdown and registration numbers. In review of this document, Director Hebert proposed a modification to the registration component.

Director Hebert explained that during the preparation period for the Department's budget, the Recreation Department requires information about the number of games, practices, spectators as well as registration numbers. If this information was provided on the report, it would save the Department's office countless of hours of research on each league's website.

A motion to approve the Proposed updated League Financial Document was made by Gary Vallerand and seconded by Tom Creonte. All were in favor.

Next on the agenda was Request: Baystate Games- July 2024. Director Hebert stated that The Baystate Games organization is excited to request their return to Veterans Athletic Complex in July of 2024. Aside for the year Veterans Complex was closed for renovations, Baystate games has been a fixture in the month of July at the Veterans Athletic Complex. Director Hebert then recommended approval of the request.

A motion to approve Baystate Games- July 2024 was made by Tom Creonte and seconded by Wayne Cook. All were in favor.

The next item on the agenda was Request: Rink Lease Renewal. The Veterans Skating Rink recently opened its 18th season on September 5th. Director Hebert shifted attention toward the executive letter that was provided in the Board's folders and explained that the City of Waltham is eligible to begin negotiating terms for a new lease. According to the current agreement that the City of Waltham has with the State, we are welcome to renew our current lease for another five years. At this time, the Parks-Recreation Board's approval to request the lease to be renewed was required. The request letter would then be sent to Mayor McCarthy who would then work alongside the appropriate departments in negotiation. A Board Member then asked if a longer life of the lease than five years could be stipulated.

A motion to approve the Rink Lease Renewal with a request for a longer-term lease option was made by Wayne Cook and seconded by Gary Vallerand. All were in favor.

Next on the agenda was Request: Jen Williams-Party in Pink Fundraiser. Director Hebert introduced a fundraiser requested by Jen Williams, the Recreation Department's Zumba instructor. Jen Williams had asked to host this Zumba Fundraiser at 510 Moody St. The Recreation Department was happy to donate space and maintenance staff for this event, if approved.

A motion to approve the Jen Williams- Party in Pink Fundraiser was made by Jerry Walker and seconded by John Graceffa. All were in favor.

Director's Report:

Veterans Skating Rink- The Rink Roof Project was completed this summer. The Recreation Department is pleased with the results and lack of moisture in the building. New Scoreboards were installed this summer. This project was a collaborative effort between the Recreation Department and Waltham Youth Hockey. The Rink season began on Tuesday, September 5,

2023 and ice scheduling is comparable to past years. New for 2023, Waltham Youth Hockey has introduced a credit card system.

Recreation Programming- Summer programs were very successful. Special thanks to all full time Recreation staff and seasonal staff for their energy and creativity in a very hot and wet summer. Summer statistics and a photo collage was provided to the Board. Also, fall program registration began on Tuesday, September 5, 2023. Programs begin the week of September 18th. Enrollment numbers are traditionally the lowest in the fall season, but the majority of programs will be operating as scheduled.

Veterans Athletic Complex Turf Replacement – The turf replacement project, which included tree pruning, hill stabilization and new walking paths, was completed. The reopening of this facility occurred on August 18, 2023. The facility returned to full schedule on August 28th. This project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget. Additionally, neighbors on Alderwood Road have expressed concern that the underbrush/weeds had been removed resulting in the ability to see the fields from their backyards. As a solution, the Recreation Department is seeking quotes for privacy slats.

Lowell Field- The reopening ceremony for Lowell Field will be on Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 6 p.m.

Infield Renovations- The infield renovation project began on Tuesday, September 19, 2023. RAD Sports (Rockland, MA) will begin renovations at Lazazzero Playground, then Nipper Maher Park and will conclude at McKenna Playground. These fields will be closed for the rest of the calendar year

Wellington Open Space- A meeting was held this summer with volunteer leaders. CPW, Recreation and volunteers reviewed the plan for the wild flower mix planting, future mowing schedules and the reminder that there are no utilities on site. We appreciate the volunteer's efforts in invasive plant removal at this location.

Touch a Truck – This event was held on Saturday, June 10th from 12:00 p.m.- 2:00 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Skating Rink parking lot. Vehicles from CPW, Fire and Police were on site.

Youth Sports Fair – The first Youth Sports Fair was held on Wednesday, July 26th at 510 Moody St. All communications for this event were provided in English and Spanish. The event saw a good turnout of families and the youth sports groups were pleased with their interactions and the questions they were able to answer. A special thanks to Ed Kelley for coordinating this event.

Amusements- Per liability insurance requirements, only employees 18 years and older are allowed to operate amusements. The seasonal staff that were hired over the summer have gone back to school. Even with aggressive recruitment, we were not able to fill a fall schedule. Amusements will be open at the Halloween in the Park/Safety Day event on Saturday, October 28th. Full time employees will work to operate the facility.

Thompson Playground- This summer, fencing was installed along the wall that runs alongside the Basketball Court. There have been reports from neighbors and police that young children were playing on the wall unsupervised and other reports that drugs had been a concern in this area as well. The Recreation Department continues to work with Community Policing at this location.

190 Trapelo Road- The designs for the playground, spray park, mini golf course, recreational memorial area of the property, walking path and grass fields is anticipated to go out for bid for construction in the near future. We are excited to begin development.

Pickleball Reservation- The online reservation system was activated this past week. A Law Department review was requested for this online reservation system to ensure the City did not lose recreational immunity.

Laser Tag- A Laser Tag system was purchased and utilized at 510 Moody St. With software updates needed and the lack of use over time, a decision to surplus the amenity was made. It is currently being sold on the Mass Municipal Auction website.

Maintenance Staff- The two recently hired recreation maintenance staff began in July 2023. They have been a huge asset to our facility maintenance and evening supervision.

Drinking Fountains- Some City Park drinking fountain locations remain. Currently most of them are off due to broken/unfixable components as well as ongoing sanitation issues. After speaking with CPW, they have gotten the unit at Cedarwood Playground operational. The unit at McKenna Playground is no longer repairable and will be removed this upcoming off season

Recreation Department Gyms- The Recreation Department has shared use of the gym at the old Fitch School, which is currently home to Healthy Waltham. It is in our fall brochure to hold an outdoor street hockey program at this location. We would utilize half the gym in the event of weather. Healthy Waltham has secured a new facility but no move out date has been determined. Additionally, the 119 School Street Gym will be utilized for afterschool open gym for the Chill Zone program. We have also had a gym rental at that location four days of the week throughout this fall

Dedication Subcommittee- a meeting will be scheduled in the next few weeks to review recent dedication applications.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ed Kelley
Assistant Director of Recreation