

The Waltham Recreation Board held their February Board meeting on February 11, 2019 at the Waltham Recreation Department, 510 Moody St, Waltham, MA 02453.

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

Also present were Director, Nick Abruzzi and Assistant Director, Kim Scott.

Chairperson Richard Scanlon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2019 Board Meeting by Jerry Walker, seconded by Stacey Tully, all were in favor.

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

Director Abruzzi reviewed the statement of accounts explaining that two pages in their folders detailed operational and capital budget accounts. Director Abruzzi explained the first page is the operational accounts. There is a significant change in the Kaleidoscope and Spray Park Operational Account as close to \$50,000 in water bills were recently paid. These annual bills would be for irrigation and water spray park facilities. The Capital Account balances had a change in the Veterans Field Playground CPC account. The final invoice was processed for the Veterans Memorial Athletic Complex playground. A special thanks to CPC for assisting with this funding. Director Abruzzi drew the Boards attention to the Special Revenue Accounts, stating that both accounts are extremely healthy and will see increases as spring and summer registration begins as well as revenue is received from field permits. All accounts are in good standing.

The presentation of final plans for Bobby Connors Playground Capital Improvement Project with Carolyn Cooney and Darryl Bird was next on the agenda. Carolyn Cooney provided the Board with a detailed explanation of the improvements. Updates to the Park would include, an ADA perimeter walkway, fenced in playground with play elements for toddlers through age 12, water spray park, shaded sitting areas, adult exercise area, new back stop for open field use, sledding hill, basketball court as well as street hockey court. Carolyn Cooney stated that the community was very involved in all aspects of the design phase. There was Board discussion on the benefits and attractions to this neighborhood park. A motion to approve the final design for Bobby Connors Playground was made by Wayne Cook and seconded by Gary Vallerand. All were in favor. The Board thanked Carolyn and Darryl for all their work in Waltham.

Future Recreation Amenities was next on the agenda. Director Abruzzi explained that the development of recreational opportunities and amenities within Waltham for toddlers through adults is what makes Waltham stand apart from other communities. An opportunity to purchase recreational equipment recently became available from the same company that sold the Carousel to the City of Waltham last summer. This equipment would feature rides and games that could be used in numerous City of Waltham locations including but not limited to Waltham Community and Cultural Center, Veterans Memorial Rink and Prospect Hill Park. The reputable company that Director Abruzzi has dealt with in the past will deliver and install all equipment and warranty everything. Director Abruzzi had a site visit in Long Island last week and was impressed with the condition of the equipment. With the cost of \$75,000 for five attractions, Director Abruzzi wanted to present this opportunity to the Board prior to purchasing. These amenities can be used indoors as well as outdoors and will be distributed throughout the City to enhance already established

recreational attractions. Director Abruzzi noted that the special revenue accounts are extremely healthy and thought this was a great investment. A discussion was had about the recreation opportunities already available and the benefits of additional amenities. A motion to approve the purchase of \$75,000 in recreational amenities was made by Stacey Tully and seconded by Wayne Cook. All were in favor.

A request was received from Bill Hanley, President of Waltham Youth Baseball, requesting support for the addition of two middle school baseball teams to Waltham Baseball. As the School's Athletic Department currently does not have funds to support this program, Mr. Hanley is asking the Recreation Board to assist. The letter outlines the cost for these two teams including; uniforms, insurance, equipment, and umpire cost. The Board discussed the request and logistics involved with the support of the two teams. Board Member Jennie Scafidi, inquired if any investments, i.e. uniforms, have been made from past fees collected and will fees still be charged to the youth to participate? Additional insurance would be required outside of the policy Waltham Baseball already carries since the play time would be outside the Little League season.

The Board discussed different levels of support and settled on 3 specific recommendations:

1. A recommendation to approve an increase of \$1,000.00 to the Babe Ruth League for assistance paying umpires. This would change the annual stipend from \$2,500.00 to \$3,500.00.
2. A recommendation that the Recreation Department provide baseballs and work with the School Department to allocate field space.
3. A recommendation that this would be for one year only and the arrangement would be reevaluated at the Recreation Board October meeting in 2019.

A motion to approve all three recommendations was made by Jerry Walker and seconded by Wayne Cook. All were in favor.

The annual request for Community Development Block Grant was presented to the Board. This request would be for Year 45 (2019-2020). The four requested items include improvements to the restrooms and accessibility to 510 Moody St, ADA Composite restrooms at area parks and playgrounds and playground improvements and installation of accessible surfacing at both Thompson and McDonald Playgrounds. Director Abruzzi noted that a letter and this list of requests will be sent to the Planning Department, following Board approval. A motion to approve the Year 45 (2019-2020) CDBG request was made by Jerry Walker and seconded by Gary Vallerand. All were in favor.

Next on the agenda was the approval of the 2019 summer staff rates. Director Abruzzi directed the Board to a two page handout in their folders. The first page was a historical perspective of the last five years along with the proposed rates for 2019. The second page is the State of Massachusetts minimum wage chart with scheduled increases. In January 2019, the minimum wage was brought to \$12.00 per hour which is what we paid our summer staff last summer. As a means of attracting great staff, Director Abruzzi recommended that an increase of \$1.00 per hour bringing the Program Instructor hourly rate to \$13.00. The Lifeguards/LEAP Director and Assistant Directors will remain at their current rates of pay. A motion to approve the increase to \$13.00 for program instructors was made by Gary Vallerand and seconded by Stacey Tully. All were in favor.

The election of the 2019 Chairperson and Vice Chairperson was next on the agenda. Jerry Walker made a motion to nominate Richard Scanlon as the Chairperson for the next year. The motion was

seconded by Stacey Tully, all were in favor. Gary Vallerand made a motion to nominate Jerry Walker as Vice Chairperson for the next year and it was seconded by Stacey Tully, all were in favor.

Director's Report:

Hillcroft Playground – Director Abruzzi attended the City Council's Long Term Debt meeting on Monday, February 4, 2019 to present the final plan and seek funding for the project. The funding was approved. Once the contracts are signed and the weather improves, construction will begin.

Prospect Hill Park – The deadline to complete the Prospect Hill Park survey was February 1, 2019. Surveys were available online in English and Spanish and 524 surveys were completed. Residents could complete the survey and provide write in answers. Assistant Director Scott draws attention to the fact that 58% of those completing this survey visit Prospect Hill one to two times a week. Another 19% of responders visit at least three to four times a week. Those responding to the survey would prefer the natural elements of the park to stay. The top three preferred recreational activities include hiking, nature walks and sledding. Various other outdoor individual and group activities are also recommended. Director Abruzzi stated that the results have already been sent to the Mayor as well as the consultants for the project. The results will be shared on the Recreation Department's Capital Improvement web page in the near future.

Cornelia Warren Park – Two options for Capital Improvements were available for residents to view and comment online until February 1, 2019. 13 responses were received and shared with the consultant. Director Abruzzi will be meeting with the consultants in the near future to proceed with preferred plans.

Sweetheart Dance – The first sweetheart dance was held this past Friday, February 8, 2019. Over 100 people attended this themed dance, held in the auditorium at 510 Moody St. A DJ and photo booth were available to party goers. The feedback was great and the Department looks forward to future similar events. A special thanks to Recreation Supervisor Kara Greeley for organizing this event.

Upcoming Family Events – Flyer for the new family events being offered were in the Board folders. Similar to the recent Free Winter Carnival, Super Family Fun Night will be held at 510 Moody St on Saturday March 23rd. All the recreational amenities will be available for families to utilize. Spring Fest, a new family free offering will be held at Prospect Hill Park on Saturday, May 18, 2019. This completes the department goal of offering four seasonal family free events. The Spring Fest in May joins the Fourth Celebration in July, Halloween in the Park in October and Winter Carnival in December.

Teen Events – In the folder was a flyer for teen specific events that are upcoming. They include the second annual Dodgeball Tournament. This event pairs middle school and high school aged students with adults as they battle for the top Dodgeball Team. This event was extremely successful last year and the Department is excited to offer it again. Laser Tag/Dance Night will move Laser Tag into the Skate N' Scoot room for a larger gaming space and transform the Laser Tag room into a Dance Space. This new teen event will be held on Saturday, March 16th.

Waltham Walks – A flyer for the kickoff event is in the Board's Folder. The Kickoff is scheduled for Wednesday, April 10th on the Waltham Common at 5:30 p.m. Board Member, Gary Vallerand

inquired if the Board meeting scheduled for that evening could start at 5:00 p.m. so that Board members could attend the walk.

IPAD – As the Recreation Department continues to expand its social media presence, the Recreation Department has purchased an iPad. This device will be used strictly for creating graphics and posts for social media by Recreation Supervisor, Kara Greeley.

Master Plan Conference – There is a Master Plan Conference scheduled in Worcester on Wednesday, February 13th. A unique opportunity for continuing education and staff bonding, all four Recreation Supervisors, Director Abruzzi, Assistant Director Scott and Assistant Superintendent of Recreation Facilities Kelley will be attending.

Other Business

Board Members observed that the vehicle access gate at Elsie Turner Field is open. Director Abruzzi explains that it was requested that the parking lot be open year round, weather dependent so that the users of the trails into the Western Greenway have access. The parking lot will remain open unless there is a weather concern.

A question was raised regarding if a ceremony had been scheduled for the opening of Graverson and Elsie Turner Playgrounds. Director Abruzzi noted that at this time, no date/time has been established.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Gary Vallerand and seconded by Jerry Walker, all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly A. Scott
Assistant Director