

The Waltham Recreation Board held their March meeting on March 27, 2013 at the Waltham Community Center, 510 Moody St., Waltham MA.

Present were: Thomas Creonte, Patricia Curtin, Bill Fowler, Richard Scanlon, Stacey Gallagher Tully, Gary Vallerand and Jerry Walker. Wayne Cook and Lisa Limonciello were absent.

Also present was Director of Parks and Recreation, Sandra Tomasello.

Chairman, Richard Scanlon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He announced that the meeting was being filmed by WCAC, Waltham's local cable channel and would be shown on the local channel at a later date.

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2013 meeting was made by Jerry Walker seconded by Thomas Creonte and voted unanimously.

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

In reviewing the Statement of Accounts, Director Tomasello noted that the first page was an update of the Operating Budget. She noted that with preparation underway for the summer programs these figures will begin to reflect decreases with purchases in preparation for these programs. The second page is the Capital Improvement Accounts, with the breakdown of projects currently underway.

Next on the agenda was the last of the youth sport organizations to appear before the Board for their annual presentation of financial reports, program participant statistics and summary of season's activities.

Representing the Waltham Youth Hockey Association (W.Y.H.) was the Treasurer, Paul Aborn.

Mr. Aborn briefly reviewed the organization's numbers, noting that this year's numbers stayed the same, but anticipates an increase in their numbers for next year, with participants coming from Watertown Youth Hockey.

Director Tomasello noted that Youth Hockey works closely with Asst. Director Abruzzi at the rink and asked about changes implemented for concession stand operations. Mr. Aborn noted that things are now running smoothly at the concession stand.

Thomas Creonte noted how great the rink building looks. Mr. Aborn noted that Nick and staff do a great job and are very helpful in working together with W.Y.H.

Mr. Aborn inquired about the monetary support that the Recreation Department gives to each of the youth organizations. He was wondering if it was a fixed amount for each group.

Director Tomasello noted that amounts given to the groups are not the same, with Waltham Youth Hockey receiving the highest annual appropriation of \$4,000. Amounts assigned to groups were decided several years ago. The Youth Hockey's amount has been increased over the years as ice rental fees increased, prior to Waltham Recreation Department running the Waltham rink, and with W.Y.H. incorporated the in-house hockey program once run by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Aborn also inquired about more ice time at the rink. Director Tomasello noted that most of the groups using the facility have been customers long before the City took over the rink 8 years ago. She suggested that Mr. Aborn talk with Nick to see if any additional time might become available.

Next before the Board were Ms. Wendy Valentine and Ms. Cara Hanrahan from the United Way.

They were at the meeting to update Board members on the proposed design for the "Brain Building Learning Trail" at Nipper Maher Park. Their group has visited the park several times and have come up with a preliminary design of the trail, working closely with employees at Weston and Sampson.

Pictures of the proposed signage that will be installed includes (2) entrance/exit locations at Nipper Maher. Also included in each packet distributed to Board members were photos of play element pieces that will be located at each of the (10) learning stations.

Discussion followed about the locations of equipment and color schemes.

Ms. Valentine presented the concept of a \$5,000 maintenance fund that would be used for the upkeep of the equipment. Should equipment need to be repaired or replaced the Recreation Department would notify M.E. O'Brien and Sons to schedule the needed repairs. She also talked about how the signs would be constructed, so lawn mowers would have easy access around the signposts.

Director Tomasello noted that before decisions can be made, she would like to see exactly where each piece of equipment would be located along the trail and possibly do a site walk.

She also noted that with anticipated construction/renovations to Nipper Maher for drainage improvements, she wants to make sure the placement of all equipment and trail posts do not interfere with existing and future park plans.

The Board was thrilled with the overall design of the project.

Next for consideration was the FY2014 Budget Proposal. The budget was due last Friday, but because the Board must approve it, Director Tomasello will submit it tomorrow. The Mayor will meet with Department Heads to discuss their respective budgets.

Director Tomasello reviewed the packet with Board members. She noted that the overall budget consists of many more pages than presented, but each packet presented to the Board summarizes proposed changes.

She briefly talked about the request in the General Account, including the City's contribution of \$70,000 towards operational expenses of the Connors Pool run by the State of Massachusetts/DCR.

She also talked about the increase in Salaries/Wages. She noted that last year the Mayor recommended a change for Director of Recreation, from a Grade 17 to 19. The City Council did not approve this and comments and feedback received were approval may have been granted of a grade increase of 17 to 18. Director Tomasello has proposed a change in grade for the following positions: Director (from 17 to 18), Asst. Director (from 14 to 15), (3) Recreation Supervisors (from 12 to 13). An additional Recreation Supervisor position is proposed.

The staff of the Recreation Department works many times (6) days a week without compensation. They are unable to take vacations during the summer months or during school vacation weeks due to scheduling. They also work nights and weekends without compensation. It is also impossible to fulfill program obligations and grant compensation with time off.

She is also requesting that the part-time position of Admin. Assistant return to full time status. Also, keeping the part-time office coordinator position.

Director Tomasello also recommended changes to the personnel positions at the rink. Currently there are (3) staff positions at the rink – (1) Rec. Facilities Supervisor II and (2) Rec. Facilities Supervisor I. She is proposing to eliminate the Rec. Facilities Supervisor II position and having (3) Rec. Facilities Supervisor I positions.

Also included in the proposed budget is a \$9,000 request for an energy audit for the rink. Director Tomasello briefly talked about the committee's research regarding geo-thermal and other utility improvements for operating the rink. If such an audit were to be done, we may also be eligible to be reimbursed 50% of its cost from NSAR.

With the expansion of the Chill Zone and the increase in attendance, additional staff is needed to provide adequate supervisor of staff. Attendance on Friday is averaging 70 youngsters and on Saturday 60 youngsters. The Step Program (youngsters graduating from Chill Zone) has also expanded, and will each year when participants get too old to participate in the Chill Zone.

Additional staffing will also be needed with the new "Scoot and Skate" rink under construction in the café at the Waltham Community Center. The Mayor is also proposing to construction a couple of bowling alleys at W.C.C.

Director Tomasello commended Kathy Gross and the Chill Zone staff on the success at the Chill Zone. A Chill Zone program summary report was presented for review.

After further discussion, a motion to approve the FY2014 Budget Proposal as submitted by Director Tomasello, was made by Thomas Creonte, seconded by Jerry Walker and voted unanimously.

During the Director's Report, Director Tomasello noted that (2) brochures were printed for summer programs. One for elementary age children and the other for middle school age youngsters. Online registration will begin on Monday, April 1st and walk-in begins on Thursday, April 11th.

Because of the many snow days, Waltham Public schools will be getting out on Monday, June 24, which is the first day of the department's summer season.

The department is currently working on a revised schedule of events for that first week. The information will be posted before online registration begins.

Director Tomasello noted that the restroom project at Prospect Hill Park is currently under construction. The two (2) units will be located near the Summer House pavilion. She anticipates the units will be ready by the end of June. They will be maintained by the C.P.W. Department.

Construction has begun at the James Falzone Memorial Park on Trapelo Road.

Applications for summer employment are available at the Recreation Department. Applications and interviews must be completed by May 3, 2013.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Bill Fowler, seconded by Jerry Walker and voted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen O'Brien, Clerk