

The Waltham Recreation Board held their December meeting on December 7, 2011 at the Waltham Community Center, 510 Moody St.

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

Also present were Recreation Director Sandra Tomasello and Asst. Director Nick Abruzzi.

Vice-Chairman Richard Scanlon called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2011 meeting was made by Jerry Walker seconded by Bill Fowler and voted unanimously.

In review of the statement of accounts, Director Sandra Tomasello noted the figures presented to the Board for the operating budget and the Capital budgets show little change since our last meeting three (3) weeks ago.

This month appearing before the Board for the annual presentation of Waltham youth organizations were: Waltham Track Club; Waltham Youth Soccer and Waltham Pop Warner.

Appearing before the board from the Waltham Track Club was Treasurer, Joe Tranchita.

When asked by Director Tomasello how the program was going, Mr. Tranchita replied "better than ever".

Mr. Tranchita noted that they have expanded their program to include training four (4) days a week, increased from the previous league program of (2) days a week on Mondays and Wednesdays. Their indoor program is held at the Kennedy Middle School Field house and the outdoor program is held at the track at Leary Field.

He spoke about the program, noting that the goal of the program is to offer a fun; safe environment and help individuals develop self-esteem while participating.

Next to address the Board were representatives of Waltham Youth Soccer, Treasurer, Anna Masciovecchio and Board member, Julie Babcock.

Ms. Babcock spoke about a new program that was held this fall. The Waltham Youth Soccer hired Mass Premier Soccer (M.P.S.) to run programs with the younger children and coaches to work on building their skills. The feedback from parents and participants was very positive.

Waltham Youth Soccer hopes to expand this partnership with Mass Premier this spring and offer a possible summer camp with M.P.S. to U12 and U14 participants. Half of the fee to attend the camp would be paid by W.Y.S. and the other half by the parents.

Director Tomasello inquired about the possible drop-in program that Ms. Babcock referred to in an email. Ms. Babcock talked about a similar program in Natick where the youngsters participate in a program right after school. Ms. Babcock noted that the ideal situation would be to offer a similar program both on the north and south sides of the city. They may inquire from the school department about field space at the McDevitt Middle School for possible open middle school afterschool program.

Representing the Waltham Pop Warner Program was the Vice President, Dennis Gullotti.

Director Tomasello inquired about their registration figures and if the league anticipated any changes in the future.

Mr. Gullotti noted that the numbers are a little down. There is a new rule this year that football helmets must be replaced every 10 years. Previously older helmets would be checked out to meet safety criteria to be considered re-conditioned and certified as safe. This will no longer be accepted. Mr. Gullotti anticipates that they will be replacing approximately 80 helmets this year.

Jerry Walker inquired about the cost for the replacements. Mr. Gullotti noted that the new concussion helmets go for \$100-\$175 each.

Gary Vallerand inquired about the gym rental charge. Mr. Gullotti replied that the cheerleaders used Kennedy Middle School gym for some practices.

When asked by Bill Fowler about the deficit of \$6,000, Mr. Gullotti noted that this should not be a problem, as one of the expenses of new uniforms will not be needed next year.

In reply to Mr. Walker's question about on-line registration, Mr. Gullotti noted that the league has begun on-line registration and will begin that process earlier this coming year.

Groups were thanked for coming in to discuss their programs.

Director Tomasello noted that in the discussion with the Girls Softball League, last month, concerning use of fields she forgot to mention that the league unofficially used Elsie Turner Fields on Sunday mornings in the summer and throughout the fall. As agreed upon with the Church Collaborative a number of years ago, youth groups would not be given permits for use of recreation facilities on Sunday mornings. The only exception was the Pop Warner Football program that had been using the facilities, before the agreement was made. A permit request for 2012 may cause similar conflicts.

Next for the Board's consideration, was the 2012-2013 Community Development Block Grant proposal, totaling \$935,000.00. Director Tomasello noted that fewer and fewer facilities are eligible.

The proposed requests include funds for Waltham Community Center, for staffing expenses and renovations. The other request is for renovations to the Peter Gilmore Playground. Director Tomasello noted that the Mayor currently has an RFP to potentially lease the building at 80 Hall St., which was once a south side satellite library. The Head Start Program currently uses the building. If the building is not going to be leased, the land could become available to be included into a new plan for the playground.

Director Tomasello also mentioned her support to appropriate C.D.B.G. funds should the Greater Waltham Association for Retarded Citizens, Inc. (G.W.A.R.C.) seek funding for recreational services for children.

With the recent departure of a G.W.A.R.C. staff member, who has worked for many years along with Recreation staff in support of inclusive programming of developmentally challenged participants within our programs; Director Tomasello wants to be assured the appropriations are utilized specifically for children's recreation services.

After further review, a motion to approve the 2012-2013 C.D.B.G. Proposal as presented by Director Tomasello was made by Jerry Walker. The motion was seconded by Stacy Tully Gallagher and voted unanimously.

The 2012 Facility Use Permit Application and Fee was next for review. Board members received a packet of information summarizing permits issued for fields at the Veterans Memorial Complex and a separate listing of all other facilities. Each list contained the name of each group that received permits for the facilities and the total number of permits issued for 2011.

Director Tomasello noted that the total number of usage was down a little from last year, as an adult group that used softball fields at Veterans Memorial Complex chose not to return to Waltham.

She researched several surrounding communities with synthetic turf fields to find out what their fee structure was for use of recreation fields, both synthetic and natural turf. Some were as high as \$150.00 per hour. Other communities do not allow non-residents to use their fields. Some communities also charge a user fee per program participant enrolled in their youth sport organizations.

The current Recreation Department fee structure is \$75.00 per 2-½ hour block. Director Tomasello proposed that the fee be increased to \$100.00 per 2-½ hour block. Most groups renting the facilities are adults, and Director Tomasello noted that even in this economy, the fee is minimal and affordable when you divide the total fee amongst all members of a team.

If the fee increase is approved, groups that have used the facilities in the past will be notified, so they can plan accordingly for 2012.

In his motion to approve the increase to \$100.00 per 2-½ hour for 2012, Jerry Walker noted that these are top-notch facilities that we offer and finds the recommended increase reasonable. Bill Fowler seconded the motion and it was voted unanimously.

Next for review was the 2012 Waltham Community Center Application and Fee. Board members were given diagrams of each floor, noting room assignments to current tenants within the building. Director Tomasello noted that renovations are currently scheduled for the gymnasium and auditorium.

Director Tomasello talked about the use of the facility, notably the common space areas currently being used – the gym and cafeteria. Several youth groups use the building for their registrations, at no charge. Several of the tenants in the building, the Family School and Head Start, also use the two areas at no charge.

The current charge to use these facilities is \$40.00 per hour. Director Tomasello recommends the fees remain the same.

A motion was made by Jerry Walker for the 2012 Waltham Community Center fees remain at \$40.00 per hour. The motion was seconded by Bill Fowler and voted unanimously.

The next item presented to the Board was the 2013-2017 Capital Improvement Budget proposal.

Director Tomasello reviewed the list with the Board, detailing several items. The special (\$\$\$) notation requested for the Veterans Memorial Rink would be for replacing the roof, with an estimate to be determined. The request for park signs is for the new standard sign used throughout the City consisting of concrete/granite pillars with the name of the park/facility. Renovations to Elsie Turner will address the softball field and parking, now that land will not be utilized for a golf course.

The request for funds for the Veterans Memorial Complex in 2016 would be used for turf replacement. The turf was put down at the facility in 2005. The warranty on the turf is 10 years. It is currently in very good condition, but at some time after the warranty runs out it will need to be replaced. The department intends to use a similar product for the new synthetic turf field at Falzone.

After further discussion, a motion to approve the 2013-2017 Capital Improvement Budget proposal was made by Jerry Walker, seconded by Gary Vallerand and voted unanimously.

During the Director's report, Director Tomasello noted that the Board members received in their folders the cover sheet for Warrendale Little League's financial report they received at the October board meeting.

On-line registration for our winter program ended at noontime and walk-in registration will be tomorrow (Dec. 8), starting at 7:30 a.m.

Chill Zone celebrated their first anniversary on Dec. 2. Mayor McCarthy stopped by for a visit and participants celebrated with a birthday cake.

Asst. Director, Nick Abruzzi updated Board members on operations at the Veterans Memorial Rink. The high school has started their practices. Public Skating began on November 18th with overall attendance being great.

He informed the Board that he has been in contact with Zenith Marimon from Baseball Unlimited about a tournament they would like to have in 2012. They will be submitting a request for Waltham field usage. A brief discussion followed, concerning the best time for offering such a tournament.

It seems mid-August might work out best.

The tournament would be an invitational tournament for other communities, not restricted to Waltham teams only. Asst. Director Abruzzi anticipates the Board being approached by Mr. Marimon for next month's meeting.

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

Vice Chairman, Richard Scanlon wished everyone a "Happy Holiday", and extended the Board's sympathy to Stacy Gallagher Tully on the passing of her Mother, Marge Gallagher, a former Recreation Board member.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen O'Brien, Clerk