

MINUTES

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023
WILLIAM L. PULLEN MUNICIPAL BUILDING MEETING ROOM
ONLINE NON-INTERACTIVE ON TOWN HALL STREAMS
6:00 p.m.**

Committee members present: Dan Taylor, Pat Hood, Ashley McKellar, Janelle Blake, Mitch Wilson, Matt Wyman

Others present: Jay Feyler (Town Manager)

1. Call Meeting to Order: at 6:20 p.m.

2. Pickleball:

Pat said since the TCC closed pickleball is still happening at different places. They need a certificate of insurance to protect the entities where they're playing, so Catherine Meyer has consulted with and taken out an insurance policy to meet those liability reasons at those places – a gym in Hope, etc. She did this on behalf of pickleball not Parks and Rec. There is about a \$20 per person added cost.

Through his discussions, Pat didn't think it fair that a resident who played for \$5 now has to pay to support the additional insurance. His thought was to ask the board if Parks and Rec could pay backfill at this point: is there a way for them to pay for the insurance, so the people taking advantage of the sport still pay the amount of money that it was over here? In answer to Ashley, Pat said the insurance covered multiple places.

Mitch asked Jay about town insurance. Jay said they have it if run by the town; there are different regulations if run by an individual. If pickleball is a town event it could possibly be covered depending on where they're at. Ashley confirmed they are now using the South Hope church. Jay said coverage would depend on if that building meets the criteria. Pat said this should be something they discuss next year and added it is \$315 annually -- \$1 million in liability and up to 40 people per event. Jay questioned 40, saying volunteer insurance that this committee has is dedicated with individuals' names on it not a blanket.

Pat got a message from Catherine that is the lowest rate they have. He said now through the rest of the season it's an annual policy, and next year they will see if there's another option, through the town if there's a way to do that.

In answer to Ashley, Jay said the Parks and Rec budget is pretty much the same as last year other than supplies that he asked for. Pat thought there was enough in the budget to cover it. Ashley confirmed the budget year ends June 30 and asked if there's enough to cover that and do everything else they have to do, Ayer Park, etc. before fiscal year's end.

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Jay said he'd have to look at the balance, but that insurance already paid so it probably doesn't run out until January or February. Ashley confirmed via Pat that they would be looking for the committee to pay this year, as they've already paid that premium. Next year they could shop around or have something from the town.

Mitch agreed it should be provided as a Parks and Rec service. Matt asked how many Union folks are taking advantage of it. Pat said the same group is still playing, not all Union people but plenty. Ashley confirmed they use the Union school on weekends. Matt said he supports supporting them but it should be encouraged in Union as much as possible. Jay confirmed town insurance covers the Union school as we use it for events. Mitch suggested a stipend for outside expenses to continue the program other than dedicated to covering insurance.

Pat asked for stipend ideas. Dan confirmed the Union school is just personal coverage and doesn't require additional; it's the other places like Hope church that require the certificate of insurance.

Ashley confirmed the \$5 a head went to the TCC to help offset utilities, etc. Pat said there is still money charged to cover some equipment and probably supplement the insurance. He did not know what the Hope church charges. Jay said the pickleballers must have been doing this since the TCC closed in January.

Ashley asked what they would be looking to give everyone back from their \$20 contribution, and would it be for this year? Pat said Catherine has not paid the deductible this year, waiting for the committee's decision, and funds are coming out of her pocket. Pat said they've been playing at the South Hope church but are probably paying quarterly or some other way.

Jay said he would have to run this by the town insurer. We follow the Maine Tort Claims Act so he needs to make sure this wouldn't void that.

Pat asked if they should table to find out if it works or is there a way to stipend the program to do that and not pay the insurance. Jay thought you could stipend the program and not say it's for insurance, but are they an official group? He wondered how the insurance reads. Matt said they are essentially probably a club, Jay added with an address, a president or whatever, and he would assume you could stipend that. Mitch added we are probably already giving them money for equipment, infrastructure, etc. so this is probably something we should look into: these are the groups we have, we only have a finite amount of money, how much can people have to spend to maintain their equipment and needs.

Pat asked for a flat amount. Matt recommended seeing what we have to work with first and looking at program sizes when distributing those funds. Ashley asked what the pickleball budget is. Matt would like an answer as to what exactly is covered, who and where, and would the pickleball club be covered; if their insurance covers Union, he felt

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we were already benefitting them in Union at the school, which has been taken advantage of through other programs through the years and we were always covered. Jay confirmed, adding July 1 they get a renewal, and it probably would not cover people from other municipalities.

Pat summarized: Jay can get the answer on town insurance, and he can find out size, find out specifically if it's a club, etc. and Mitch added budget. Then they could vote by email.

Dan added the pickleballers are also getting prime time weekends that he tried to get for basketball. Matt mentioned a summer outdoor space. Pat said he heard most people due to weather, wind, sun exposure prefer inside. Jay added we'd also need whoever is in charge of pickleball as they are currently not on a volunteer roster for insurance. Matt said it seemed prudent to have them officially be a club or a group or something and sounds like they already have a board but just put it in writing, and they can be on the volunteer list and the responsible parties for insurance reasons or whatever. Pat added it is similar to basketball or baseball.

3. Update on tennis courts:

Pat asked Jay for an update on tennis courts. Jay said the board voted to put \$30,000 into the budget to surface the tennis courts. It was not his advice that they do that as they've said two to three years and it's just a waste of money, but they did it. The companies he's talked to have all indicated, as we can't commit until July 1, they probably won't get it done this year so some time in 2024. In answer to Pat, Jay said it is under dedicated reserves.

Pat asked if it's Maine Track or Maine Tennis. Jay said there are two: Vermont Tennis and the Maine company in southern Maine, which is the company who got back to us. Also, in answer to Pat, Jay said Catherine applied for the Pullen fund and the Pullen Committee did not approve it (whole rebuild). Route 17 was mentioned; Jay said we are probably three to five years away. He clarified this was for tennis and basketball courts; it's under land conservation something so in perpetuity to take care of that land over there, they took money way back in the '60s or '70s, it's forever as the park not the ramp side, the other side.

4. Update on basketball:

Dan said not for public other than the courts we have here to use for everybody.

Pat confirmed pickleball interest and asked if they want to play it is first come first serve. How else could this be done: sign up, this time is dedicated to pickleball, etc. Pat and Dan agreed they do not want tape on the basketball courts. Pat suggested potential future lines should be painted.

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Dan said he plays basketball and didn't like how they lined the school/gym. He disagrees with it because there are lines all over the court when trying to show young kids how to play basketball. He would not agree with painting the basketball courts permanently. Pat didn't think it made sense to paint them now if they are going to resurface, but this may be a talk for the future; maybe they could lower (lowering kits) the nets for pickleball, and you could paint that inside the tennis courts then you could have both going at the same time, a benefit to everybody, but due to weather, deterioration, and elevation one is better than the other. Taking the tape off the tennis courts was discussed; Pat thought it was slippery, and paint would be less lines. Dan noted as the weather gets better the courts will be busier, but pickleballers play in the morning (9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.) which probably won't affect the basketball court. His only thing would be disliking the lines painted on. Pat said they make take a portable net, which Dan confirmed we bought, and go out there and want to play.

Matt brought up tennis vs. pickleball and how many are playing. Pat said it would be nice to have one dedicated side for pickleball and one for tennis, but one is in better condition than the other. Mitch confirmed to Ashley there could easily be two pickleball courts on one tennis court. He and Pat discussed the mechanics of this. Matt agreed with a dedicated court for each and noted they have not heard from tennis players.

5. Baseball:

Pat said they have five teams, four leagues of play: two T-ball teams of eight each, a lower minor team with 16 kids, an upper minor team with 14 kids on it, and a Little League team with 12 kids on it. We have the most kids to date playing baseball. We are challenged with field space but the school said yes to that upper field, and we are bringing back the backstop to go back there as of today. The field is in good shape. Jay has purchased eight helmets, a ton of baseballs, two T's, a couple of Little League bats, so money has been spent though a small amount because of our work with the Little League Fund. We bought three bats and a bunch practice stuff to help with hand/eye coordination. We are in really good shape with baseball, a short six-week season.

Matt asked if someone could come power rake the school field as it's been years if the school allows us to do it. Pat said they were given the green light for both T ball and lower minor from Scott White with some stipulations. The second T ball team will use Washington to practice as they have one team and no coaches. We have bases which he dropped off today, and they use fine limestone not expensive turf. Matt said that material is still all under the weeds and was fantastic the seasons we did it; it can be done quickly, and Chris Packard did it in the past. The field was further discussed. Parking at Mic Mac is discouraged. Pat said we will need turf next year but all set this year. He raked out the infield two weeks ago. We will have to widen out the baselines, and the drainage last time done by Matt and him is awesome, still holding up.

Pat said we will have to grab a gallon of paint and paint the dugout on the other side. A field day will be done at some point. A shopper was discussed. Jay said it's about \$240

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(for power raking), and it should be covered under the Parks and Rec budget. Jay said he can make it happen. Pat said for the record Chris Packard will be contracted to power rake the field at Union Elementary. Support was unanimous by a show of hands.

The field behind the town office was discussed. Pat reviewed the details and said it appears there is not a league restriction. His thought was keep the lowers over there, as Little League typically practices five days a week. The practice schedule is now pretty well set. Ashley confirmed we are using Washington, for which the Little League board was hopeful.

6. Other business:

Pat said Argy Nestor asked Parks and Rec to be part of it. He is not sure of the role. He suggested maybe a slow pitch softball tournament. Jay said it's next summer. Pat said we would table it.

Pat had a thought about perhaps floor hockey on the courts, after baseball, for the summer. We have a couple of nets. Consensus was great, including Dan. Dan noted his basketball group usually plays in the evenings.

Ashley brought up Ayer Park. Pat had a note about an Ayer Park attendant. Jay said they'd only had one interest, underage. He continued you have to be 16 to work alone under state labor laws. We did not have an attendant last year. Jay discussed building docks at public works. He added we have brand new security cameras there.

Ashley asked about porta potties up at that field for Little League purposes. Pat said they thought they needed one, but he said they have historically never had one, there is one provided here.

Matt said he'd like to resign. He would still like to be involved but feels he is not as involved as directly as he used to be. He added he would stay until he has to. There is great stuff happening, but he is being pulled to other programs. Pat noted all he did for softball. Matt said we now have three Medomak Valley softball teams competitively put together for the survival of the program and the benefit of the kids.

Matt Wyman's resignation was unanimously accepted by a show of hands.

Mitch suggested putting out that there is an opening. Pat will put it out on the Parks and Rec page.

Next meeting will be after baseball, late summer/early fall. He will email answers from the pickleball piece to give them some direction.

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Pat asked Jay about the TCC. Jay said there will probably be a special town meeting this summer depending on which developers are interested and what they are asking for. He expects @ 20-year funding for that field with the TIFs (Tax Increment Financing).

7. Adjourn:

Motion by: Ashley McKellar

2nd by: Mitch Wilson

All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary