

Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC) Meeting
Roland "Beaver" Jutras Recreation Building
Minutes of February 12, 2018
Approved

Attendees: Andrew Dunbar, Chair; Heather McClusky, Vice Chair; Chris Kotula, Secretary; Ryan Griffiths; Jeffrey M. King, Recreation Director; Lisa Koziell-Betz, Program Coordinator; guest Nicole MacStay, Deputy Town Administrator; and Lauren Martin, Minute Taker

- I. Call to Order: As soon as there was a quorum, Andy called the meeting to order at 6:59 pm, although Heather had not yet arrived. Jeff introduced Deputy Town Administrator, Nicole MacStay, who will be facilitating the strategic planning discussion tonight.
- II. Approval of Minutes:
 - A. There was no meeting in January.
 - B. Andy motioned to approve the Minutes of December 6th. Chris seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.
- III. The Director's, Program, Senior Program, Scoutmaster's, and Facilities Reservations Reports were accepted as submitted.
- IV. Revolving Fund Report:
 - A. Senior Programs: When questioned how much the Town provides to supplement Senior Programs, Jeff responded that it is approximately \$3,500. He explained that we typically apply that money to Peterborough Community Center (PCC) rent. The Senior Program balances look like they are in the hole but the supplemental money is accounted for under Community Center Revenues- Rental of Buildings. We are not necessarily charging the rental fee to the Senior Programs that take place there. Jeff clarified that we charge seniors \$8 for the lunch, though they cost us \$10. We had just recently increased the fee from \$7 to \$8. Andy asked to have summary figures provided on what the Senior Lunch costs us and what we take in for it.
 - B. Andy noted that he saw a blue traveler services information sign on Route 101, pointing the direction to the PCC and Adams Playground. Jeff responded that the sign must have just been put up today.
 - C. Resident Pool User Fees:
 - i. Andy stated that since we are doing so well with the budget, he wondered if we can do away with the charge for residents to use the pool. He requested figures that show the need for resident user fees. Ryan stated that a common question he encounters is why Peterborough residents get charged to use the pool when they are already paying taxes. He added that the Town Report shows that Recreation sometimes turns money back in. Nicole MacStay, Deputy Town Administrator, commented that this helps offset the budget but other funds like water/wastewater are not at all supported by taxation. We are always trying to balance the demands to keep taxes low but still provide services.

- ii. Conversation ensued about the history of the pool. Our previous Town Administrator, Pam Brenner, wanted as much of Recreation as possible to be funded by user fees. Jeff affirmed that a user fee has only been in place since the pool renovation. The pool is, in part, supported by people who actually use the pool. Some people do not plan to use the pool or take swimming lessons. The user fee is, in part, offsetting the increased operating costs of running the pool.
 - iii. Andy made a motion that the PRC revisit charging residents to use the pool for which they already pay taxes. Ryan seconded the motion. There were two votes in favor and one opposed. The motion carried. Chris commented that we charge residents practically nothing to use the pool, and he has never heard of a community opening a pool for free. He said his children can swim there all summer for just ten dollars and he thinks that is very reasonable. When it was pointed out that they don't charge user fees to those attending school, Nicole remarked that if you take user fees away from the pool then taxes will have to go up to cover the difference. Andy stated that instead of sending money to other departments we could keep it in Recreation. Jeff explained that our proposed revenue for the operating budget is \$36,700 and our proposed operating expenses are \$553,087. We are not really giving money to other departments, but returning money to the general fund does, in essence, help offset possible budget deficits in other departments.
 - iv. Heather arrived at this time. Nicole remarked that "under budget" means you use less tax monies to fund your programs. If we are under budget in the general fund, that money stays in the general fund. The next year, the auditors tell us how much money we did not use. We can either leave this money in the general fund or we can use it to offset the tax rate so we do not have to raise this money in taxes. The latter option is what the Town usually does. Andy wanted Heather to have the chance to vote on the issue of revisiting charging resident pool user fees. Ryan expressed understanding for how the Town finances work, but said there is animosity toward Recreation so we should be more transparent if money in the general fund needs to be used for other departments. Nicole replied that Recreation revenues stay with the Recreation Department in the Revolving Fund. Monies in the tax supported general fund stay in the general fund and are essentially returned to the taxpayer.
 - v. So that Heather could participate in this vote, Andy motioned to reconsider the original vote on the issue of revisiting charging resident pool user fees. Heather seconded and all were in favor. Andy then motioned that the PRC reconsider whether we should be charging Town residents fees to use the pool. Three members voted in favor; one opposed. The motion carried.
- D. Budget: Jeff stated that he is not aware of any changes to the proposed Recreation budget. He distributed a FY2019 Draft Budget Summary handout which seemed to indicate that there is a 2% expense increase in the budget, but he explained how these figures are confusing and do not take into account revenues. Our expenses have gone

up 2% but we have also increased our revenues. Jeff affirmed that our net increase is 0.6%, which is essentially flat. Andy commended Jeff, Lisa, Lauren, Gloria, and Roland for doing a really good job. Jeff remarked that he will get a new budget summary at tomorrow's Budget Review meeting with the Budget Committee and Selectmen.

- E. Conversation returned to the issue of charging residents' pool user fees. Nicole explained that user fees are not charging twice for the same thing, clarifying that every dollar taken in as user fees is a dollar that does not have to be made up through taxation. Lisa pointed out that if resident user fees were discontinued, people who do not use the pool will have to pay more money (through taxes) to *not* use the pool.

V. Outstanding Balances Report:

- A. Lauren explained that since the last report we received \$37.23 on old balances through 2016, leading to a total of \$12,735.30 collected. Two families continue paying very small, regular amounts to whittle down their balances. One family has fallen behind on their payments and has been sent a strongly worded letter urging an immediate response. Although progress is slow, we do expect to receive the remaining balance due of \$2,118.07.
- B. From 2017, we still have \$314.00 due from three families. Threatening letters have been sent and these accounts have been frozen.
- C. For upcoming programs in 2018, three families have been making monthly payments for lacrosse, which begins in March. Two families have begun making monthly payments for Summer Teen Challenge.
- D. Andy thanked the staff for their efforts, saying that this is revenue he is happy to receive.
- E. Jeff called attention to a yearly calendar of important dates for the PRC, which had been added to the agenda packets. Some dates are subject to change but this list gives a sense of the year at a glance.
- F. Jeff stated that we are working hard to prepare the spring program brochures for bulk mailing in the next few days. His goal is to send four seasonal brochures. After this, we will send a spring/summer brochure and then see where we are financially.

VI. Strategic Planning Discussion:

- A. Jeff remarked that we have not held a strategic planning discussion since 2007, when Carol Ogilvie led the process. Jeff asked Nicole to help us because he does not want his influence as the Director to overshadow any goals the PRC might have.
- B. Nicole began by stating her goal is to plan the planning. She reviewed a Strategic Planning 101 handout, explaining that the purpose of strategic planning is to establish priorities, articulate your plan for success, and develop a roadmap that supports the group's larger end goal. The process must involve the wider community since we want it to reflect what the community wants from Recreation. The intention will be to identify goals that we will refer to and work with on a fairly regular basis. The planning should be updated every two to five years.
- C. Nicole described how there are many different ways to gain input and prioritize, such as surveys online or on paper, and questionnaires that could be placed at the end of a

brochure. Andy suggested that face to face conversations could be held on an advertised date at the various PRD facilities. Nicole explained that the process is not necessarily linear. We may learn a lot at a visioning session and decide to return to something that had been discussed earlier.

- D. One of the earliest questions we answer is how much we want to engage the public, employees and customers. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, so we can search for models other recreation departments have developed. Nicole suggested the PRC take a look at the Recreation Committee Charge and the Recreation Department Mission Statement to see if these are still saying what we want them to say. The Town mailed a postcard survey in 2001 to 10% of the voting data base and received a statistically high response rate.
- E. Nicole briefly described some different techniques for starting the conversation. A **SWOT** Analysis identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that may be helpful or harmful to achieving the mission. A 3/3/3 process involves listing three things about the Recreation Department we should keep, three things we want fixed, improved or kicked to the curb, and any three comments we want the Recreation Department to know.
- F. When asked about the Town's Master Plan, Nicole replied that the whole Master Plan is a few hundred pages. She distributed a copy of the chapter from 2015 updating the vision for the Town of Peterborough. Nicole explained that in the State of NH, if you want to have zoning or capital improvements, you must have a master plan. She feels Peterborough is really good at using our Master Plan, though she pointed out that there has never been a chapter on Recreation. The Master Plan Steering Committee has their hands full working on two other chapters this year, but Nicole believes they are interested in hearing from people who have thoughts about Recreation. Jeff commented that after he had been working in Peterborough for ten years, the chapter on facilities finally came up for review but we were not consulted. He is encouraged that Town Administrator, Rodney Bartlett, and Nicole are kickstarting this, but added that we need to make sure we insert ourselves into the process. When Ryan asked if department heads participate in the process, Nicole responded that they try to stay out of it so they do not influence responses. It is important that this is a reflection of the community and not just what Town employees want to see. Andy cautioned that if words are used that are not measurable, we will never know if we have achieved the goal and will not know where we are going. Nicole highly recommends that any Peterborough resident spends time looking at the Master Plan, noting that they tried hard to offer varied opportunities for residents in different life situations to contribute input. Jeff mentioned that the spring, when our facilities become busy, would be a great time to follow Andy's suggestion of conducting face-to-face interviews if we promoted the opportunity in advance. Nicole suggested we consider soliciting non-residents' opinions as well, offering the example that you cannot have an adult softball league without non-residents. Jeff mentioned that over the weekend he received an email from a Sharon resident who inquired if they are considered residents with access to Cunningham Pond. Jeff explained that they are not, but that if Sharon paid on a per capita basis

what Peterborough residents pay, they would get resident status. Jeff thinks if one town agreed to do this, others might follow.

- G. Andy thanked Nicole for coming, as she handed out Town survey results from 2011. It was noted that some respondents were unclear whether they did or did not use Recreation facilities. Nicole said that next time she will bring Kristen Bixby, who is a former Playground Program counselor and now works part-time for the Town doing a lot of work in planning. Kristen can help us organize the outreach and keep us on track. Andy stated that he would love to hear what other recreation departments are doing, and he would like the PRC to focus on this for the next meeting. Nicole summarized that the next step in the visioning process will be to identify the information we are looking for to help us make decisions, including where the department is right now in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Jeff gave the PRC homework to review some data from the past, by handing out a chapter about Recreation from the book Our Changing Town that will provide a historical perspective.

VII. Other:

- A. Andy is working on his submission for the Town Report. He invited any PRC members who would like to offer input to let him know by Friday. At the next meeting, we will plan to take a photo of the PRC members for inclusion in the Town Report.
- B. Jeff reviewed that tomorrow night is the Budget meeting at 6:00pm. Andy will be attending with Jeff. Nicole remarked that there is not a lot to criticize Recreation for because we are essentially flat and they will be anxious to get to the Library budget. Jeff stated that last year it was great to have the Capital Improvement Projects Committee visit our facilities, when in the past they had voted on our capital items without knowing what we do.
- C. Ryan commented that he has been posting our Senior Program flyers on a bulletin board at Monadnock Community Hospital.

- VIII. Adjournment: Andy motioned to adjourn the meeting and Heather seconded. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 8:24pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday March 7th at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Martin,
Minute Taker
February 16, 2018