

Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC) Meeting  
Roland “Beaver” Jutras Recreation Building  
Minutes of August 1, 2018  
Approved

Attendees: Andrew Dunbar, Chair; Ryan Griffiths, Vice-Chair; Chris Kotula, Secretary;  
Kate Coon; Heather McClusky; Karen Hatcher, Select Board Liaison;  
Jeffrey M. King, Recreation Director; and Lauren Martin, Minute Taker

- I. Call to Order: From 6:30 – 7:00pm, Kate led the PRC in a strategic planning “SWOT” session identifying Recreation Department Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Andy called the regular PRC meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
  
- II. Approval of Minutes:
  - A. Andy asked for a change in wording in the July 11<sup>th</sup> minutes, Section III F. Where Jeff had been explaining to the gathered Recreation management team about the PRC’s role, Andy asked to have it clarified that the PRC “oversees our budget.”
  - B. Andy motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Kate seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
  
- III. Director’s Report:
  - A. Budget:
    - i. Jeff explained that we have just finished the first month of the new fiscal year, which runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>. Jeff created a chart for his written report which showed how we ended-up at the end of FY2018 using expenditure and revenue status reports as of 7/31. Although FY2018 has been over for a month, the Finance Department may not have completely closed out FY2018 yet. Therefore, these figures may not be “official” yet. He figured the vast majority of expenditures and revenues were reflected. The data shows we did well last year, coming in under budget on expenses and over budget on revenues. Jeff pointed out that he did not put in expenditures for the new fiscal year, but we have spent about 10% of our FY2019 budget in the first month. As opposed to other Town departments, the seasonal nature of what we do means we spend a lot of money this time of year. Our expenditures decrease in the winter and then pick back up again in the spring. Pool admission fees and stand-up paddleboard/kayak rentals are completely weather-dependent. If the weather is lousy, people will not go to our aquatic facilities, which is why Jeff has always been cautious about projecting revenues.
    - ii. When asked about the category of capital outlay/fixed assets, Jeff explained that we gross budget about \$20,000, which we receive through the Isabelle Miller Fund. This is a trust fund where we receive approximately \$20,000 every year, which we deposit with the Trustee of the Trust Funds. We can draw off that for Recreation projects. Philosophically, we choose to bank this and use it for big-ticket items where we are creating something new. The procedure for expending Isabelle Miller funds is as follows: Recreation

Director makes a recommendation. Recreation Committee approves or denies. If approved, the expenditure goes through the regular purchase order process. The Isabelle Miller Fund is not meant to be used for operating expenses or general maintenance. Refinishing the Peterborough Community Center (PCC) gym floor is “new” in the sense that the improved surface and court lines will allow us to start running a basketball program. That project will likely cost around \$50,000, but we have over \$100,000 in the Isabelle Miller Fund.

B. Facilities:

- i. Jeff remarked that our maintenance staff are well-underway constructing a new dock for Cunningham Pond. We had been hoping the old one would last the season, but very consistently staff were alerting us that boards were coming loose. The maintenance staff discovered that the joists were rotting and the whole dock needed replacement. We decided to make this project a priority, and hopefully it will be finished by the end of the week.
- ii. Our lifeguards have been busy working on lousy weather days to renovate the lifeguard storage room and the first aid room at the bathhouse. Our maintenance men will build some cubbies when the storage room is ready.
- iii. Jeff ordered a new orange fence to divide Ecco and Russell fields.
- iv. Jeff is trying to get a reasonably-priced batting cage to replace the one that was blown over multiple times and destroyed last year.
- v. Jeff has sent schematics for a new hand dryer for one of the Cunningham Pond restrooms to an electrician, to see if it might work for us.
- vi. When asked whether the malfunctioning water fountain at Adams Park has been replaced, Jeff responded that we have not been able to get to that yet. We have been referring people to use the fountain near the public restrooms in our office building. When Jeff said we have not heard many complaints about the lack of water fountains, Kate pointed out that just because people are not saying anything does not mean it is not a problem. Jeff affirmed that we have had a lot of difficulty keeping up with everything this year. For example, he recalled how he had explained at the last PRC meeting how we had purchased a second set of parts for the sandbox diggers at the playground, and today Jeff discovered that both diggers are again broken. Our maintenance workers have to finish the dock for the pond before they repair the diggers. It has been like this all summer, with one thing after another. When asked about a water fountain at the pool, Jeff said we have none there. The best spots would be where there is blazing sun, so we would need a refrigerated unit. Jeff acknowledged that the fountains we had were not working well, so we will need to get a new model rather than fixing what we currently have.
- vii. Noting that the conversation about the park water fountain first came up last fall, Ryan suggested we keep a running list of active action items so things like this do not get lost. Jeff explained that he just walked around our facilities to update a list with the maintenance staff, but he is not certain if water fountains is on their list.

C. Personnel:

- i. Jeff stated that two of our staff have non-work-related injuries, and we are now down three bathhouse staff people. A bunch of staff members are leaving early for college. We do not have the staff this year to offer a modified Playground Program to help fill the remaining time before school begins. We had to cap our Playground Program for the final two weeks because they were full. Some of our staff have had health issues and everyone at this point is a little fried.
- ii. When asked how we advertise our positions, Jeff said that it depends on the year, but we use Facebook a lot since young people are more likely to see ads in social media than in the newspaper. The problem at this time of year is that since most young people already have summer jobs, it is likely too late now to find a replacement for just a few weeks.
- iii. When asked about the last day for the pool, Jeff responded that he is waiting to hear about our lifeguard availability, so he is not sure yet. We plan to remain open at least until our Playground Program and Summer Teen Challenge end on Aug. 17<sup>th</sup>. For the past two or three years, we have been able to keep the pool open longer because it was hot and we had enough staff. The pond remains open through Labor Day and takes fewer guards to staff. If possible, we will keep the pool open, as long as the weather is decent. The pool usually requires four lifeguards (shallow end, deep end, one walking around, and one for the slide) plus a bathhouse attendant. We could keep the pool open with one less lifeguard by closing the slide. The pond requires a bare minimum of two lifeguards plus a bathhouse attendant. Kate asked if we could hire certified lifeguards on a per diem basis. Jeff responded that in the past, some of our former lifeguards have filled in for us in late summer when needed.

D. Action Items:

- i. Ryan asked if we can add the previous month's action items to Jeff's Director's Report, so we can stay on top of them. There was consensus to conclude each meeting's minutes by listing action items. Karen asserted that lots of groups start meetings by reviewing the status of action items, which the PRC was interested in doing.
- ii. The status of July's action items is as follows:
  - a. SWOT session- was conducted this evening
  - b. Off season Cunningham Pond beach rental policy- Ryan and Jeff have briefly spoken about this before the meeting.
  - c. Adding a full-time staff member- will be discussed as part of the fall budget proposal process

E. Non-PRD Events:

- i. Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Cleanup and Picnic: Jeff referred to a handout produced by the League of Conservation Voters on behalf of the LWCF, announcing that Thursday August 9<sup>th</sup> is a Peterborough clean-up day followed by a picnic at Adams Playground. The LCWF has to be reauthorized by Congress every year. While the League representatives

initially wanted to schedule this for the Saturday immediately after our summer programs end, Jeff encouraged them to choose a date when our Summer Teen Challenge and Playground kids could participate. Jeff described that our basketball and tennis courts, a formerly open drainage ditch parallel to Union Street, and Picard field are all LCWF projects that must remain in perpetuity as public parks and recreation areas. Although he was not given much notice, he wanted to try to support this effort. Jeff asked the PRC members to let him know if they plan to attend, so he can respond to the event organizers. When it was questioned why the group chose to meet at Putnam Park when Adams Park is more in need of clean-up, Jeff said they initially wanted to focus on downtown and he was not given a lot of notice. Ryan asked why they did not ask the Recreation Department or the PRC before making their plans, and Jeff replied that he received an initial email inquiry about downtown back in June, which he referred to Public Works, but discussions about coming to Adams Park didn't begin in earnest until last week.

- ii. Bee Mural at the PCC: Matt Willey from The Good of the Hive has been working this week on his honeybee mural on the PCC exterior. On Monday, Jeff was told that they want to shoot a music video there on August 18th- outside if the weather is good - featuring Boston band Winona and the Riders. Jeff had no idea that this was part of the mural project and stated that it is fortunate the PCC was not already booked. Jeff already has commitments on the 18<sup>th</sup>, however, and while they do not expect him to be at the PCC that day, he says we will need to have someone on-call in the event of an issue. Kate says this band is well-known and this is hugely good publicity for Peterborough. Jeff spoke today to Chief Guinard and Chief Walker, to be sure there were no safety issues to worry about since the band hopes to have the singer on the PCC roof. Parking will need to be managed and Jeff is certain Bowling Acres will not want people using their parking lot because they'll be open during the event. Karen acknowledged that the bee mural organizers think this is a big publicity project to promote the Town as well as the bees, but there should have been some formal agreement made in advance about what would be happening at the PCC, related to the mural. Ryan affirmed that Jeff should not have to worry about staffing this or changing his plans, and Karen remarked that she will be around that weekend. She thinks we can manage this but that there is a lesson to learn about specifying in a similar situation that if something else comes up, we need to be informed. Jeff has been told that Matt is insured, but he has insisted that Matt will need to provide a copy of the insurance certificate.
- iii. Ryan pointed out that Jeff had to take the time to call the police and fire chiefs, as well as to talk to the mural facilitators. He feels this is an issue for Jeff budgeting his time when he has to deal with things that come out of nowhere. Jeff acknowledged that after taking off Friday, he spent the entire day Monday in meetings with various staff, who are all young and need lots of supervision and coaching. A discussion ensued about achieving balance

between having an open-door policy where we are available to meet residents' needs, without being expected to put our regular work on hold whenever anyone walks in. It was proposed that there need to be protocols and we should ask for advanced notice. Jeff affirmed that he has been an advocate for LCWF in the past through NHRPA and NRPA so although he was not expecting the news about their clean-up day, he did not want to say, "No." Ryan remarked that things are going fine and Jeff is managing well, but if things are getting backlogged he may need to rethink being immediately accessible. Kate acknowledged that the general public does not know what goes on here and may not think it is a problem if they drop in. Andy added that we have to be emphatic that people allow us time to make a decision, such as the people who attended last month's meeting to ask for approval for an off-season event at the pond. Ryan suggested that in the future, we might consider setting policies and procedures for people needing approval for events.

#### IV. Program Report:

- A. Ryan remarked that the list of programs is awesome and he has been hearing a lot of good things from people in the community. Jeff replied that when everyone is starting to feel fried, it is nice to hear good comments like that so they're appreciated.
- B. Expanding Programs:
  - i. Lisa's Program Report included the text of a Facebook post from the parent of a Summer Teen Challenge (STC) Session I participant. The parent raved about the program and requested that it be expanded next year to include incoming 10<sup>th</sup> graders, so his son and friends could participate once more. Chris remarked that he thinks this is a really good idea since teens this age are not yet driving and cannot get summer jobs. He proposed we consider offering separate STC sessions - one geared toward for younger kids and one for older kids. He remarked that we might even want to consider allowing incoming sixth graders who have lost interest in the Playground Program to join the younger STC session. Chris said older kids might prefer the first session since it would not overlap with sports team tryouts in August, but Jeff responded that last year our first STC session was lean and the second session was full so it can vary from year to year.
  - ii. Heather cautioned that restricting who can attend each session might make it hard for kids with scheduling conflicts to attend at all. Jeff said he loves the idea of expanding a great program, but this is all dependent on the budget. We cap STC at 21 due to the capacity of the two Recreation vans.
  - iii. Heather suggested that we might consider modifying the Playground Program so that kids in their last year have a dedicated counselor and activities geared toward older kids, perhaps even in a mentorship role. Again, Jeff said that he is always happy to expand a good program, but we need to be sure we can support this budgetarily. It was suggested that we talk more about this at the next PRC meeting, when Lisa will be present.

- iv. Karen remarked that the Fresh Air child who stayed with her this summer is entering seventh grade, but Lisa agreed to let him participate in the Playground Program so he could be home at night with Karen and her husband, instead of away at overnight adventures with the STC. Karen said this boy, who is quiet, loved the Playground Program and made a lot of friends. She pointed out that some children this age might fit nicely in a younger group and be a leader, while others might do better in STC. Karen appreciated our flexibility and suggested that it would be a good idea to meet individual needs, if possible. Jeff agreed that right now we have some sixth-grade girls who are very happy in the Playground Program, but earlier this summer there were some girls who were bored with it. Chris thought that exposure might be a contributing factor, where kids who have attended the Playground Program for years might tire of it by sixth grade, while others who are new to the program might still enjoy it at that age.
- v. Heather commented that her daughter, who attended Session I of STC, is still doing stuff with the other kids from Session I. Jeff acknowledged that it is a great benefit of the program that kids who might not have even talked to each other before attending STC together, might now say hello or wave to each other at school.

C. Youth Sports:

- i. Ryan stated that he is waiting for an answer from Donny Boice about whether soccer will be offered to young children this fall. He acknowledged that by neglecting to approach Donny until August, he realizes this may now be a moot point.
- ii. Ryan asked if youth basketball will happen this winter, and Jeff replied that he has not heard anything about this yet. When asked if we should start working on this as an action item, Jeff responded that for us to run that program he needs to have the infrastructure where we know we will have regular access to facilities and will not be bumped at the last minute. We need a good agreement with the school district, so meeting with the ConVal District school superintendent and facilities director is a crucial step toward that. Jeff stated that if the program is just for elementary aged children, we could probably get away with just using Peterborough Elementary School (PES). If it includes the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams as we used to run, we may need other gyms. Heather remarked that last year her son played 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade travel basketball and the only Peterborough location where they met was at PES. Chris stated that we could use the PCC gym for early development of younger children, and Jeff affirmed that the PCC hoops are portable and can be lowered, and we would not even need basketball court lines for this young program. Continuing the discussion of a winter youth basketball program was identified as an action item.
- iii. Karen asked Jeff if he has had trouble arranging to meet with the school superintendent. Jeff replied that he had begun meeting with her every other month to reopen the lines of communication between the school district and Recreation Department. Near the end of the school year, the superintendent

grew busy and had to postpone their meeting twice. Karen announced that she is also the Peterborough liaison to the Selectmen's Advisory Committee to the School Board. She offered to be supportive of this dialogue if there is anything she can do to be helpful. She understands there is a general perception that there is a disconnect between the school district and the Town. It was explained that the PRC has talked about wanting to meet with the school board, but they were waiting for Jeff to have this meeting with the superintendent and facilities director before taking the next step. Karen suggested that with four Peterborough residents serving on the school board, inviting these four to meet with the PRC might be a good way to open communication. Jeff pointed out that he is overly cautious about bringing up concerns in a public meeting, not wanting to call anyone out in public. Karen responded that everyone wants the best for our Town and our children, so if we come at it from that shared point of view we can communicate that we are open, we want to hear from each other, and we want to determine how we can do better together for the kids.

- V. Outstanding Balances Report was accepted as written.
  
- VI. Action Items:
  - A. Water fountains for Adams Park- update to be given at the next PRC meeting.
  - B. Determine off-season beach rental policy
  - C. STC program expansion
  - D. Future programs/facilities: youth basketball, youth soccer, ice rink for this winter
  - E. Determine policy for responding to requests and events
  - F. Continue to explore Jeff's meeting with school superintendent and how PRC can help structure ways to improve relationship with the schools
  
- VII. Adjournment: Andy thanked Jeff and Lauren for their hard work, thanked Karen for attending, and thanked the PRC members for their commitment. Andy motioned to adjourn the meeting and Heather seconded. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 8:19pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Martin,  
Minute Taker  
August 2, 2018