

Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC) Meeting  
Roland "Beaver" Jutras Recreation Building  
Minutes of November 6, 2019  
Approved

Attendees: Andrew Dunbar, Chair; Kate Coon, Vice-Chair; Andrew Brescia; Michael Strand;  
incoming PRC member Rob Fox;  
Bill Taylor, Peterborough Select Board Liaison; Rodney Bartlett, Town Administrator;  
Roland Patten, Budget Committee Chair;  
Lisa Koziell-Betz, Acting Recreation Director; Gloria Schultz, Senior Program Specialist;  
and Lauren Martin, Administrative Assistant and Minute Taker

- I. Call to Order: Andy D. called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m.
- II. Approval of Minutes: Kate motioned to accept the October 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes as written. Michael seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- III. Updates from the Town Administrator: Andy D. invited Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett to speak on a number of topics, as scheduled.
  - A. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) update: Rodney took the replacement of our dump truck to the CIP Committee, who agreed to move it forward. We are planning on a full size, one-ton truck with a snowplow, which could be used for clearing snow from the Recreation facilities as well as for general snow removal around town, if needed. The request is for the FY21 budget and will probably go to the Budget Committee in January. Fiscal year 2021 runs from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.
  - B. Recreation Director search: The posting closed on November 1<sup>st</sup> and eighteen applications were received. Applications have been sent for initial review to the search committee: Rodney, Deputy Town Administrator Nicole MacStay, Bill Taylor, Kate and Michael. The committee will schedule meetings or conference calls to weed through the applications, with interviews expected around late November or early December. The goal is to have someone on board in January. Rodney stated that we have a number of qualified people to consider.
  - C. Downtown facilities reservations:
    - a. Rodney had been unaware there were outstanding balances still unpaid for Town or Town-associated rentals of Recreation facilities. He is seeing to these now and expects to have resolution by the end of this week.
    - b. Regarding the possibility of having the PRD assume responsibility for centralized reservations of all municipal buildings, Rodney stated that this topic has been pushed off to sometime in 2020.
  - D. ConVal School District's unpaid invoice for PRD facilities usage:
    - a. Rodney explained that in 2016, former Recreation Director Jeff King provided the school district with an estimate of \$1,463 for their annual use of fields and the pool. The District agreed that sounded reasonable and budgeted that amount for 2017. The first invoice they were actually sent was in 2018 for \$6,000, with no accompanying explanation of what that amount covered or the time frame it encompassed. The school superintendent was understandably frustrated, and Rodney has been working with her to try to rebuild a positive relationship. He spoke with Superintendent Saunders today, who expressed feeling comfortable with the figure of \$1,400 and said we could plan on that amount now. Andy D. commented that in a previous meeting with the superintendent,

she appeared unhappy about having to pay the Town for facilities use for voting on the school budget. Rodney responded that they are working together on this issue, as well. Rodney does not believe they will pay \$6,000 because there was no agreement on that figure and no back-up provided to explain how it was determined. They will consider paying the \$1,400. Rodney has no information about where the \$6,000 figure came from and he suspects the line of communication was not very clear between Jeff and the superintendent. Andy D. noted that when he reached out to the school board about this unpaid balance no one responded to his emails. Rodney would like to agree with the superintendent that \$1463.00 is their bill for the past year. Michael suggested that it is reasonable to assume the district is not trying to shortchange the Town, and since we have no backup to explain the \$6,000 figure, our options seem to be to accept the \$1,463.00 or get zero if we hold to the \$6,000. Andy D. commented that as a businessman, if he sent a bill he would expect it to be paid. Noting that Rodney reported the estimate was given in 2016 and the invoice submitted in 2018, Kate questioned what happened in 2017. Rodney reiterated that there was no calculation accompanying the invoice in 2018 so we do not know which years that was intended to cover. In 2016, there was no actual invoice but a calculation that began the process of billing. Andy D. remarked that he attended some meetings with Jeff and the superintendent so he will look for a paper trail that might offer more information. Andy D. recounted the history of how earlier Recreation Director Beaver Jutras had an understanding with a previous superintendent that they could use our fields if we could use theirs. When it felt that facilities usage was getting “out of whack,” Jeff King was trying to get the District to pay accordingly. Andy D. explained that a study in the past determined that 50% of PRD participants were non-residents. He believes there was a valid bill. Michael motioned to allow Rodney to move forward in good faith with the ConVal District to discuss the \$1,400 they seem willing to pay, pending a review/cost analysis of the actual proportional cost of the District’s use of PRD facilities, and with the understanding that if prior documentation supports a \$6,000 or other higher balance owed, the \$1,400 would be applied against any revised final balance. The motion was seconded by Kate. The motion passed with Michael, Kate and Andrew B. voting in favor and Andy D. voting against.

- E. Pump Track. Rodney explained that the Mathewson Company’s work of pulling up the concrete at the old ice rink is essentially done. Tim Selby wants another 200 cubic yards of material delivered. The Friends of the Peterborough Bike Park will pay for it, so it is on its way.
- F. Peterborough Community Center (PCC) renovations: Rodney stated that he will send out a request for proposals to assess the PCC building envelope, energy efficiency and best methods of heating, cooling and humidity control. He hopes to have someone engaged to conduct the analysis by December. It will probably take three to four months to assess the building and he hopes to receive direction on how to proceed with renovations by spring.
- G. Recreation budget: Lisa explained that the Town’s change to a new financial system is leading to a different process for establishing the budget. She will be meeting with Finance Director Leo Smith next Tuesday to review numbers and will probably have the budget done by the end of November. Rodney stated that the budget has to go to the Budget Committee by the end of December, so the PRC can review it at their next meeting.
- H. Scouting update: When Rodney offered to provide an update on arrangements with Scouting, Andy D. objected to adding a topic that had not been placed on the agenda. Andy D. asked to be notified in advance of agenda topics so that the PRC can be prepared to discuss them. Lisa thought that due to the timeliness of the issue, it should be discussed. She explained that she had included Andy D. in an email today about changes in the relationship with the Scouting

units, but she did not include the other PRC members since business cannot be conducted via email. Michael and Andrew B. clarified that at the September PRC meeting, the committee voted to endorse continuing to charter the Scouting units pending any information that this would cause undue strain on Recreation resources. Lisa remarked that Town Administration has totally honored this but there have been changes that addressed the Town's liability issue. Rodney explained that they are encouraging the Scouting units to find another charter organization because municipal accounting rules do not support the current relationship. A similar example he gave is that we are separating ourselves from the Peak Into Peterborough event. In October, the Scouts used the entire Union Street recreation facilities for a camporee without paying any fee, but they will be charged to use facilities in the future. Andy D. specified that Scouting was not charged in the past because the PRD charters these Scouting units. Rodney clarified that he, as Town Administrator, is making the decision to charge all outside groups for using Town facilities or resources. We will not give away free stuff to anyone. The Chamber of Commerce will be paying to have banners put up on streetlights, with their fees gradually increasing over five years. Rodney affirmed that a lot is going on and we are trying to make up for lost time, so we are giving the Scouting units one year to find another charter organization.

- I. Andy D. asked Rodney to let him know one week in advance if he wants to be on a future PRC agenda. Andy D. introduced Roland Patten to the committee, identifying that Roland was attending the meeting as Chair of the Budget Committee but was not interested in speaking. Rodney and Gloria departed the meeting.

#### IV. Program Report:

- A. Lisa remarked that most of her written report is self-explanatory, but that a lot has been happening in the past four or five days. She asked Andy D. if he does not want to know about late developments until they can be placed on the following month's agenda. Andy D. clarified that he did not say he does not want to *hear about* late developments, but that he does not want to enter into discussion or decision-making unless they know the topic ahead of time. Kate remarked that she would want to know about things that are affecting us even if they are not on the agenda, and she asked Lisa if there is anything that has come up since her written report that she thinks the PRC should know.
- B. Lisa explained that the staff is struggling with health issues. Linda Paris has been out for a few weeks but hopefully will begin coming back next week. Lisa will be taking a leave of absence for foot surgery in January. She will not be able to drive for two months, so she expects to work from home for the first five weeks and then rely on carpooling. Lisa will be meeting with Julie, a current IT Department intern, to talk about how she might help our department during this time. Lisa wanted to give the PRC advanced notice because we may need their help.
- C. Softball and baseball:
  - a. Lisa stated that she recouped \$553 from the Monadnock Youth Softball League, as reimbursement for some checks that were cut from Town funds.
  - b. On November 19<sup>th</sup>, Lisa will be meeting with Rodney and a representative of Cal Ripken to discuss the PRD possibly absorbing that organization. They still owe us money and that will be part of the discussion.
- D. We sold a couple of things on Municibid.com. Lisa is pleased to receive some income while getting rid of some old equipment.
- E. Lisa will spend a lot of time working on the budget with Rodney, Leo and Seth MacLean.
- F. Panic buttons: Lisa explained that the Town recently held Active Aggressor training, which brought to our attention the idea of having a panic button that would send a silent alert straight to the police department. We will have a button installed at the front desk in the office, and we

- are looking into the possibility of a portable button that Senior Program Specialist Gloria Schultz could keep with her as she moves around in the PCC. **Andy D. identified an Action Item of getting one panic button for the pool and one for the pond.** Lisa said she can ask Buildings and Grounds Supervisor David Croumie about this.
- G. Kate asked if we will discuss the proposed Recreation budget at the December PRC meeting or if it will not be discussed at all. Lisa said the new process will be so much cleaner and she is not sure if we will need to talk a lot about it, but we can go over everything at the December PRC meeting. At Andy D.'s invitation, Roland shared background information on the Town's finance system and the decision to switch to a newer one. Roland understands that the new system is much better to work with. Andy D. noted that we used to have a liaison from the Budget Committee attend PRC meetings and that Roland, who is also the former Recreation Maintenance Supervisor, is welcome to do the same. Roland shared that in recent years the budget process began in October. This year, it will be delayed until January and we will vote on the budget in May.
- H. Andrew B. asked if the PCC gym could be supplemented with free-standing portable lights similar to what is used on construction sites. These would reflect light off the ceiling so it would not be hard on the eyes. Roland commented that the PCC ceiling is brown, and the best thing would be to put in a new suspended ceiling. **Lisa agreed to look into the cost of portable lighting, which became identified as an Action Item.**
- I. Andy D. asked if the tennis court lights are on a timer, which was confirmed. Roland suggested turning off the lights after December 1<sup>st</sup>. A different set of lights will remain available for the ice rink.
- V. Strategic Plan Update: Kate stated that the written summary of her meeting with Jim Hassinger that was included in the agenda packet is self-explanatory. Because this was added to packets today without PRC members seeing it first, Kate reviewed that Jim acknowledged that we've gathered a lot of data. Instead of a retreat, Jim suggested that a smaller design group- possibly comprised of Kate, Lisa and Bill Taylor- could go over the surveys with fresh eyes. Ninety-eight percent of what we are likely to want to deal with is operational and can be resolved at this level. If we come out of the process and determine there is something huge that we cannot resolve easily, then we would need a strategic plan for establishing funding, a timeline and goals along the way. Strategic planning is usually comprised of ambitious three-year goals with steps for annual progress. Recreation strategic plans might be related to facilities, such as if we decided to build a new Senior Center, or to programs, such as if we wanted to become a leader in providing after-school programs. Kate proposed that when personnel is sorted out, we can plan a gathering between the committee and the department. We might meet for a couple of hours to go over the year and then conclude with a party, and we might want to consider making this an annual event.
- VI. Andy D. noted that since Rob has not been sworn in yet as taking the vacant seat on the PRC, he cannot yet vote on PRC matters. Rob affirmed he would plan to get sworn in tomorrow.
- VII. Outstanding Balances:
- A. Lauren reviewed the written report included in agenda packets. A total of \$13,551.81 has been collected on old outstanding balances in the past four years. One family continues to pay off a very old balance with \$67 remaining. From summer 2019, we have \$3,501.00 remaining due. Most of that is from ten families with large balances ranging from \$158 to \$540. Just under \$300 of that is due to eight families with small balances from \$15 – 48. The total summer balance due is greater than it has been in November in recent years. Contributing factors include greater enrollment this summer in the Playground Program, families who registered online fell through the cracks and did not agree to payment plans, some families who applied for scholarships and were denied did not have the funds to pay in full before programs ended, and that Lauren sent

invoices throughout the summer but was unable to follow up more aggressively. Conversation ensued about possible ways to control the situation in the future, such as requiring a mandatory minimum payment for summer programs, limiting the ability to sign up online for large ticket programs, offering a multi-child discount and providing a discount for balances paid upfront or paid in full by a certain date. During the last two weeks of the programs, we need to put down our foot and say that children cannot return if their families do not meet a minimum payment threshold. Rob asked what percentage the unpaid balances represent of their total program income, which Lisa agreed to determine. Andrew B. wondered if the Town has a collection agency that could assist us. The percentage of resident versus non-resident families with outstanding balances was questioned.

VIII. Action Items:

- A. Kate noted that we have an Action Item for December to determine the non-resident Cunningham Pond sticker fee and number of stickers available.
- B. Michael added an Action Item for January to brainstorm ways to make our collections process more effective.**
- C. Kate created a new Action Item for Andy D. to collect his information relative to conversations with Rodney and the ConVal District Superintendent. Andy D. agreed to dig out the information but said this can be an agenda item, not an action item.
- D. Andy D. stated that the Recreation Director search committee should plan to give an update on that process as an agenda item for December.
- E. Michael noted that we have an Action Item to discuss creating a capital reserve fund for big maintenance items. He is interested in the idea that if we stay under budget, we might get back a percentage of our savings to put into an interest-bearing account and not need to go back to the Town for funds to pay large bills. Andy D. responded that this would have to become a warrant article, but Michael declared that the first step is simply to discuss the topic here. Andrew B. noted that if he was having trouble paying his summer bill to Recreation and then learned at town meeting that the department is under budget, he would have trouble with that. Michael suggested that perhaps the amount of money we are under budget could help us create a more robust scholarship assistance system. Andy D. remarked that perhaps we could eliminate charges for residents to use their own pool. Lisa recalled how Nicole MacStay had spoken on this topic at a previous PRC meeting, when she explained that the fees charged at the pool are for the extra maintenance and operations expenses the renovated pool and splash pad presented. If residents could swim for free at the pool, that revenue would need to be made up somewhere else. Michael responded that charging for pool use is tangible and would be received better than putting an extra burden to be assumed through taxes.

- IX. Adjournment: Andy D. welcomed Rob to the committee. Andy D. motioned to adjourn the meeting and Kate seconded. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 8:29pm.

The next PRC meeting is scheduled for 6:30pm on December 4, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Martin  
November 12, 2019

Attachment: Action Items List 11/12/19