

Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC) Meeting  
Roland "Beaver" Jutras Recreation Building  
Minutes of December 4, 2019  
Approved

Attendees: Andrew Dunbar, Chair; Kate Coon, Vice Chair; Andrew Brescia; Michael Strand;  
Lisa Koziell-Betz, Acting Recreation Director;  
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 offered a correction to the November 6<sup>th</sup> minutes, which erroneously listed her in the list of attendees as PRC Secretary. Kate is the PRC Vice Chair. Andy moved to approve the amended minutes, which Kate seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- III. Agenda Topics:
  - A. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Updates: Lisa remarked that nothing has changed except that the replacement dump truck will be a \$65,000 line-item in the FY2021 budget. Public Works Operations Manager Seth MacLean is looking into whether we might be able to get a grant for replacing the softball and tennis lights.
  - B. Capital reserve fund for big maintenance items: Lisa shared that Town administration thinks this is a good idea, but it will not happen this year. The idea of taking unspent recreational monies in the General Fund and allotting them to a capital reserve fund could never happen, since funds preapproved for one reason cannot be used for another.
  - C. Recreation Director Search: Kate reviewed the timeline as follows: The position was posted, with 18 applications received by the Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. The search committee, consisting of Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett, Deputy Town Administrator Nicole MacStay, Selectman Bill Taylor, and PRC members Kate and Michael, reviewed the applications and offered feedback. Michael, who is in the personnel business, volunteered to do phone interviews. Nicole then created an assignment asking candidates to respond to residents' request for a dog park. Eight or nine people responded to that challenge. The whole committee will conduct interviews next week. They hope to make the appointment so that we can have a new director in place for January. Kate noted that Lisa is one of the applicants.
  - D. Unpaid balance for ConVal District's use of recreation fields and courts: Referring to the itemized list of costs to maintain fields and tennis courts that the ConVal SAU had been given in the past, Lisa pointed out that the total yearly cost to the ConVal District was specified as \$1,451. Andy explained that he checked his email and could not find any documentation backing up the \$6,000 figure that former Recreation Director Jeff King had told the District they owed. Andy did say that, in the past, he attended a meeting with Jeff and the School Superintendent, and no one raised an issue at that time about the \$6,000 figure. Andy affirmed that Rodney is proceeding with the \$1,451 amount that can be itemized, but that we have not heard any update on the situation. When it was pointed out that \$1,451 is the invoice for only one year, Lisa remarked that she cannot find a record of Jeff billing the District for 2018. Michael questioned whether it was worth fighting with the District to maintain the integrity of our budget, or if we would be better off working with them to move forward in good faith. Lisa shared her gut reaction that it might be better now to get one year's worth of the \$1,451 fees, let go of the history, and then bill the District every year going forward. Kate asked for an update in January. When asked if there was a contract between the schools and the PRD, Lisa explained that we

- have never had a contract with them but simply reserve their requested dates when they reach out each spring. It was agreed that we should have an understanding with the District.
- E. Unpaid facilities rentals from Town of Peterborough: Lisa explained that the Town used the PCC for voting and the DPW has held some events and trainings in the PCC. Andrew B. asked why one division of the Town pays another division of the Town. Andy D. explained that every group using the PCC must pay - including the Recreation Department, because it is not supported by taxpayers' dollars. When asked if Senior Lunch pays for using the PCC, Lisa stated that the lunch barely breaks even as it is and, in the past, the PRC had not wanted to increase the price for their lunch. So no, they do not.
- F. Cal Ripken Baseball: On November 19<sup>th</sup>, Rodney and Lisa met with Cal Ripken folks and it looks like the PRD may be taking on the program. Lisa's big concern is whether equipment may need to be purchased. Larry Pimental is reaching out to last year's coaches to find out if they have equipment at their houses. Andrew B. asked what the difference was between absorbing Cal Ripken into the PRD and supporting the Scouts. Lisa explained that, like softball, lacrosse or anything else, Cal Ripken would require paying a national fee and their registration fees would come into our coffers. We will build in the price of field maintenance and administrative fees for registering Cal Ripken through the PRD. All their expenses will be covered through their registration fees. When asked if we make a profit, Lisa stated that it is not our goal to do so, but we add a little extra "for Murphy's Law." She explained that Cal Ripken used to pay an agreed upon group fee, but when their participation dropped, they paid a certain amount per player. They paid less last year because they had fewer participants, but they also did not charge participants enough to cover their expenses. Lisa said Cal Ripken is interested in following the Monadnock Youth Softball League (MYSL) board model, with representatives from the different participating towns working together to cover insurance and overhead expenses, while each town covers its own team's umpires and equipment needs. Kate noted that Cal Ripken would get the stability of having the PRD administer the program, and we would get the positive exposure of offering another youth sport. Lisa remarked that MYSL had a \$10,000 buffer which helped them this year, as parent volunteers fell away and fundraising did not happen last year as it had in the past. Lisa stated that her big concern is that if Cal Ripken cannot find their equipment and we have to build in a charge for purchasing replacements, that the PRD will be seen negatively for raising the registration fee. When asked if there are two different ways of approaching an outside organization like Cal Ripken versus Scouting, Lisa said the two are not set up the same way. Cal Ripken has a national organization and a state level organization to which dues are paid, which we factor into our costs, but we would run the program. Town Administration has determined that our municipality cannot offer Scouting because of an insurance issue. After further discussion, there was agreement that the PRC would like to understand the issue with scouting and they asked Lisa to get Nicole's explanation, preferably in writing. Kate asked if Cal Ripken had a Plan B if it doesn't work out with the PRD. Lisa said she asked the same question and was told there would be no baseball in Peterborough and that people would be upset. Conversation ensued about which neighboring towns do and do not have baseball programs, and that lacrosse has become the most popular spring sport in our area. When asked if there are cons to absorbing Cal Ripken, Lisa stated that it is a positive this year that there are enough current parents to help, but a con that most of them will be "graduating" with their children after this year. The biggest con is that if we have to buy more equipment, we would have to charge more for registration, and that Peterborough already is frequently criticized for having large fees. Players provide their own gloves, but we would become responsible for bats, balls, helmets and catchers' equipment. It was questioned if players could be told they are responsible for providing their own equipment for the first year the PRD might run the program. Lisa responded that first we need to learn what equipment Larry determines is out there. Kate

remarked that we want to build back the PRD providing youth sports, to which there was general agreement. Michael stated that as long as we have the capacity to do it well, he would like to see us offer youth sports, and that he does not want to add fuel to the fire that we are an expensive town. He acknowledged that it really complicates things when we have the facilities anyway and we go through the time it takes to charge for facilities usage. Andrew B. summed up that included in our discussion is that we look for ways to reduce costs for Cal Ripken.

- G. Cunningham Pond non-resident stickers and fees: Lisa reviewed the three-year history of the fees charged and number of non-resident stickers sold. Kate moved to keep the fee (\$125) and number of available stickers (125) the same as this past summer. Andy D. noted that if we raise the fee, we might find fewer stickers sold, thereby reducing perceived congestion. Michael, Andrew B. and Kate agreed they always found the pond “dead” in the late afternoon. Lisa responded that during the day it has been busy for families with children. Kate suggested for future discussion that if the pond has so much human usage that we run into bacteria problems, then she would be concerned that we are over-using the area. Lisa said that the state used to check the pond’s bacteria levels four times a season, but we have always been so consistently low that this year they decided they did not need to check any more. We *can* test as the season goes along, however. Discussion ensued about whether or not people who have paid \$125 would perceive a raise to \$150 as a big difference. Kate remarked that she thinks 125 stickers at \$125 seems logical and there is no argument against it, unless we learn that we are getting higher bacteria levels. After more discussion, Andy D. amended Kate’s original motion to raise the fee to \$130 but to continue offering 125 stickers. Andrew B. seconded and the motion was approved unanimously. Andrew B. wondered if, in addition to keeping an eye on bacteria levels, there might be interest in studying the effect pond usage by humans is having on the marine life and the critters who hang out around the pond. Lisa commented that she believes the Peterson land around the perimeter of the pond has just been sold to the Monadnock Conservancy, who reached out to her today about the possibility of an ice fishing derby. There was agreement that exploring the impact of human pond usage on the life in and around the pond would be a good action item for the spring, and that this may be an opportunity to engage the Monadnock Conservancy, Harris Center, ConVal schools, or the Scouts.

H. FY2021 Proposed Budget:

- a. Lisa explained that the proposed budget packet consists of two budgets - one for the General Fund and one for the Revolving Fund. Overall, the General Fund budget is \$15,000 over what Rodney would like to see. Considering that we do not know what will be happening with the Administration Salaries, some of this \$15,000 may be absorbed. Michael stated that he would be hesitant to use salaries to offset the budget, feeling that based on the salary expectation for both the coordinator and director positions, the most we may save is approximately \$5,000. Andy D. questioned if the PRC has a function in reviewing the budget and Lisa responded that Rodney said it was fine to give the PRC this proposed budget. Kate remarked that it is one of their responsibilities to understand the budget.
- b. On page three of the General Fund breakouts, Lisa noted her question about encumbering the remaining \$95,000 of Isabelle Miller Funds for the PCC work that has yet to be done. It is noted so it does not get forgotten, and Finance Director Leo Smith said that we should not physically put a number in that line because we are not asking for more money. On that same page, \$43,000 is still approved for sandblasting the pool. Lisa clarified that \$43,000 will be carried over for sandblasting the pool, and that the \$65,000 capital outlay for 2020-21 will be for the replacement dump truck. It was questioned whether we should put significant money into repairing the current truck, to

- save money on purchasing a new one. Lisa noted that Valley Auto, our DPW department, Rodney and Seth have all looked into this and feel a new truck is warranted.
- c. Lisa stated that we are busiest in spring and summer, which is when our salaries and expenses are greatest. Regarding General Fund salaries on breakouts page two, Lisa broke out salaries into four figures. She put in a 2% cost of living adjustment but does not know if this will be accurate. Lisa stated that Jeff had been using an outdated salaries structure, so she did her best to figure out new salaries and increased the budget to cover deficits.
  - d. Regarding General Fund Services, Lisa brought the figure down to be more in line with 2018 – 19.
  - e. Lisa expects a high staff turnover this year, which is impacting the budget for Medical Services. New staff receive Red Cross training and drug tests. Michael remarked that Convenient MD conducts drug tests for \$35/person.
  - f. Staff Development: Lisa has a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional certification, which requires professional development CEUs. While she feels networking is important and local conferences are great, she feels nationals may be less valuable. This might be an area where we could save money in the budget.
  - g. Electricity: Lisa said we could lower this number by taking some money out of the Revolving Fund. For example, when the adult softball budget is done, a portion of what we charge each team is meant to cover the use of lights for night games and practices, but those monies have never been transferred to the General Fund. As a general rule, programs monies go through the revolving fund. Lisa explained that when money is put into the General Fund as revenue, it cannot be taken later. We could technically take more money out of the Revolving Fund and move it over to the General Fund to cover some of those operational expenses, but this hasn't been done in the past. It may also be decided by Town Administration or the Finance Director to take some of the administrative assistants' salaries from the Revolving Fund.
  - h. Repair and Maintenance: Lisa could not find the history of all expenses because the old Pentamation financial system has been closed.
  - i. Andy D. suggested the members take home the budget for further review and ask Lisa individually if they had questions. Lisa pointed out that she sent the budget to the Committee a while ago so they would be able to review it before this meeting. The budget moves to the next stage of review downtown at the end of December. Michael acknowledged that Lisa has already slashed where she could and that if PRC members have other ideas about where to save money, they would need to speak with Lisa to learn background information. Lisa remarked that her biggest question for the PRC tonight is how much they want to take out of the Revolving Fund to cover these expenses. It makes sense to her that a quick solution would be to take \$15,000 out of the Revolving Fund, but this has not been done in the past. There was agreement that this sounds like the most actionable thing we could do to save money in the budget. Kate pointed out that this would also prompt them to keep a more eagle eye on the Revolving Fund.
  - j. Michael questioned if raises had been built into the seasonal employees' salaries, recognizing that this year may be a challenge to hire. Lisa responded that this year is already budgeted so we may be a little low anyway. Michael would like to find more opportunities to save money, thinking savings elsewhere might be a way to bump up salaries, esp. lifeguard salaries. Lisa pointed out that we are also selling equipment that had been sitting around unused for years, such as the groomer. Andrew B. asked if there is any place in the budget where Lisa feels we are vulnerable. Lisa responded that she is worried about salaries, noting that if you were hired three years ago and received yearly

raises, but a new hire makes just pennies less than you do, you might be unhappy. Michael declared that paying your people is the most important thing, stating that if we save \$5,000 on the director position, that \$5,000 should go to other salaries.

- k. Andy D. moved to adjourn and meet individually with Lisa if members have other questions. Andrew B. remarked that he feels it is beneficial to think about how we might change our meetings from a budgetary point of view. He has not been feeling very useful as a board member but thinks if the PRC can provide questions or brainstorming that helps Lisa (or a future director) problem solve, that could be helpful. There was agreement that the PRC should have a presence at the Budget Committee meeting when the Recreation budget is reviewed. Andy D. departed the meeting at 8:50pm.
- l. Lisa stated that the easiest way to resolve the budget shortfall is to allow some money to come from the Revolving Fund. Michael suggested that if we keep \$85,000 as a Revolving Fund threshold beneath which we would not dip, he thinks he would tie that to the stipulation of aggressively adding to salaries. Lisa noted that if we do that in February or March, she could find out what other towns are offering for seasonal salaries. Kate suggested we consider the vulnerability of our aging plant, stating that we know the pool and PCC will suck money. There was agreement that we need to be strategic if we pull from the Revolving Fund to cover the \$15,000. It was suggested that perhaps the monies come out of the Revolving Fund to off-set the overage with the caveat that there is conversation around addressing salary and CIP issues.
- m. Lisa added that the roofs of the building at Cunningham Pond, the pavilion and gazebo at Adams Park need to be replaced and we have put out for contractor bids. Because we were so conservative with spending this year, Lisa is hoping to deal with these roofs in the spring. Kate expressed interest, which was met with agreement, in looking at the Revolving Fund on a regular basis, along with Action Items. Lisa stated that she does not need the PRC to take a vote to transfer money from the Revolving Fund to the General Fund, but they can advise her, and she can crunch numbers. Michael thinks it is important to be able to show that we have looked at and are advising Lisa on ways to save money.
- n. Andrew B. raised the issue of portable lights for the PCC gym, noting that light could be reflected off the white walls. He is thinking of lights the size of his two hands, with a rotating head which could be pointed at a reflective surface. If we can get such a light, Andrew B. would experiment with it. Lisa said we have a light like that on hand so he can borrow it anytime to see how the reflection would or would not work.

IV. Adjournment: Kate motioned to adjourn the meeting and Andrew B. seconded. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 9:07pm.

Andy D. will reach out to the PRC about rescheduling the next PRC meeting, which is due to fall on January 1<sup>st</sup>. During the meeting, there was tentative agreement to aim for Wednesday January 15<sup>th</sup>, or at least to try to avoid Wednesday January 8<sup>th</sup> due to commitments already established by PRC members.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Martin  
December 10, 2019