

Virtual Meeting – 6:30pm

June 15, 2020

Commissioners: Bobby Beagan, Mara Huston, Jim Marotta, Ben Carmel, Dick Williamson, Jim Marotta

Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool, Lynn Ziffer, Pool, Chris Felt, Parks and Ground, Janie Dretler, Jen Roberts, Mike Treacy, Bill Schineller

**Public Comment:** Mike Treacy asked about the status of the playgrounds and when they would be opening. Bobby stated issues regarding opening Haskell playground center around following the guidelines for cleaning and the costs incurred by following the regulations in order to keep every as safe as possible. The additional issue is opening the bathrooms at the playground. Mike asked if it was state guidelines or the law. Bobby stated the Town and Board of Health follow the CDC and state guidelines regarding reopening.

**Director Update** – Dennis reported the Town has established an opening committee. They are looking at the state's guidelines and will work as a group to open up the closed areas of the Town.

Dennis discussed Haskell playground and said he is in discussions with the Board of Health to open the playground. He said other Towns have opened playgrounds with play at your own risk signs. Mara asked aren't playgrounds already play at your own risk? Dennis stated they are, but with the COVID-19 guidelines signage would be needed to let the public know they will not be cleaned per the state's guidelines.

Dennis would like to open the Haskell playground with play at your own risk signage. He is working with the BoH and Town Manager to open the playgrounds without cleaning. Bobby asked if we could get signs that say residents only for the playgrounds. He would like to see the Haskell open, but doesn't want it over flowing with kids.

Dennis did not think the Haskell Playground could be limited to Sudbury residents since it is a public space and the CVS/grant funding used for building the playground.

Chris Felt added the back section of the playground fence was broken. His staff temporally fixed the fence, but it will have to be repaired at some point.

Mara asked about cameras. Chris stated cameras were put up at Fatherland and that seemed to help with the vandalism. Dennis stated that might work, but there is no funding at this time for cameras. Mara asked if Dennis could talk with the police about possible funding for the cameras.

Bathrooms will be the next step at the playgrounds, but at this time there is no plan to open the bathrooms.

Dennis sent Bobby a sample of signage from other towns. Dennis stated it may take a week or so to get the new signs printed.

Mike Treacy asked if Park and Recreation was responsible for all playgrounds in Town. Bobby responded Park and Recreation is only responsible for Haskell playground.

Dennis reported he is refunding all camp registrations from March. The department is offering half day summer camp weeks starting in July. He reported there are 95 children registered for the summer. He has a meeting next week with the Town Manager to review camp numbers and expense to determine if the camps will run. Dennis stated next Monday is when the Town will decide if the camps will run. Ben C. asked if other Towns are running into the same problems. Dennis stated that some Towns have cancelled summer camp all together, others are planning to run camps following the state's guidelines which will make camp very different this year.

Mara suggested Facebook postings about our summer camp and suggested the Town Manager might do a "Municipal Minute" for Recreation talking about the summer camp.

The Recreation Department is still in tough financial shape. Dennis stated he will submit a 1/12 budget for the Pool and Field Enterprise funds, but not for the Recreation Revolving Fund since that is funded by the revenue from programs. A 1/12th budget will be voted on monthly until the Town Meeting in September.

Bobby asked if Dennis had received any field permits. Dennis stated he received requests from Youth Baseball, Youth Soccer, LSRHS soccer and softball. All groups will need to abide by the Phase 2 guidelines until we hit Phase 3.

**Discussion on Atkinson Pool** - Dennis discussed the budget submitted to the Town Manager for the Pool. The current plan is to reduce hours, only use full time staff for coverage and maximize rentals since it will be difficult to generate revenue during phase 2 and 3. The pool will open from 7 to 4:00pm and move to 8:00pm in the fall depending on swim team rentals. Mara asked why close at 4:00pm. Dennis stated coverage by the full-time staff hours. He does not want to hire any part time staff until he sees the activity at the pool during the summer.

Dennis stated in order to reach the budget required to operate the pool, he worked with the Finance Director and there will need to be an increase in fees for pool use.

Lynne Ziffer, Aquatics Coordinator, worked with Dennis and Pat to look at past fees and pool expenses and come up the budget for FY21.

Mara asked if the increase is due to COVID-19. Dennis stated it is a bit of both, COVID-19 and the need for additional revenue to operate the pool. The hourly wage increase will continue to go up over the next two years, in addition to increase in vendor costs.

Lynne presented the pool numbers, reviewed the current pool rates, and how she arrived at the increased rates for the pool. Dennis stated that no one really knows when people will feel comfortable to return to the pool. Some swimmers can't wait to start and others are unsure and will wait till the fall.

Ben asked about past increases and Mara asked if the new increases would still make us competitive with other facilities. Mara also asked if the budget included any capital costs. Dennis stated no, it is just an operating budget.

Commissioners were concerned with the increases. Mara was concerned about the increases for seniors on fixed incomes. Lane rentals and dive well rentals will also increase.

Dennis responded it is hard to cut expenses for electricity, gas, chlorine etc. He can cut pool hours and try to offer more pool lessons and hope that people will sign up. Mara stated the pool hasn't offered good lessons in a while, so additional lesson revenue would be great.

Jim Marotta suggested raising the senior age to 65. Mara suggested contacting the swim teams to see how the increase will impact them and also questioned the non-resident and resident pricing for swim teams.

The Commission discussed reviewing the increase in fees further, but Dennis stated that without a vote to increase the fees he would not be able to propose the budget required to operate the pool.

Bobby agreed and stated it was apparent the staff had done a great deal of work reviewing the pool numbers, he didn't see how additional review by the Commission would change anything.

A motion was made to approve the proposed rate increase for the Atkinson Pool presented. Motion received a second. Jim-yes, Mara-yes, Dick-yes, Bobby-yes, Ben-yes.

Jim requested it be noted that the vote is due to the presentation showing the pool's difficult financial situation and the need for the increase.

Ben asked if the Town will help the Pool financially if needed.

Dennis stated the Town is already helping out the Pool due to COVID-19 and the loss of revenue in the end of FY20. The Town is working with Dennis on the FY21 budget and the 1/12 budget since the pool will run at a deficit until it is able to generate revenue from rentals, memberships and swim lessons. The next two months will tell how busy the pool will be and how comfortable people feel coming back to use the pool.

Dennis stated the Town has also helped the Pool out in the past with capital expenses.

Mara stated again that she feels the Town should be helping Recreation and the Atkinson Pool out during the COVID-19 crisis. She also believes non-resident swim teams should be paying higher rental fees than resident teams.

Lynne stated that SST and the LSRHS team get preference in rentals and the other teams take the hours more difficult to rent out.

Mara felt the pool rental policy should be similar to the field rental policy.

**Pickleball/Tennis** - Dennis reported he has received complaints about private lessons being taught on the tennis courts. He also reported the new pickle ball nets are missing and the boxes they were stored in were damaged. He is also receiving complaints of pickleball noise at early hours on the courts.

Dennis may plan to rent nets from the office, but currently that would be difficult due the public buildings being closed and staffing.

Bobby asked if Dennis could contact Longfellow and ask them to tell their tennis pros not to teach private lessons on our courts. Dennis has done this before, but will contact them again. Mara suggested sending the instructors an invoice and Bobby suggested putting a Facebook post saying no private lessons on the courts.

**Master Plan** – discussion continued to next meeting.

**Misc.** - The new Fairbank Community Building is still in discussions for the fall Town Meeting. Jennifer Roberts stated there wasn't much new to add, it is still on the Town warrant. She said the BOS will need to make some decisions by July and if the article stays on the warrant a plan for a public meeting will need to be organized along with priorities and goals for the building. Mara stated the current building will not get better.

Minutes from the past meeting approved with corrections.

Jim-yes, Bobby-yes, Dick-yes, Mara-yes, Ben-yes

Bobby will send out dates for the next meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm