

Virtual Meeting – 6:48pm

August 17, 2020

Commissioners: Bobby Beagan, Mara Huston, Jim Marotta, Ben Carmel, Dick Williamson  
Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool Guests: Janine Dretler, Jen Roberts

**Public Comment:** None

**Director Update** –Sudbury mini camps ended Friday, August 14th. 108 registrations; many repeat attendees. Dennis stated the department will offer pop up one-day camps during the remaining weeks of summer. Bobby asked about mask issues over the summer and an update on guidelines. Dennis stated the camp followed the CDC guidelines regarding masks. Staff wore a mask all day, kids wore masks inside of building and outside if social distancing wasn't possible. Masks were not worn during water play outside or during snack time. Mara asked how much time is spent indoors. Dennis responded indoors was just for snack, if it is hot outside and for bathroom breaks. Arts and Crafts camp was outside most of the day.

Added two more weeks of swim lessons. 150 kids enrolled for summer lessons. Pool is open for dive well and lane rental.

Pool lost revenue for one week due to an HVAC issue. Dennis reported the overall pool financials for the month of July. Pool expense/revenue -\$1,700. Fields expense/revenue - \$33,000 (no Parks and Ground salary expense) Recreation – expense/revenue \$12,000 (after all camp refunds and summer mini camps)

Dennis stated this is still not a great picture, since full time salaries are paid out of expenses. Staff is working on fall programs.

Mara asked for explanation on the Revolving Fund and if the mini camps covered the expenses for the summer.

Dennis reported after mini-summer camp expenses the net was approximately \$2,000 dollars. The overall camp refunds were \$272,175, which currently leaves the Revolving Fund at \$12,000. Mara stated it was good given the current situation.

Bobby asked how the Town was helping the department. Dennis responded the Town has to cover Enterprise Fund losses from the prior fiscal year. Moving forward the Town is working with a 1/12 budget. Pool and Recreation are only using full-time staff, no part-time staff has been used since March. Pool has reduced hours and will extend hours as need for rentals.

Mara asked if the loss of revenue issue is tied to COVID. Dennis said yes, but there were issues with pool and recreation before, that he was just starting to address which also impacted the overall revenue. The cancelled summer camp will also impact the pool revenues in FY 21.

Dennis reported that the Pool will not close down, as usual, in August.

Bobby asked about any feedback from user regarding summer programs and would Dennis change anything. Dennis stated the camps and swim lessons have been well received. He would like to have offered more options for residents. He is happy with the results given all the restrictions and guidelines.

Janie Dretler and the Commissioners thanked Dennis and his staff for the recreation/swim opportunities offered to residents/non-residents over the summer during the difficult times.

**Fairbank Community Center Update** – Mara reported the building architects will be presenting to two Town committees this week. The Town Forum for the new Fairbank Community Center is scheduled for August 26<sup>th</sup>. Pat Brown and Jen Roberts are organizing the event; Dennis and Mara Huston are on the panel. Mara and Ben put together a list of commonly asked questions regarding Recreation/Pool to help understand the need for the new building and asked Dennis to answer them:

1. How is the existing building limiting your ability to respond to after school programs, extended day and how would the new building help? Dennis stated it is difficult in the current building to offering programs during Covid. It is imperative to have more space, due to social distancing guidelines.
2. What feedback have you received from users regarding the locker room and viewing for swim meets, how would new locker rooms and viewing enhance revenue for the pool? Dennis stated the current lockers are old and no family locker room is an issue. Family locker rooms would make families feel more comfortable. User of the pool would enjoy improved locker rooms since the current lockers are showing signs of age. Better viewing would help out with swim meet rentals.
3. Would Dennis explain why so many Park and Recreation programs have been cancelled in the past few years? Dennis said he wasn't here for the past few years, but noticed too many programs were offered that didn't run. Too many vendor programs were offered, some similar and if they didn't fill the minimum requirement they were cancelled. Dennis is planning to run fewer programs, but make sure that the quality is high whether it is a in house program or a vendor program.
4. At a high level, can you explain how the Pool Enterprise Fund works along with the Recreation Revolving Fund. Dennis responded the department has two Enterprise Funds, Pool and Field. Each year the Town votes in the Enterprise Funds after he puts together a budget for the departments. Enterprise Funds are not funded by the tax levy. Dennis' job is to manage the budget, if the proposed revenue is not reached the Town has to cover the difference. The Revolving Fund brings by the programs Recreation offers. The revenue comes in and then goes out as vendor expense, salaries, office expense etc. The only expense the Town covers for Recreation is some of the salary for the department. This year it is very difficult due to the camp money that had to be refunded. Mara asked will the new building help these issues. Dennis stated that fees will have to be adjusted due to minimum wage increases, utility expenses, office expense.
5. What was the summer camp registration? – Financial numbers - \$272,175 refunded for summer camps. Preschool Program - \$11,272 average 10/12 kids per week; Sudbury Summer - \$147,400 85/95 kids per session; CIT \$9,600 20 kids per session; Extended Day - \$24,000 for the summer

The summer registrations would have increased, but summer programs were cancelled in March. Cancelled all spring programs and remaining Wild Wednesdays Elementary and Middle school programs due to Covid.

Bobby asked Mara if she had an idea how other committees in Town felt about the Fairbank Building proposal. Fin Com voted early and vote was split 4-4.

CIAC voted unanimously in favor of the building. Energy and Permanent Building Committees meet this week. Board of Selectmen voted 3-2 against the building. Janie did not want to comment on why people voted no. The current situation with Covid was stated as a current reason for the no votes, along with other reasons. Mara stated there is an obvious concern regarding Covid, but the low interests and the current environment could get better bids and this could be best time to do the project. Mara stated if approved, it will be approximately 3 years before the new building is complete. Mara stated a virtual tour of the current building will be available before the Town meeting.

Jen Roberts added the tax impact of the new building won't be felt until 2022, for design fees, 2024 will have a larger tax impact, but hopefully things will be better by then. Janie added another reason not to delay the project further is that the cost of the building will continue to increase.

Bobby expressed concern for those currently unemployed or concerned about their employment due to the current situation, who will be impacted by the increase in taxes. He stated the comment about the tax impact will be a few years out may help some people in their view on the building. Janie agreed with Bobby about the sensitivity of the issue. She does think a new building will help with programs that can run during difficult times, but if the building is old and run down that will not be a help. Jen added that the Council on Aging programs offered are necessary for the community. It was felt the Community should be given the option to vote on the new Fairbank Community Center.

CPC Update – Met in early August, set schedule for project submission. Need to decide what might be submitted such as Feely softball improvements, Smile Playground renovations, and possible Davis Field improvements.

Current estimate on smile playground is \$186,000. Dennis will be meeting with Kate Trainor of girls' softball to discuss their plans.

**Public Concerts** – Ben spoke with the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce representatives. They would be supportive of the program. Dennis stated his interest in running them again. The Recreation staff is currently looking at some type of community event in the fall. May look to companies to sponsor. All of the expenses would have to be sponsored or funded by the Revolving fund, which is currently low due to Covid-19.

**Master Plan Review** – Bobby shared comments from the Park and Recreation Commission on the draft of the Master Plan. The Commission expressed concern that the Master Plan draft mentions recreation in relation to open space, but no mention of Fairbanks Community Center and recreation programs or mention of all the fields in town used by adult and youth groups for recreation. Commissioners discuss their comments.

Dick Williamson commented the document was a base line of the current status of the Town. Dick mentioned there is another document called an action plan, which he will distribute to the Park and Recreation Commission. Bobby mentioned the Master Plan does not include recreational goals for the future, no mention of inclusion, or specific recreation fields.

Dennis spoke with the Consultants last winter. He mentioned the Town could use a gathering for concerts etc., transportation for students to recreation sites would be helpful to parents and transportation of seniors to recreation facilities. Bobby asked Dennis to send him any additional ideas because he didn't see any of his comments in the draft. He also asked Mara to send him some bullet points on what the Fairbank Community Center provides to the Town residents. Some of the lack of information could be due to the changeover in the Park and Recreation Staff over the years. Dennis felt that the Atkinson Pool is a resource for the town and should be mentioned in the draft.

Dennis offered to reach out to the consultants again to make sure certain recreational opportunities are mentioned in the Master Plan. Bobby said he is happy to join in the meeting. Jen Roberts said she has been involved in the Master Plan and departments do advocate for themselves. She agreed it was a good idea to reach out and talk to the consultants.

Bobby asked if the Commission views Sewataro as part of the Recreation future. Janie stated the BOS is planning to discuss Sewataro at their meeting tomorrow night, so it may be premature to discuss Sewataro at this time.

Bobby read an email from Adam D. regarding the Master Plan. He forwarded it to the Park and Recreation Commission.

Jen Roberts said goal is to offer affordable, enriching programming for residents, possible offering afterschool programming. Others mentioned bringing back more inclusion programs. Dennis would like to see Recreation more involved in the Rail Trail plans.

Tentative dates for Future meetings:

September 8, 2020, October 5, 2020, November 2, 2020, December 7, 2020

Meeting adjourned 8:50pm