

Virtual Meeting – 6:35pm

January 5, 2021

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

Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

Guests: Howard Feng (Fin Com), Chris Felt (Parks & Grounds), User Groups Representatives

Public Comment: Howard Feng, (Fin Com), reported salaries of two Recreation employees were transferred to the Town's General Fund. Two Recreation Staff salaries are split between the Town General Fund and the Department's Program Revolving Fund. Howard reported Funds were allocated from the General Fund to both the Pool Enterprise Fund and the Field Enterprise Fund due to lost revenue due to COVID and to cover salaries and expenses.

Director Update: Dennis reported the department has been very busy through the month of December. Swim team rentals, dive well rentals and lap rentals have kept the pool active throughout the month. The Recreation staff offered several take home programs and some in-house vacation camps.

Mara asked how those activities translated financially to the department.

Dennis reported the Pools revenue/expense are ahead \$45,000. Employee benefits have not been charged to the pool yet, if they were charged the actual pool numbers after 6 months would be \$9,000. Dennis reminded this is due to slashing expenses and reducing part-time salaries as much as possible. Once swim team season is completed, he plans to offer more swim lessons, family swim and other rentals and programs to offset the lost swim team revenue. Dennis stated his goal is to break even, and is unsure when pool memberships will return, it may not be until July 1, 2021. Dennis added that for next six weeks the Pool will be hosting five virtual swim meets every weekend.

The Field Enterprise Fund is in good shape at this time since the Parks and Grounds salaries and benefits have not been charged yet and the \$10,500 has not been transferred to the stabilization fund. Dennis stated if those expenses were taken out, the Fund would be in the negative by \$2,000.

Mara asked about the funds that were voted at Town Meeting for the Pool and Field Enterprise Funds. Dennis said the funds had not been transferred yet. Expenses were down due to COVID and some were charge to the CARES Act. It is still unclear how the spring sports will run due to COVID and CDC requirements.

The Recreation Revolving Fund is in difficult shape since the majority of the money in the fund was refunded due to cancellation of spring programs and summer camp. It has been difficult to run programs during the winter due to COVID and CDC regulations.

He will roll out a similar summer camp as last year with larger numbers and a full day program and hope things continue to improve with COVID and the vaccine. Camp will be small and managed by in house staff.

Mara asked if summer registration will be in March again. Dennis stated at this time he is planning on registration in March after February break and will probably start registration with a 40-space maximum for the full day camp program. He will add more spaces depending on CDC regulations and interest.

Mara asked about offering inclusion programs. Dennis stated there is no one on staff to manage inclusion programs. He may run some vendor inclusions programs in the spring. He spoke with representatives from SMILE to discuss running inclusion programs with vendors in the spring. He not sure about the summer.

Bobby asked Dennis about the funds from the General Fund to help with the shortfall in FY21. Dennis stated the Town approved \$50,000 for the Field Enterprise Fund and \$150,000 for the Pool Enterprise fund. He stated about \$24K was left in the Field Enterprise fund and about \$50 left for the Pool due to the fact the numbers in FY21 were not as bad as first anticipated since some field and pool activities were able to be run at the end of the fiscal year.

Mara expressed her concern regarding the Revolving Fund and the loss of revenue due to COVID. Partial salaries some Recreation staff is paid out of the Revolving Fund along with all recreation expenses.

CPC Project Update: Feeley proposal is in good shape and is moving forward. CPC had some additional questions on the SMILE playground at Haskell. Dennis shared his presentation to the CPC that will take place tomorrow night. Questions regarding the Haskell playground were; cost of trees, cost to save existing trees, cost of additional PIP for the septic area, additional costs for shade and new playground equipment, funds that may be available for use in existing accounts, and adding additional contingency money. Dennis did the research on the questions; the quick overview is Chris Felt was able to get an arborist to give an estimate of \$1,500 dollars to look at the root structure of the trees to determine if they can be saved or if they need to be removed. The septic area can't be accessed at this time and won't happen until the spring when bathrooms are in use again. He discussed the space and the proposed shade structure and new piece of equipment. Priced out the area, added funds for these items in the revised CPC proposal. The December CPC request for this request was \$230,000 and the January request with the additions and additional DPW work is \$281,690.37. (adjusted once Dennis corrects the tree estimated cost).

Bobby asked if the CPC knows the cost estimate is going up. In addition, he asked if the old equipment being removed could be used by someone else. Chris Felt commented that the equipment is extremely old and parts may no longer be available from the vendor.

Mara stated it doesn't make sense to phase in this project. The CPC project submissions will be discussed tomorrow night.

User Group Discussion - Mara stated the framework of the discussion will include; capital improvements (needs and wants), financial overview, field maintenance, and reservation systems and policies along with questions from the Commissioners and User Groups. She stated the Master Plan calls for improvements to both Feeley and Davis. Field improvements for Feeley are included in the CPC request which will hopefully be approved at the spring Town meeting. Plans for Davis are still being discussed by the Park and Recreation Commission and will be discussed further in the February Commission meeting.

Mara asked representatives of the user groups to put their enrollment numbers in the chat.

Craig Berkel, Youth Football, stated their registrations have increased by over 165% due to the increased popularity in flag football. Their organization includes flag football, tackle football, and youth cheerleading. He stated their biggest challenge is only having one lined football field in Town and that is the Community field that is shared with the Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School. The program is growing and is looking for additional field space during the fall. Craig asked if any consideration has been given to installing lights at the turf fields in Town. He felt the lower turf fields at the high school and Cutting, if lit, would allow for more field usage in fall.

Mara stated it was something that has been discussed, but Park and Recreation does not control the high school fields. Bobby Beagan added that an attempt has been made in the past to put lights at Cutting, but it didn't move forward, but is still on the Commission's priority list. He stated he is looking for user groups to become active and working with the Commission in order to get this accomplished.

Geoff Howell, from men's softball, stated their greatest need is secondary field space to accommodate make up games during the week. They can use an unfenced field and have used lower Feeley in the past. They have also used Curtis. The only field they use with a fence is at Featherland. Geoff stated the big issue is time constraints when they try to get two games in on the same night at the same field. It is difficult for some of the players to get to field on time for the first game of the night.

Robert Lee, youth soccer, stated their enrollment numbers have remained level since 2017. They are looking for more field space, Davis has drainage problems and is not close to the others so not as useful right now. Improvements at Davis will help with the field space needs and lights on the turf fields would be very helpful, especially in the fall.

Mara stated she will save the chat from the user's groups.

Tracey Berry, women's softball, expressed concern about moving men's softball back to Feeley. She stated if they are playing at the same time as the women on lower Feeley there could be potential injury issues.

Bobby stated the Commission was looking at Broadacres as potential field space.

Art Reilly commented on the interest in lights at the lower turf fields. He is open to discussing lights, but cautioned it would not be of benefit to LSRHS. He has been told that added use, will cause the turf to be replaced earlier, and any rental for the fields would be paid to LSRHS, not Park and Recreation since the fields are owned by LSRHS. He is not sure lights would financially benefit Park and Recreation.

Mara suggested that the conversation on the benefits of installing lights on the lower turf fields at LSRHS continue at another time. Bobby requested Art send him any information on additional use of the turf fields reducing their lifespan be sent to him.

Mara asked Chris Felt explain what Park and Grounds staff does for the user groups and youth sports in Town.

Chris explained that they use a system that on a weekly basis tracks work orders and also calculates how much time spent. This allows him to create documents showing how much time was spent each week on specific tasks/services or percentage of time on specific tasks.

In warmer months, the majority of time is spent mowing. Fields are mowed twice a week; some fields are mowed three times a week. The second most time consuming is field preparation and maintenance for baseball because they drag equipment over every field every day. Eight to ten hours a week is spent on trash removal. Tot lot maintenance is about 2 to 3 hours a week.

Irrigation repairs and maintenance takes up time, along with 12 to 16 hours a week painting foul lines on the baseball fields and soccer fields at Haskell. In addition, they take care of equipment maintenance and vandalism issues. Every day they also check and report back on any safety issues.

Chris added that if Broadacre and Davis field are compared, once cleared, Broadacres is larger. If improvements were made somewhere, his suggestion would be to work at improving Broadacre, since it abuts land that is already recreation, it has parking, and it's dry. He felt with a lot less effort and less money field space could be freed up. Davis will take a lot of fill and time and money to make useable and dry.

Mara asked for clarification on the size of the Broadacre compared to Davis. Chris said that the cleared and uncleared area of Broadacre is a little bit bigger than Davis.

Financial overview of the Field Enterprise Fund. The budget, which includes, salaries, field maintenance, park maintenance and utilities which is approved at Town meeting. Once

approved, the Town basically fronts the money to operate the Fund until the field permit revenue is deposited into the account. If there is a short fall, the Town has to cover the deficit, which is what happened due to COVID. He stated, historically the field permits bring in approximately \$200,000 each year. Half of the Parks and Grounds salaries and half of their benefits are paid out of the Enterprise Fund. Field permit fees have to increase regularly to keep up with the increase in salaries and cost of living expense for supplies etc. If all the money collected for field permit fees is not spent in the fiscal year, it becomes retained earnings and be spend at a later date. Dennis explained the Town's philosophy is that half of the Parks and Grounds salaries are paid by the field enterprise fund because half of their time is spent on the fields, which are used by the user groups.

Dennis stated he never really knows how much revenue is coming in each year, but it has averaged around \$200,000.

Dennis stated he will be looking at light fees for the Feeley baseball diamond and the field at upper Featherland. He is currently working with Eversource to make sure we are being charged the correct rate. He offered that user's currently do pay a light fee, he just doesn't think it is enough to cover the costs.

Carlo Lepordo, men's softball, said they had been paying for lights and thought they were already on a meter and paid for just what they used. He asked if anything had changed.

Dennis didn't think anything had changed, but will look into it.

Howard Feng asked what the biggest unpredictably in the field Enterprise fund is. Dennis stated salaries and benefits are somewhat predictable, expenses are a little more unpredictable. The bigger issue is if the field permit if it doesn't increase regularly, it will not keep up with the salaries and overall cost of living expenses.

Dennis stated the other issue is how much of the field maintenance expenses should the Field Enterprise Fund cover, without field permits to users, there would still be expenses for bathrooms, mowing fields trash removal etc. The question is should the Town be paying for more of the expenses.

Marc Spector (Sudbury Youth Baseball) stated he thought the user groups and families are bearing the brunt of some of these field costs and he feels it is a big concern. He agreed it required a deeper analysis. He stated many user groups spend a significant amount of their own money to maintain fields and assist with expenses which isn't accounted for in the Enterprise Fund. Marc said we can't start charging families \$300 to 400 to play youth sports.

Field Reservation Policy - Mara shared her screen with the field permit policy. User group priorities are listed and application submission dates. Mara and Dennis discussed block reservations and need to communicate if time is not going to be used. Dennis said he takes care of youth groups, and adult teams first along with LSRHS. It is best to send an email, let him

know of needs for specific groups. Once he receives and reviews all the requests, he enters them in to the reservation systems and prints the permit/invoice. He is happy to work with the groups on their needs and changes throughout the season.

Craig Berkel asked how to handle groups on fields from outside of Sudbury who may not have a permit.

Dennis said right now he only has one permit out right now due to the warmer winter. His belief is that if someone is getting paid by someone for training on public land, they should pull a permit in that case. If it looks like it is an official training activity, they should have a permit for the field and people have a right to ask to see the permit. Dennis offered that anyone can email him after hours or give a call during the day to check if the field is being used.

Dick Williamson mentioned that TI Sales fields wasn't discussed, but felt it should be included since the design of the Rail Trail includes widening the access road going into TISales.

Minutes – Motion to approve the minutes from November 30th, with corrections. Motion seconded. Motion passed 4-0. Mara - yes, Ben - yes, Bobby - yes, Dick- yes.

Motion to approve minutes from November 9th with corrections. Motion received a second. Motion approved 4-0. Mara - yes, Bobby - yes, Dick - yes, Ben - yes.

Bobby asked if the Commission needed to vote on the updated CPC submission request for the SMILE playground at Haskell since the dollar amount changed. Mara did not think so since the request was already approved by the Commission and she did not put a vote on the agenda. Bobby thought it would be good to check just to be sure. Mara stated she would go back and look at the original meeting and vote to see if there is any concern.

Next Meetings – Next meeting is scheduled for February 1. Continuing with the first Monday of the month, future meetings will be held on March 1, April 5, and May 3.

Misc. - Dennis stated Chris Felt found development plans for Davis completed by Gale a number of years ago. He said if anyone wanted to review to contact him. They are old, but might be helpful as we look to develop Davis. Bobby will contact Dennis for the plans.

Mara Huston stated the February meeting will focus on Davis, as well as discussing long term planning. In March she suggested bringing in the Garden Clubs to talk about the parks. Dick will contact and see if they are available.

Motion to adjourn, Bobby seconded. Mara yes, Bobby, yes, Ben – yes, Dick – yes.