

Virtual Meeting 6:32 pm

March 23, 2026

Commissioners: Mara Huston, Granger Atkenson, Ben Carmel, Laurie Eliason, Bobby Beagan (joined at 7.03pm), Amy Hamilton, Interim Park and Recreation Director

Guests: Cheryl Wallace, Commission on Disability, Victor Garofalo, Asst Town Manager/Finance

Roll Call: Ben-here, Granger-here, Laurie-here, Mara-here

Public Comment: None

Chair Comments: Mara noted that at some point during the meeting the Park and Recreation Commission will enter a joint meeting with the Sudbury Commission on Disability.

Recreation Finance Review with Victor Garofalo: Victor presented a comprehensive overview of the financial structure supporting Sudbury's Recreation services, the general fund, enterprise funds, and revolving funds in addition to the Community Preservation fund. The revenue sources for these funds are field fees, pool rental fees, program fees and tax levy. Field Enterprise Fund supports the maintenance of our Town athletic fields, which are used extensively by our youth organizations. The proposed budget for FY27 is \$254,000. He explained that if the field permit revenue does not cover the operating costs retained earnings are used to balance the budget. Field Enterprise retained earnings are currently at \$72,868 and are being depleted to cover operating costs. Victor mentioned at the most recent certification, the Department of Revenue commented on not only the Field Enterprise Fund but also the Pool and Trash Enterprise Funds in regard to using retained earnings to balance the funds. He stated retained earnings can cover an imbalance, but it is not sustainable and it is something that can be questioned because it could mean there isn't enough revenue to cover costs. Victor noted that the Field Enterprise Fees were increased for the FY 27 budget, which he expects to bring in an additional \$20,000.

The Atkinson Pool Enterprise Fund supports the operation and maintenance of the swim facility, which provides recreational swimming for residents and non-residents, swim teams, swim lessons and other community programming. The proposed budget is \$579,697., however pool revenues are hard to judge at this time since the pool has closed for renovations twice in 3 years and will be closed again for the month of May, so at this point \$110,000 in retained earnings will be used to balance the FY27 Pool Enterprise Fund. Victor offered that Vivian and Amy visited the Beede Center in Concord to observe the pool management structure, staffing model, and maintenance process. He stated the goal is to emulate their operations and strengthen the operations of the Atkinson Pool and expand our aquatics programming. Over the next year the staff is looking forward to increasing Community engagement, expand programming, with options such as water aerobics and specialty classes. The pool fee structure is being reviewed since it hasn't been updated in years and doesn't currently reflect the operation of the facility. Future fee plans will be brought before the Recreation Commission probably sometime in the fall.

The Recreation Revolving Fund supports all Town Recreation programs through a fee structure. This type of fund is usually self-sufficient, where the fees collected support the actual program offerings, but ours isn't because the Town does not charge back for indirect costs. Currently a percentage of staff

salaries are paid out of the Town budget. The goal for the future is to modernize our fees and expand program opportunities in all recreation programs.

The Town is considering hiring a third-party vendor to review the Recreation/Atkinson Pool operations model in more detail. Commissioners asked individual questions on Victor's presentation. After questions and discussion Ben asked that the Commission get a copy of Victor's presentation and that it be posted to the website. Victor will send a PDF version that can be supplemental material to the minutes.

Bobby asked about pool rate increases. Victor said analysis has started and the pool staff will be charged with doing research regarding their programming and fee structure. This information will be shared with the Commission once completed.

Joint Meeting with the Sudbury Commission on Disability: Liesje Quinto called the joint meeting to order at 7:46 pm. Roll call for the COD, Cheryl Wallace-here, Annika Hardy-here, Bessie Struck-here, Liesje Quinto-here. Mara stated the joint meeting was to review and discuss plans for the Smile Playground at Haskell field. Liesje raised concerns about a specific section of the playground design near new wood chips and the septic system, which Victor agreed to review before finalizing plans. The COD shared plans for accessible bike meetups and discussed potential collaboration on inclusive enrichment programs with the school system. The discussion also covered ongoing accessibility projects including Haskell Field path improvements and the Community Forum planned for late April to gather input on the Haskell Field design. The discussion focused on accessible swim lessons and renovation of the Haskell playground. In regard to swim lessons, Amy explained the Atkinson Pool/Park and Recreation currently doesn't offer adaptive swim lessons directly, but does have vendors that provide swim lessons. In addition, the SMILE program is at the Atkinson Pool several times a week using the pool for children with disabilities. The group discussed the importance of proper training for adaptive swim instruction. Victor presented the revised playground design, which includes a sensory tunnel, merry go-round and farmer's market area.

After discussion, Bobby made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission support the playground design as presented. Laurie seconded the motion. Vote: Bobby-yes, Laurie-yes, Ben-yes, Granger-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor-5-0.

Cheryl Wallace from the Commission on Disability made a motion to approve the current design with the modifications as noted in regard to the spinning seat currently in the wood chip area. Seconded by Annika Hardy. Vote: Cheryl-yes, Annika-yes, Bessie-yes, Liesje-yes. Vote passed in favor 4-0.

Joint meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Director Update: Amy provided an update on Park and Recreation activities and stated the Wachusett Ski Club program ended, was very successful and they may consider expansion of the program next year. A new lift for the pool was ordered and received and two new pool vacuums have been purchased. The Town is advertising for a new program coordinator and also hiring summer camp staff. Plans are ongoing for Summer Camp, Sudbury Adventure and Preschool Pals which will start at the end of June. Amy discussed programming gaps, particularly for middle school and school vacation activities and discussed the Recreation van for field trips. She also discussed the presentation she and Vivian made to the School Committee requesting that Park and Recreation be given one space per school building after

school for programming. Amy noted that programming at the schools is more successful due to transportation issues, so the hope is the schools will see the benefit and will work with Recreation. She also talked about plans to implement a more formalized registration process for seasonal programs. Bobby asked about reviving the summer concert series which led to a discussion about potential funding sources for such programs including grants from the Sudbury Foundation and the possibility of a Community Revolving fund. The Commission also addressed the need to increase responses to the Open Space and Recreation Plan survey. Amy offered to help distribute survey information to the recreation mailing lists.

Liaison Updates: Commissioners gave updates on projects along with planning for outdoor spaces, programming and capital improvements. Laurie and Bobby provided updates on the Haskell Outdoor Space/FCC noting progress on plans for a new basketball court, pavilion, accessible pathways, and potential lacrosse wall. They discussed the upcoming community forum, scheduled for late April, to inform residents of the plan and gather additional feedback.

Capital Planning Continued Discussion: Mara mentioned the successful PRC meeting in December to discuss capital planning. She mentioned one of the goals is to get the long-term capital plan for field improvements and other projects updated over the summer and make sure it aligns with the Town's capital plan. Ben brought up concerns about the proposed solar panel project at Haskell. Lisa Kouchakdjian, 30 Meadowbrook Road, Select Board liaison, acknowledged concerns and confirmed the Town Counsel is conducting its due diligence on the project and noted more discussions are expected in the future. The Commission clarified that while they have not taken a formal position yet, their current stance is against the project and will be discussing it further in the April meeting where they hope to have additional information and actual project renderings. Discussion continued with Laurie expressing concern about the timing and need for more involvement in the design process before making a decision in April. The Commission also discussed the approval process and decision-making authority on the solar panel project. Victor explained that while a Town meeting vote is required, the project still needs to go through multiple phases and the Select Board/Town management would make key decisions after approval. Victor offered to ask Sandra Duran to the vendor to discuss the project at the April 13th meeting. Bobby raised some concerns regarding the condition of the parking lot and if the DPW department had assessed it for the project. Victor will check on that issue. Mara emphasized the need for the Park and Recreation Commission to be included in the decision-making process and Lisa agreed to communicate the Commission's concerns to the Select Board but thought it would be premature to make any type of motion at this time. Mara stated she would put a vote on the project at the April meeting. Laurie proposed the Park and Recreation Commission send a letter to the Select Board regarding the project timing and requesting to be involved in the design process before deciding in April. Commission agreed to have Laurie draft a letter outlining concerns to share with the Select Board after the April 13th meeting rather than send it immediately. Victor suggested making the solar project the first agenda item in April to allow more time for discussion and Andy recommended that Laurie prepare her letter in advance so it could be reviewed and modified during the meeting. The Commission agreed to compile questions from members to share with the Town staff in advance and Mara will reach out to the Finance Commission liaison.

Sewataro Advisory Committee: After discussion, Granger volunteered to apply to be on the Sewataro Advisory Committee. Mara made a motion to send a letter of support to the Select Board for Granger's appointment to the Sewataro Advisory Committee. Bobby seconded the motion. Vote: Mara-yes,

Bobby-yes, Laurie-yes, Granger-yes, Ben-yes. Vote passed in favor 5-0. Mara will write the letter from the PRC Chair to the Select Board and will also copy the PRC.

Upcoming Community Events: Commission discussed participating in the upcoming community events including Sudbury 250 Day on May 16, and Sudbury Pride Day, June 14th. Both organizing groups have asked boards and commission to have a presence at the tables. Mara stated it would be a good opportunity to bring visibility to what the Park and Recreation Commission is working on and Recreation/Pool programs and collect community feedback on programming.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes: Motion made to approve the January 2026 meeting minutes. Second by Granger. Vote: Granger-yes, Laurie-yes, Ben-yes, Bobby-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor – 5-0.

Motion to adjourn. Seconded by Laurie. Vote: Bobby-yes, Laurie-yes, Ben-yes, Granger-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor 5-0.