

**TOWN OF GUILFORD  
EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE  
MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY APRIL 20, 2010  
7:00 P.M. – GUILFORD TOWN HALL**

**Present:**

Task Force Members: Martha Carlson, Michael Dowley, Chairman Gary Gilbert, Jim Galvin, Mark Matlosz

Town Officials: Selectman Charles Havrda, Bd of Finance Chairman Matthew Hoey

Parks & Recreation Department: Ellen Clow, Phil DeMond, Terry Holland-Buckley, Tracy Guliani, Director Rick Maynard

Clerk Karen Quercia

**1. 7:00 p.m. Call to order**

Mr. Gilbert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. 7:01 – 7:02 p.m. Approval of minutes of the April 6, 2010 meeting.**

*Motion: Upon a motion by Ms Carlson, and seconded by Mr. Dowley, the Efficiency Task Force voted to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2010 meeting.*

*Approve: Carlson, Dowley, Galvin, Gilbert, Matlosz*

*Oppose: None*

*Abstain: None*

**3. 7:03 – 8:45 p.m. Discussion with Parks and Recreation Director and Staff**

Mr. Gilbert explained that he is a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, and as such he felt it would be appropriate to have Mr. Dowley moderate the discussion.

Mr. Dowley thanked the members of the Parks and Recreation Department for attending and outlined the goals of the Task Force.

Mr. Maynard explained that the Parks and Recreation Department is divided into four areas: Recreation, Administration, Seniors, and Parks. Mr. DeMond is the Parks Foreman; Ms Clow is the Recreation Supervisor; Ms Holland-Buckley is the Administrator and Ms Guliani is a Program Assistant. Ms. Czaplicki is in charge of the Seniors Programs, but was unable to attend the meeting.

There are four full time employees and four to five seasonal employees who work for Mr. DeMond to maintain the Parks. They are busy all year round. Their duties include:

- Mowing 100 acres of land
- Maintaining 40 ball fields (including school fields)
- Trash removal (Parks, Green, shops on Whitfield Street, athletic fields, schools & Town Buildings)
- Maintaining two beaches

- Snow plowing all town parking lots, with the exception of the Fire Department, but including the town owned lot behind the Food Center.
- Removing snow from two miles of sidewalks
- Maintaining skating ponds
- Maintaining equipment (i.e. picnic tables and soccer goals)
- Clearing brush

Mr. Maynard distributed a handout comparing Guilford's Park and Rec Department's staffing levels and maintenance responsibilities to Madison, Branford, and Cheshire's departments. Overall, Guilford's department has fewer employees but more areas of responsibility than the surrounding towns.

Mr. DeMond explained that he is in charge of the daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal maintenance of the fields and is the immediate supervisor of 8-9 people. He plans and implements the turf programs which includes; fertilizing, seeding and spraying, as well as field renovations. Doing this work in house saves money. He stresses "safety first" within his department.

There are five basic tasks that he and his department perform;

- Cutting
- Trimming
- Painting Fields
- Trash pick up
- Grooming and marking the fields

The quality of the fields has improved immensely over the past several years.

Seasonal duties performed by his department include:

- Maintaining the two town beaches
- Preparing the fields for school sports, soccer, lacrosse and little league
- Fertilizing and seeding four times a year using the IPM (Integrated Pest Management) program. – State mandated
- Snow removal (town parking lots first, then sidewalks, then help DPW plowing roads if time allows)
- Maintaining ice skating areas and skate park

Mr. DeMond appreciates input from his staff and is open to suggestions for improvements. All five full time employees have their pesticide and herbicide licenses. The law regarding application of herbicides will be changing. No herbicides will be allowed on school grounds for eighth graders and younger, only organics will be allowed. Organics are not as effective and are more costly. The department is trying other options such as the use of industrial strength vinegar on the fence lines, but this is also expensive.

Mr. Dowley asked how the department knows that it is cheaper to perform the field maintenance duties in house. Mr. DeMond stated that the department had in the past done research into the cost of contracting out grass cutting and trash collection. Several trash haulers were contacted for quotes, and several landscapers submitted estimates based on the number of fields and acreage to be maintained. Also, the department already has the necessary equipment. They also have more control of how the fields are maintained by performing these tasks in house.

Mr. Galvin asked if the cost analysis included a labor rate. Mr. Maynard stated that he used the highest labor rate and added 20-25% for benefits.

The department has a cooperative agreement with Madison whereby the two towns share equipment. Guilford may borrow Madison's beach cleaner, and Madison may borrow Guilford's top dresser.

Mr. Havrda asked why Guilford has so many more fields than Madison. It was speculated that Guilford has a higher rate of participation in the various sports programs. There are 35 about fields in Guilford, and most fields are multi use. There are also 4 bocce courts.

The Standing Fields Committee has been very supportive of the P&R department.

Ms. Clow is the Recreation Supervisor. She has two full time employees that report to her; an administrative assistant and a program assistant. The department offers approximately 500 classes each year, as well as an aquatics program in summer, summer day camp, sports camps, pre-school activities, basketball, softball, yoga, aerobics, and a very popular adult kickball league. The department offers programs for ages one through ninety-six, and estimates that they serve approximately 18,000 people per year, including special events such as the concerts on the Green and fireworks.

Ms. Clow is very proficient with the use of technology. The department has upgraded computers and now has the capability to do e-mail blasts. Program information can be distributed more quickly and effectively with the use of computers. The department has received training on the RecTrack program from Vermont Systems. The website is being updated and to be more user friendly.

Mr. Dowley asked how the department determines which programs to add and which ones to drop. Is there a rubric? Mr. Maynard explained that the department has a determined approach. They use a worksheet to look at costs for staff and supplies for each program. The programs require a minimum number of participants or they will be cancelled. The only exception may be if a program is new or if total enrollment for several sessions covers the costs for all sessions. The department adds a fee of \$5.00 per person, per program to cover administrative overhead costs. They do not figure in factors such as electricity or building maintenance. Eighty percent of the registrations are done on-line and with credit cards. The credit card fees were factored into the program prices.

Ms Carlson asked if the program fund is a revolving fund, and Mr. Maynard confirmed that it is. The fund is never in the red, all programs are self-supporting, no tax dollars are used for the programs, including the cost of the brochure.

The department seeks approval from the Commission before spending any program funds. The picnic shelter, basketball courts, docks at Lake Quonnipaug and even a mower were all paid for with program funds, not tax dollars. Repairs to the roof of the Community Center were paid for from program funds because there was no money in the (town) budget to fix the roof. The program fund reduces the department's reliance on tax dollars.

The P&R budget pays for a custodian, even for non-recreation events. All revenue from rentals goes into the General Fund. This revenue offsets about half the cost of the Community Center operations.

Mr. Gilbert stated that there is usually a minimum of \$65,000 - \$75,000 in the program fund. A difference of 100-200 people in enrollment can have a huge impact on the fund's balance. Last year there was approximately \$180,000 in the fund. The department tries to set aside some funds for capital improvements.

Ms Holland-Buckley is responsible for the many of the administrative functions of the P&R department. These duties consist of scheduling the use of the Community Center (CC), payroll, purchasing and accounts payable, overseeing the budget, preparing monthly packets and reports for the Commission as well as the quarterly reimbursable report.

Mr. Maynard explained that the Community Center is not just a recreational center. A large percentage of the Community uses the building. During an average Monday through Sunday, 170-180 events are held at the Center. Of those, approximately 92 are rec events, 29 are senior activities, and 37 - 40 are non Park & Rec events.

The Seniors portion of the P&R department is overseen by Ms. Czaplicki. There is one full time assistant (who is currently out on medical leave), two full time cooks, two part time cooks, and four part time bus drivers, as well as instructors.

Mr. Maynard estimated that 28,000 meals per year are served from the Community Center. Of that number, about 75% are Meals on Wheels. This is the only hot meal of the day for many of the seniors, and also provides a source of socialization for them. Often seniors will participate in a program either before or after their meal. Breakfast has proven to be a profitable meal. It is available to anyone at the Community Center. Special event meals (i.e. a luau) help bring people in. Meals are generally \$2.50, and \$5.00 for special meals.

The SILL (Shoreline Institute for Lifelong Learning) program has grown considerably since its inception. It has grown from an initial participation of about 50 people to over 200. One of the goals of the department is to increase the participation by “younger seniors”, the children of the most senior participants. There are many people age 60 and over who participate in programs but do not consider themselves part of the seniors program. Seniors age 60 and over participate in aerobics programs.

Of the department busses, three are leased and two are owned by the Town. The leased busses can only be used for senior citizens or disabled residents. They bring seniors to the CC, medical appointments, hair dressing appointments and Big Y. The only occasion that they take residents out of town is to bring a patient to the VA hospital in West Haven, or on special trips.

The busses are leased for a five year period, with an option to buy at the end of the lease. This is how the town acquired the other two busses, which are used for camp trips, etc. This saves money as the town does not have to rent vehicles for these trips.

Mr. Maynard and his staff provided the ETF with a list of opportunities to improve efficiencies in the department. (Detailed list attached) They included:

- Updating phone system to more appropriately direct the phone calls the department receives
- Cross training for office and administration staff,
- Technology improvements to (hardware and software),
- Adjustments to field maintenance,
- Equipment purchases ( trash truck, laptop)

When asked about other overall efficiencies the department might be aware of, they suggested that the school playgrounds could be better and more safely maintained. The department has worked in cooperation with the schools in some areas. For instance, P&R used to mow some of the grounds at Melissa Jones, and the BOE mowed some. As it was time consuming for P&R to go all the way to MJS to mow a small area, the BOE agreed to do all the mowing at that site.

The ETF asked Mr. Maynard how he perceived the relationship between the Director’s position, the P&R staff and the P&R Commission as defined by Town Charter. Mr. Maynard stated that the Director is pulled in many different directions: he reports to several Commissions including the Green Committee; the Standing Fields Committee; and the Park & Rec Commission; as well as to the First Selectman. On a day to day basis he reports to the First Selectman.

The Green Committee will present him with a list of tasks at one of their meetings, as will the Standing Fields Committee at one of their meetings. For personnel matters, he works with a sub-committee of the Park and Rec Commission and the Human Resources Director.

Mr. Gilbert stated the Task Force’s intention to resolve the chain of command issue. A meeting between members of the Task Force, the First Selectman, In-House Counsel, and Human Resources Director to address this issue will be scheduled for next week.

A discussion was held regarding the consolidation of services such as mowing. Currently the BOE mows the non-athletic fields and P&R mows all the athletic fields. (DPW only does roadside mowing.) Would there be better control if all the mowing was consolidated under one agency? Mr. DeMond advised that when the new Day Care facility is opened at Rollwood Park (Woodruff Farm) that location will be added to the list of outdoor areas his department will be responsible for maintaining. They also discussed centralizing services such as plowing and sanding, and custodial staff.

Ms Carlson stated that of all the ETF members, she has probably had the most use of the P&R department over the years, both as a parent whose children have participated in programs, and as a member of community organizations that have used the P&R facilities. In these capacities, she has been in virtually every Community Center in the State, and Guilford's Park & Rec department is unequalled. It is a model for every other P&R department in the State.

Whenever her children participated in a P&R program, she always felt that they were safe. There is an overwhelmingly positive feeling about P&R throughout the Community, and there is nothing more important to the quality of life in a town. All the members of the Task Force agreed that the Parks and Recreation Department does a great job.

The ETF thanked everyone from the P&R Department for taking their time to attend the meeting.

**4. 8:30 –9:08 p.m. Discuss progress on personnel forms, organizational charts, data Collection.**

The Task Force discussed the draft organization charts they have received to date. Further clarification is necessary: both as to how the Charter outlines the chain of command, and as to how direction is actually taken and given. The goal of the meeting next week with the First Selectman, HR Director and In-House Counsel is to help clarify what the organization charts should contain.

Mr. Galvin spoke about Worker's Compensation. Safety should be tied into the employee performance appraisals. Safety objectives should be set by Department Heads, who should be responsible and accountable for those objectives. There should be documentation of safety violations, as well as safety improvements and initiatives.

The ETF discussed the preparation of an interim report to the Board of Selectmen. The report would provide bullet points for the central issues the ETF has discovered so far, including the challenges of creating the organization charts, and the implementation of best practices. The ETF agreed that preparing this report would be the focus of their next meeting.

The ETF briefly discussed the services that are functions of town government v. the cost of those services, and how does the town decide what services government should be providing. How are the services that are of value to the community balanced with the cost to provide those services? Mr. Dowley stated that the focus should not be on reducing services, but on providing them in the most efficient way.

*Motion: Upon a motion by Mr. Galvin, and seconded by Ms. Carlson, the Task Force voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m.*

*Approved: Carlson, Dowley, Galvin, Gilbert and Matlosz*

*Opposed: None*

*Abstained: None*

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Quercia  
Clerk