

Approved Minutes 11/7/11

TOWN OF GUILFORD  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Budget Workshop Minutes – 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2011

The Parks and Recreation Commission held a Budget Workshop on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2011 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman Ralph Schipani presiding.

Present: Theresa Bryant, Rose Dostert, Barbara Pine, Sue Robins, Ralph Schipani and Judy Sullivan. Also present Director Rick Maynard, Recreation Supervisor Ellen Clow, Seniors Program Coordinator Terry Buckley and Parks Foreman Phil DeMond. Excused: Jenny Carrillo. Absent: Marc Iacobellis and Calvin Page.

The meeting was called to order at 7:07p.m. Mr. Schipani said tonight's meeting was a pre-budget workshop so data could be collected and questions asked.

**Parks Foreman:** Regarding equipment, Mr. DeMond briefly reviewed two bond package items (dump truck, loader) and one capital item (truck with plow). Mr. Schipani noted that these were in the capital budget which the Commission had approved at its last meeting and subsequently submitted to the Town. Mr. DeMond stated that the rest of the equipment was a regular line item. One piece of this, which had been brought up in the past, was a laptop computer for himself. Mr. DeMond felt this would make operations run smoother and save him a lot of time. He added that he had many blank forms which could perhaps be adapted and put on the computer. Mr. Schipani said from his perspective, in addition to the cost of the laptop, he would like to know how much extra would have to be spent on software or did the Department have existing software that could be used. Mr. Schipani said he would also like to know the cost of history and data entry that would be required to bring Mr. DeMond up to date. When Mr. DeMond mentioned that he had no computer knowledge, Mr. Schipani pointed out that training would be another additional cost. He said he wished to know what the true investment cost would be, not just the cost of the laptop itself. Mr. Maynard stated that Rec Trac had a maintenance program but he believed this cost \$10,000 - \$20,000. Ms. Robins asked if the Town had a system. Mr. DeMond replied yes, that there was a system for road maintenance but he did not know how this would adapt to deal with turf, fields, etc. Mr. Maynard recommended reviewing what was on the Public Works' system. **Account #144-56775 Town Green Maintenance:** Mr. DeMond said that the fertilization/seeding program had been cut for the Guilford Green and this work was done out of the Department's budget. He said he would like to see funding for this restored to the budget request. **Account #144-55210 Field Maintenance:** Mr. DeMond said over the past few years Contracted Services had been reduced from \$6,500 to \$4,000. He said he would like to see this request restored to \$6,000. Mr. Schipani recommended placing it under Annual Recuperative Renovation & Maintenance. **Personnel:** Mr. DeMond said when trash collection was outsourced the Department lost 120 manhours of which trash collection was 32 manhours. Personnel was cut from 10 to 7 people and Mr. DeMond said the facilities were suffering. Work was being half done instead of properly done. He asked the Commission to think about this. Mr. Schipani asked Mr. DeMond to make a list pointing out what might potentially not get done because of reduced personnel. Mr. Maynard noted that with a new State law herbicides could no longer be sprayed near schools with 8<sup>th</sup> grades or younger. This meant weeds and brush had to be hand done which was slower.

**Seniors Program Coordinator:** Terry Buckley said that she hoped to incorporate more items together so trips attracted a broader range of ages. Also there would be opportunities for Saturday and evening events. She noted that there were now more options for weekend activities. Mrs. Buckley

mentioned that Ms. Clow had listed events on Facebook. There will be lectures for younger seniors on social security, Medicare, general financial planning, and trusts – once a month on Thursdays.

Mrs. Buckley mentioned that the seniors donated funds raised from their annual fair to charities, police department, etc. This year some funds will be donated towards a grill for the kitchen. She added that the meal subsidy was behind this quarter but she thought that might be due to Hurricane Irene. Mr. Schipani said the Department might have to revisit what it was charging for meals. He also noted that whatever the Department decided to do about providing rides to residents might affect the number of bus drivers needed. Referring back to the meals program, Ms. Pine said since the breakfast segment seemed to make money, once the new grill was installed a notice should be sent out. She suggested talking to the chef about how to get more volume for breakfast. She felt more marketing should be done if the breakfasts were a money maker. Ms. Robins recommended getting information to mothers with children signed up in classes. Mr. Schipani thought of utilizing the web site for this.

Mr. DeMond left the meeting at 7:50p.m.

Mr. Schipani stated that some comments had been received in the Department's survey regarding beach passes and he circulated information on beach pass fees. Ms. Clow said that this year the price had been increased and the option for guests on a seasonal pass had been eliminated. Mr. Maynard noted that passes at Lake Quonnipaug were per person but at Jacobs Beach they were per car. This was set up a long time ago because there was more usage at Lake Quonnipaug and the intent was to encourage more use at Jacobs Beach. Another reason for the change on the beach passes was that there had been complaints about too many out-of-town people using Lake Quonnipaug. It was noted that most of this year's complaints regarding the passes had been from seniors with grandchildren. Ms. Bryant felt a day at the beach should not be expensive and suggested bringing back the guest option. Ms. Clow said she thought the fees were reasonable. However, Mrs. Dostert said paying \$14.00 to bring two grandchildren to the beach was expensive. She then asked how the Department had done financially with the new fee structure. Mr. Maynard replied that estimated revenue was \$47,000 but over \$49,000 had actually been received. Mr. Schipani pointed out that this could be due to people staying closer to home because of the poor economy. Ms. Bryant suggested having a third category for a guest with a separate fee – maybe just \$1.00 for a child with a senior. Ms. Pine said there was not enough data available yet to know the impact of the fees this year, and that results would not be known until next year. Ms. Robins then made a motion to keep the same fee structure except for a senior/active adult pass allowing a \$2.00 fee per child for grandchildren 17 years of age or under. Mrs. Dostert seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. Ms. Clow said that the passes would no longer say 'resident' or 'non-resident' as this did not make any difference.

**Recreation Supervisor:** Ms. Clow stated that at this time she did not have any suggestions as the reimbursable account generally covered all expenses for recreation except salaries. She said she would inform the Commission if she developed any new input. Ms. Clow noted that a web server was approved last year but this still had not been received.

Mrs. Buckley and Ms. Clow left the meeting at 8:12p.m.

**Director:** Mr. Maynard reported that net revenue from programs was approximately 10% more than budgeted. He said all the fees had been increased and recommended staying with the current program fees, especially in the poor economy, unless told to do otherwise by the Town.

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The Commission reviewed the proposed budget as follows:-

Page 3: Account #56680 Senior Meal Subsidy, Mr. Schipani said if the actual figure for this was known it should be listed. Account #55200 Community Center Operation – Ms. Robins noted the large change in dollar amounts provided. Mr. Maynard replied that increases were caused by the need for roof repairs, etc. Regarding maintenance of the Community Center, Ms. Pine said she would like to see a line item for regular carpet cleaning and Mr. Maynard agreed to add this.

Page 11: Ms. Robins queried the large changes in dollar amounts listed for ball field clay. Mr. Maynard replied that this was due to stockpiling of materials.

Page 13: Remove the line item for Fireworks/Community Picnic.

Page 15: Bus drivers - Ms. Robins queried the cost of medical trips. Mr. Maynard replied that he did not have that information. The report stated “Assistant Cooks – Daily preparation of meals for senior citizens and Meals on Wheels Clients” – Ms. Pine pointed out that the cooks were not just for the seniors. However, Mr. Maynard replied that the lunches were for seniors only.

Page 18: Under 144-55900 Administration the report stated “To cut back on costs, we have eliminated attendance at the New England Parks & Recreation Association Conference....”. Ms. Robins asked if this was a good thing to lose, was it a valuable tool to lose. Mr. Maynard replied that some staff went to the State conference which was better. Ms. Pine stated that in an earlier discussion on the Reimbursable Account the Commission had made a motion to support staff development activities and had asked that a staff development plan be put in place with input from each staff member. She said she had not yet seen this plan and asked that cutting the New England conference be reconsidered. Mr. Schipani noted that staff had to come to the Commission and indicate willingness to participate in further development. Ms. Pine said she felt it was the Director’s role as department head to work with each individual to see how they could be enhanced and developed. Mrs. Dostert suggested the Commission could set a standard for employees such as, as a minimum, requiring attendance at one conference a year. Ms. Bryant felt it would be strange to require staff to attend more conferences without knowing if it was getting value for money. Ms. Robins said more thought should be given to whether or not excluding attendance at conferences was a good thing to do.

Following brief discussion Ms. Robins made a motion to start the December 5<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting at 6:30p.m. so the proposed budget could be discussed. Ms. Pine seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. Schipani said he would like to see any outstanding policies completed. Ms. Robins said she and Mrs. Dostert would be meeting on 11/3/11 to draft a policy on naming facilities and she asked for comments/suggestions from the Commission before this meeting. Mr. Schipani said he would also like to have a list of accomplishments for the year. Referring to the Jacobs Beach Master Plan, Mr. Schipani said if the grant was received he would like to do a program on GCTV as soon as possible. Mr. Maynard mentioned that he would be doing a presentation for the Guilford Rotary Club.

Ms. Pine made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00p.m. Mr. Schipani seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Katharine Stewart, Recording Secretary