

**NEW FAIRFIELD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**4 Brush Hill Road**  
**New Fairfield, Connecticut 06812**  
**Telephone (203)312-5633 Fax (203)312-5636**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**Minutes**  
**Thursday, January 22, 2009**

**7:00 p.m.**

**TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

**PRESENT:**

Sean Loughran (Chairman), Bill O’Keeffe, Steve Burfeind, Melissa Luks Fidanza, Mark Lamanna, Chris Van Steen, Fred Testor, William Tripp, Steve Merullo (Parks & Recreation Director), Denise Cocozza (Secretary)

**1. Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Sean Loughran

**2. Public Comment**

None

**3. Approval of Minutes January 12th**

Bill Tripp made a motion to approve the Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> minutes. Melissa Fidanza seconded.

Vote taken:

Steve Burfeind	Yes
Fred Testor	Yes
William Tripp	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Bill O’Keeffe	Yes

***Motion Carried.***

**4. Chairman Comments**

A) Fishing Derby – Sean Loughran confirmed that John from Valley Angler will pay the \$200 usage fee this year but might consider moving the derby elsewhere going forward due to the fee. Melissa Fidanza commented that John shouldn’t be discouraged from having the fishing derby in New Fairfield if he is offering free programs in return. After discussion the members agreed to a barter arrangement. They will charge the \$200 fee to be fair and consistent; but in return the

commission will pay him \$200 back if he agrees to hold 2 programs (to be listed in Parks & Recreation program) valued at \$100 each.

B) Coverage for Meetings – To follow up from last meeting’s discussion, Steve Merullo was asked if in the future he would send one of his staff members in his place when he is unable to attend. Mr. Merullo agreed.

C). Mr. Loughran asked Kelly for a list of vendors who received the letter from the Parks & Recreation commission regarding fees. Barb/Kelly will get back to him.

D). Rebel Turf Bathrooms – to be addressed at next meeting.

## **5. Director Update**

A). Director Update: FY '10 Budget Discussion:

- Director (Steve Merullo), Asst. Director (Barbara Coelho), and Commission Secretary (Denise Cocozza) salaries are currently paid through Town of New Fairfield. Program Director (Kelly Ferris) salary is paid through the Parks & Recreation Commission’s self-sustaining fund.
- Summer Programs – Next meeting the commission will discuss camp and other summer positions. One item to address is how to handle paying lifeguards for rained-out shifts (i.e. pay a flat amount for a rained out session vs. pay for full day).
- Revenues/Expenses Highlights:
  - Program Fees vs. Prior Year – Steve Merullo assumed a 15% increase due to the implementation of the 60/40 policy. He noted this might seem conservative at first glance but he is assuming the 60/40 policy might cause a decrease in the number of vendors.
  - Outdoor Cinema – Assuming \$20,000 in donations toward the outdoor cinema. Steve Merullo is investigating sponsorship packages and has a few leads from local businesses. The commission discussed options for cutting costs for the cinema including less expensive entertainment and potentially having a children’s bouncy house donated. Mr. Merullo is looking at workload to determine who can put in the time to follow up on sponsorship leads.
  - Chris Van Steen inquired as to what programs are currently offered for children under age 5. Due to limited facilities there are not currently many programs for this age level. Sean Loughran suggested checking into using other schools besides the high school/middle school campus. Bill O’Keeffe mentioned the possibility of seeking out volunteers to head up programs for the under 5 age level, as opposed to hiring professionals.
  - Ball fields – Discussed timing of receiving payment for ball field use. Chris Van Steen suggested that field costs could potentially be offset by offering banner space at the fields.
  - Storing boats across from the marina during the winter was again mentioned as a revenue-generating initiative. Need time/resources to investigate this.
- Reconciliation Concerns: Program level details vs. summaries in some cases are not tying out. It was noted that usage of the Rec Track system would help to correct this. Steve Burfeind suggested that a detailed monthly reconciliation be implemented to ensure

that all costs and revenues are being tracked for each project/program. Mr. Merullo to address within the department to determine where the Rec Track responsibility will lie. Mr. Loughran recommended that in a couple of months, the commission review the current year's budget vs. and how revenues and expenses are tracking to date compared to budget.

- 60/40 Split with Vendors: Mr. Merullo commented that the 60/40 letter to vendors is being mailed out this week and he will be making it clear to vendors that there are no exceptions this year.
- Turkey Run – This year 300 T-shirts were purchased and only 180 runners participated. Eliminating or cutting back the number of shirts given out would significantly improve costs for this event.
- Capital Budget – After the recommendation set forth by the commission at the last meeting, the following was agreed upon between Steve Merullo and the Board of Selectman as a starting point for the FY '10 Capital Budget:

Item	Commission Recommendation 1/12/09	Agreed upon by S. Merullo and BOS	Status
Swim Docks (repair or replace – need quotes)	\$100,000 (not to exceed)	\$15,000	Reduced per S. Merullo investigation
Boat Docks	\$ 30,000	\$30,000	OK
New Facilities	\$ 30,000	\$30,000	OK
302 Ball Pond Road (for 2 baseball fields behind MHHS)	\$180,000		To be moved to FY '11
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$340,000</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	

- Approximately \$19,000 remains from the FY '09 capital budget. Roughly \$11,000 is allocated for the Community Park/Restroom project. Mr. Merullo reported that per his discussion with the Board of Selectmen, the commission has 2 options for use of those funds:
  - a). Develop a plan (commitment, fundraising) to use towards the \$108K needed to build the restroom. Would need to coordinate plans with Parks & Rec (\$15K), Town of New Fairfield (\$15K), Board of Education (\$15K), Lacrosse (\$15K), Soccer (\$15K) and Score Fund (\$22K) based on prior estimates. All plans would need to be solidified before the FY '10 budget is finalized.
  - b). Use the \$11K towards repairing the wooden stairs and building a platform, with an option to add the restroom later.

B) Director Update: Other  
No additional updates

## 6. Commission/Office Processes

A) Representation for Parks & Recreation Department at every meeting, as discussed earlier.

B) Bill O’Keeffe recommended that the commission hire Denise Cocozza to gather information regarding the potential to store boats across from the Town Park. Steve Burfeind made a motion to utilize the commission’s self-sustaining fund for up to 10 hours of investigative work on this initiative before the next regular meeting in February. Fred Testor seconded the motion.

Vote taken:

Steve Burfeind	Yes
Fred Testor	Yes
William Tripp	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Bill O’Keeffe	Yes
Chris Van Steen	Yes

***Motion Carried Unanimously.***

C) Melissa Fidanza initiated a conversation regarding staff updates at monthly meetings. She made a motion stating that employees paid via the commission’s self-sustaining fund should begin documenting detailed account of work completed on weekly timesheets for the commission’s review. Mark Lamanna seconded the motion.

Vote taken:

Steve Burfeind	Yes
Fred Testor	Yes
William Tripp	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes
Melissa Luks Fidanza	Yes
Bill O’Keeffe	Yes
Chris Van Steen	Yes

***Motion Carried Unanimously.***

D) The commission’s role as an advisory board was discussed. Steve Merullo confirmed that the commission members have the ability to advise and pursue opportunities, but not to commit town funds or sign contracts. Any information/opportunities generated by the commission needs to be brought to Mr. Merullo before any commitments are made.

E) Subcommittees were discussed in general terms. Steve Merullo recommended re-formation of active subcommittees. Mark Lamanna indicated that some of the subcommittees are still active and intact. The commission will discuss in further detail the effectiveness of full subcommittees vs. assigning individuals on a project-by-project basis at the next meeting.

## **7. Sub-committee reports**

A). Ball Pond Property – Fred Testor spoke with Marty Morgan who is ready to proceed with this, pending the grading permit. Steve Merullo will follow up and obtain ASAP.

B) Fence for lower turf field – Steve Burfeind provided an update. There is a meeting in 2 weeks with all relevant organizations regarding the fences.

C) Ice rink – Steve Merullo reported that mice ate through the rink that was previously used on Memorial Field. He is looking into alternate locations or using tarps. It would take approximately 4 hours to set up.

## **8. Adjournment**

Bill O’Keeffe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sean Loughran seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.