

Dover Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting of December 2, 2009
Minutes

P&R Commissioners In Attendance: John Budd, Rich Oasis, Scott Seidman, Nancy Simms
P&R Employees In Attendance: Jessica Cooney, David MacTavish
Others in Attendance: Jim Kinder (Warrant Committee)

Meeting was called to order at 7:35am.

Prior Meeting Minutes

November's minutes were not available.

Capital Budget Requests for FY2011

The Capital Budget Committee ("CBC") has suggested that P&R fund its purchase of our proposed software package out of the Revolving Fund. It was pointed out that the purchase of the software is a one time expense and not a recurring operating expense. Other one time expenses, including software for other town departments, are funded through the capital budget. Frustration with the CBC was expressed as P&R has faithfully maintained flat operating budgets over the past years, imposing no additional operating budget burden on the town. P&R has used the Revolving Fund to fill in the expense gaps experienced over the years, regardless of type of expense and despite the fact that the Revolving Fund is not intended to be used as such.

It was suggested that we create an easy-to-read and easy-to-understand summary by year of items funded out of the Revolving Fund. The transparency may help CBC, as well as the Warrant Committee ("WC"), better understand the Revolving Fund. This year for instance, our "extra" money has gone to improving the P&R program space within the Caryl Center; this benefits not only P&R program participants, but people who use the spaces for private functions or other non-P&R town events. It was also suggested that P&R start including in its operating budget some of the expenses traditionally covered in the Revolving Fund.

Computer Software comparison

Jess has concluded that the Vermont Systems software package we originally were considering offers more services than our small town needs. She has identified another vendor whose product is more appropriate for Dover. There are other towns in the area using this package, and all have had great experience. The cost for this package appears to be between \$4,000 and \$6,000 with an additional \$2,500 per year for maintenance, upgrades, and service.

Differential in prices for smaller P&R dump truck

Dave spoke with the state contractor that supplies the Ford vehicles we purchase. He reported that the difference in cost between the dump truck we are requesting in our capital budget (and is substantial enough to handle snow plowing for the highway department) and a smaller one that would suffice for P&R needs alone would be roughly \$12,000. It is ultimately less expensive for the town as a whole for P&R to purchase the more expensive truck that can be shared with the highway department than for P&R to spend less on a smaller truck and have the highway department either purchase their own truck or contract an additional truck for the plowing months.

FY 2011 Operating Budget

Field maintenance expense was discussed. Our expected cost will be \$41,000 as per the estimate provided by Allen Seed Company of Rhode Island, the contractor for these services. Putting the full amount in the operating budget would accurately reflect our cost of business and provide full transparency. This expense does not reflect an increase in service (per WC request for a level service budget), but it does reflect an increase in cost because new state mandates require us to use different organic fertilizing materials on all fields used by children. Last year we began using organic materials on the Chickering and Caryl fields, but the new rules are more restrictive with regard to which organic materials we are allowed to use. Ultimately, it was agreed that we would include \$25,000

in the operating budget and hope to be able to fund the \$16,000 balance out of the Revolving Fund. Last year we spent \$11, 062 on field maintenance out of the Revolving Fund.

Other costs in the P&R operating budget that need to be explored or at least explained to the WC are the utility expenses for the Whiting Road building and the salary expense of the P&R employee who transfers to the Highway Department for four months each winter. Regarding the Whiting Road building, Dover Automotive rents space in the building, and the rent goes to the town. The P&R budget carries the fuel oil and electricity expense (about \$1,000 each annually) and the fire alarm expense (\$300 annually) for the building. Either P&R should receive the rent proceeds from Dover Automotive, or the town should incur the operating expenses of the building. It does not make sense to have the revenue and expense associated with this asset on two different budgets. Regarding the P&R employee who moves to the Highway Department for four months each winter, P&R continues to carry the salary for this employee during these months even though we lose his services completely. For our next meeting, we will calculate the salary cost associated with this temporary but recurring and predictable transfer and discuss whether it should be transferred to the Highway Department budget. At a minimum, we need to make it clear to the WC that P&R has been carrying this cost on behalf of the Highway Department. Additionally, P&R pays the salary expense for P&R employees who help out with snow plowing required during any work day. The Highway Department incurs this expense if the P&R employees are needed to help plow outside of the regular work day.

Field Usage Fees

It was agreed that P&R would set field fees for the upcoming academic year at its January meetings. This is earlier than in past years. Doing so in January allows us to convey the information to the various sports clubs well in advance of their registration timetables. This gives the clubs more time to analyze all of their costs before they need to go public with their registration information.

Field fees for Spring 2010 are set at \$25 per player. Field fee revenue is divided equally between Dover and Sherborn. Dover's portion goes into the Revolving Fund to be used for field maintenance. It is unclear how Sherborn handles their portion, but it was suggested that since there is no recreation department in Sherborn that the funds go into the town's general fund and might not be used for field maintenance at all.

In determining the field fees for the 2010-2011 academic year, we will rely on historical field maintenance expense, rather than randomly adding \$5 or \$10 to the current \$25. Jess and Dave will present these data at January's meeting along with a suggested increase amount.

Standard Room Usage for Contract

Dave and Jess are working on a standard room use contract. We need common predictable policies and procedures. Once the commission has reviewed it, we will ask Town Counsel for input/approval.

Staffing needs in Recreation Office

Currently Dave and Jess are the only office employees. Many afternoons in the Fall, they both are out of the office at field hockey and football games. During the Winter, Jess is away on Wednesday afternoons with the elementary ski program. During the Summer, Jess is at the Chickering Summer camp every morning for five weeks. Dave helps chaperone the field trips and any special events at the camp. Discussion was held as to whether P&R needed to have the office staffed from 9 to 5 every day. Do people coming up to the office or calling on the phone expect to find someone there to help them? Are they upset when they find no one there or their phone call goes unanswered for a day? There have not been many complaints received, but it is possible there are silent disgruntled customers.

Instead of incurring the cost of an additional employee (with the inherent but invisible to the public extra costs associated with the benefit and medical expense for the employee), we could look into having a senior citizen help out; maybe as part of the tax abatement program the town operates. Also, perhaps an intern through a college's work study program would be less expensive (they do need to be paid). It was agreed that we would postpone exploring this issue further until next year.

Sink to be completed in Library

As part of the improvements made to the old library room in the Caryl Center, the countertop and sink set up at the entrance to the large room has been replaced by just a countertop. It was agreed that removing the plumbing from the structure was an unnecessary expense and that a countertop area would be helpful for people to have access to. The countertop was donated by the NuTop Corporation and has been installed.

Purchase of seasonal lights

Dave has replaced the seasonal lights used to decorate the large evergreen tree to the south and west of town hall. The old light strings were beginning to fray and were dangerous. He was able to purchase LCD lights which will save the town 8/9th of the electricity cost of the former light strings.

Propose Football letter to have parents sign before season begins next fall season

George Licht and Dave continue to work on the letter for next year's 7th and 8th grade football parents. The commission will review the letter before it is mailed.

Memorial Day Rental – Needham Soccer Club

Rich reported on his follow up conversation with the Needham Soccer Club ("NSC") concerning their use of our fields for their Memorial Day Soccer Tournament. NSC wants to use the two 11v11 fields at Chickering and the one 8v8 field at Caryl and are willing to pay \$400 to \$450 a field for two or three days. It was calculated that in order to cover our field repair and relining expenses, we need to ask for \$500 to \$550. Rich will go back to NSC with this request.

As part of the agreement, Dover would want control of weather cancellation and the ability to run a concession stand with 100% of the proceeds going to us. P&R could staff the concession stand with high school volunteers. Scott reported that, as a benchmark, the DSBoosters raises \$1000 a night when they sell concessions at the evening high school sporting events.

Discovery Club registration fees

Nancy and Jess will meet after the meeting to calculate the appropriate break even registration fees to be assessed the Discovery Club.

Holiday Tree Lighting

December 9th at 7:00pm

Misc.

No other items to discuss at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10am

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Simms, P&R Commission