

**Merrimack Parks and Recreation Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, January 17, 2024**  
**Town Hall, Memorial Conference Room**  
**7:00pm**

**Attendees:** Matthew Casparius, Tracy McGraw, Maureen Hall, Heather Fairbanks, Josh Toms, Phil Przybyszewski, Matthew Brown

**Parks and Recreation Staff:** Matt Casparius, Director

**Absent:** none

**Excused:** Laura Jaynes, Julie Poole, Michelle Creswell, Christine Lavoie, Naomi Halter, Mackenzie Murphy, Rick Greenier,

**Public:** Mrs. Brown

**Start time:** 7:pm

**Open Meeting/Introductions**

**Approval of minutes from November 15, 2023**

- We did not have a quorum. Vote on minutes from 11/15/23 meeting saved for next meeting in February.

**Old Business:**

- Update from Merrimack Dog Park - Tracy McGraw
  - Dog Park Fund Balance – \$497.34
  - Reminder to pet owners to clean up dog's waste
  - Donations for baggies for dog waste and garbage are always welcome
  - A recommendation was made that small dogs under 30 lbs stay on small dog side unless they are comfortable with larger dogs; owners should consider the personalities of the larger dogs before bringing the smaller dogs into the large dog area

**Director's Report:** Matt Casparius

- Budget Update
  - Budget – 2 sections –
    - tax payer – utility, costs that we have no control over
      - past year – had 2 park attendants at beach; must be able to ask all people if they are residents – not just some; trying to bring back weekend life guard coverage; would still have 1 attendant at beach and 1 in upper parking lot, plus life guard;
      - hoping to have more lifeguards this coming summer – 3 lifeguards, but removing 1 park attendant
      - maintenance person – hired 2 weeks ago; the hours for the position were scaled back to 15 hours, and adding in seasonal park maintainer

- had to bring in staff for 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade because short of volunteers
  - recreational programs (0113874) – special events in town – summer concerts, Halloween
  - reallocating movie night money to summer concerts to bring in better quality music – trying for 250-300 attendees per night
  - LEFT SIDE of beach – tree roots; state will not allow us to remove because the roots are stabilizing the banks; looking to duplicate what was done on right on the left, with same structure; build in ADA access where current canoe rack is; move canoe rack;
  - Challenge – permit good for 5 years, expires March 2025; if not funded this year, lose permit, and have to start over
  - Permit - \$5,000, DPW has to redo all paperwork, \$100,000 project, plus the permit; pushing for it this year because out of time; PERMIT – updated information indicates that there will be an extra year “grace period” to present for the budget for the ADA work at the beach without having to reapply (learned at 1/18/24 Town Council Meeting)
  - Revolving fund – funded by camp; non-tax payer funds; gives us own account to use, with no exchange from tax payer funds; allows us to grow and expand
    - When Matt first arrived, running 20 programs; now at 300+ programs
    - Salary allocation – HR, payroll, purchasing - \$60,000 – this is above money needed to run the rest of camp; money will be given back to taxpayers; broke down 320 programs, broken down into categories, determined percentage of impact on budget;
    - Overall budget - \$687,637, allocation \$60,020 based upon breakdowns
  - Presentation to the Town Council on 01.18.24
- Summer Camp
  - Registration – opened 1/8/24; 892 registrations on 1<sup>st</sup> day; 10% higher than last year; now 68% full for summer; 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grades have sold out, looking to expand;
  - Teen camp – 65% full
  - Theatre – 1/3 full
  - Hoping for 1380 registrations
  - Cancellation process/refund amounts
    - \$50 deposit per week – increased from last year
    - Due 45 days in advance instead of 10 days as in previous years; have to cancel 35 days in advance instead of 10 days as in previous years
  - Staffing Needs – enrollment numbers are based upon what we get for staff; processing hires already; camp cook retired – looking for school/cafeteria cook; lifeguards, camp counselors, paraprofessionals, summer maintenance, archery; can hire as young as 16yo
    - Used to get done by April; last couple of years, getting done by early June;
- Upcoming Special Events

- Winter Carnival on Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 – 3:00pm - Wassermann – free games, crafts, outdoors, 22 groups signed up right now;
- Miscellaneous Updates – ice skating rink still closed; too warm; considering opening this coming weekend;
- Pathway to wild cat falls – working through winter;
- Theatre project – Nora Campbell – project approved by Town Council – Lion’s Club gave donation to help with project

#### **Organization Reports:**

- MYA - Rick Greenier (not present, but provided information through Matt Casparius) - basketball, wrestling in session; wrestling on Sunday at high school; registration for soccer 2/1 – 3/31; registration for softball begins today; obtained sufficient signatures for Greenfield park use/maintenance to go to warrant article, which will be a separate item in the budget with an impact of \$0.05 on tax rate approx.; possibly conduct education with Merrimack TV to explain necessity for the field in preparation for Warrant Article Vote; thank Getinge and Elbit for donating their fields for MYA use, and DPW for helping to maintain the fields for use
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- Senior Citizens Club - Maureen Hall - no meeting in 4 weeks because of holidays, snow day, and MLK holiday; next Monday voting on officers;
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- School Board – Naomi Halter – NOT PRESENT
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- Student Representative – Matthew Brown – last Saturday chamber music band went to Allstate; spring musical will be Mama Mia; sports teams are active
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- Town Council – Mackenzie Murphy – NOT PRESENT
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**Comments from the Public: NONE**

**Comments from the Committee: NONE**

#### **Future Meeting Dates**

- Wednesday, February 21, 2024
- Wednesday, March 20, 2024

#### **Adjourn at 7:45pm**

- Josh made the motion to adjourn the meeting
- Phil seconded the motion
- 6-0 motion passed

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracy McGraw, Chair