

BELCHERTOWN RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 17, 2016

Present: Chris Daley, Nancy Kwiatkowski, Wilbur Quirk, Rob Opalenik, and Linda Racicot

Absent: Bill Vosburgh, Nick O'Connor, Tilo Schiffer

Meeting was called to order by Nancy at 6:17 p.m.

REVIEW MINUTES

Minutes from the January 13 meeting could not be accepted due to Nancy not being present at the last meeting and could not vote.

>Wilbur stated the CPC meeting was moved to 7:00 p.m. so he apologized in advance if he needs to leave early.

OLD BUSINESS

>Chris stated the committee met at the Patrick Center to assess the building. He stated the paint was peeling and cooper piping was striped but the building had been winterized. He said Steve Williams and Max Bock thought the building looked good. The first floor could be used for town offices, which includes the public; however an elevator would need to be installed costing 250K. The building has come off the auction block and the towns would like to put a proposal together for the land.

>Chris stated he thinks Nick would like to consider a multi sport complex for that land which would cost approximately 5.5 million.

>Rob said with the housing near by and the land not level, it may not be the best location.

>Chris asked if anyone has suggested constructing a pavilion.

>Robs opinion is that it would not easily pass and would require a lot of fundraising. With the basketball court being reconditioned, he would like to see the focus on the possible development of a sporting area at that condemned tennis courts location.

>Chris said additional parking or another school may be suggested but at this time, the town wants the land and he believes something may be said at the town meeting.

>Nancy asked what the acreage was.

>Chris said 5.3 acres

>Rob asked if the committee members received an email with the Recreation survey results.

>Everyone responded yes

>Rob stated after reviewing the survey he was very pleased with the over all results. In his opinion, the community is asking for additional adult programs and at a more convenient time. He stated the Rec Dept can ask what the public considers a more convenient time in there weekly newsletter. Rob stated it's obvious to him that the public would like an on-line registration option which the Rec Dept. looked into years ago but was not cost affective. Within recent years the town now offers the option of payment on line for dog licenses and tax payments however each department is set up with a different system. John is in the process of gathering information from the town depts..

>Nancy said the added cost depends on the bank used and asked what the average percentage is right now.

>Rob stated 3.8 percent.

>Nancy stated she felt the survey was excellent and Donna did an outstanding job.

>Wilbur agreed and commented there was a lot of information to absorb.

>Chris stated there is so much offered in Belchertown between the Recreation dept., the Senior Center and the Library.

>Rob added there were comments recommending the YMCA consider offering programs in Belchertown and stated they rented a space in town a few years ago and it wasn't cost affective for them.

>Nancy stated there were a few comments regarding volleyball.

- >Linda said she has been trying to promote volleyball for younger age groups for several years. She would like to see volleyball develop and become a feeder program for the high school however either the volleyball clinics offered in the past were cancelled due to lack of participants or were very successful however the instructors were not able to continue offering the program.
- >Rob explained sometimes the problem is the date and/or time the program is offered but explained the date and time is at the convenience of the instructor.
- >Chris asked what Amherst Leisure Services was.
- >Rob stated it is a contracted Recreation Dept. however prices are generally higher.
- >Nancy asked if we offer discounts.
- >Rob said if anyone registering claims financial hardship, he will meet with them and make a decision on an individual basis.
- >Wilbur suggested a sub committee be formed to review the survey and how this will help to address a five year plan for the Rec. Dept. Wilbur also mentioned some of the negative comments were interesting.
- >Nancy stated when people don't have to attach their name to a comment they tend to be bolder with statements.
- >Wilbur said reviewing the numbers and percentages, he concluded there were a lot of swimmers who participated in the survey.
- >Rob stated he thought the numbers gave him the information he was looking for but didn't find the graphs necessary.
- >Most members agreed.
- >Rob said he was surprised to see there was more of an interest in a splash park rather than the development of Foley field. He also said there were several comments regarding horse related topics.
- >Nancy said she would send a thank you letter to Donna from the committee for her time and effort.
- >Wilbur suggested that each committee member summarize what they liked about the results and what they didn't like about the result to discuss at the next meeting.
- >Everyone agreed to come to the next meeting prepared with their comments.

NEW BUSINESS

- >Rob handed out a copy of the FY2017 Budget at a level Service report to each committee member for review.
- >Rob said to note the FY2016-317K to FY2017-321K. This increase was due to the pool utility cost.
- >Nancy asked how many years have we had a level budget.
- >Rob stated 4 years.

Chris motioned to accept the FY2017 Budget; *Wilbur seconded motion, passed 3-0-0.*
Committee members signed

- >Rob stated Selectmen Nick O'Connor put in a warrant for the town meeting, article 15, to see if the Town will vote to appropriate from free cash in the treasury a sum of money to be used toward the design and construction of soccer fields and/or hiking trails at Foley Field and all costs incidental and related thereto.
- >Nancy asked what specifically is the money being used for?
- >Rob said he was unaware of the warrant until a week before the town meeting so he couldn't answer that.
- >Wilbur stated there will be many people in the community that will want to talk about a hiking trail.
- >Nancy stated there are several areas designated for Recreation land and would like to look at the site plan for Piper Farm. She asked, if the warrant passes, what happens next.
- Rob said if the vote passes, the money is deposited in the Recreation Dept. account and must be spent or obligated by June 30, 2016.

>Rob handed each committee member a copy of the flyer Belchertown Beyond stating several organizations are involved with gathering information and would like the communities input to help plan Belchertown's future. If you have any concerns or comments Rob encouraged the committee to attend on February 22 & 24.

- >Nancy stated it looked very interesting and asked if this was with reference to Route 202.
- >Rob said yes. There are currently several groups working on similar projects. Rob thinks Nick would like to see this project organized under one umbrella.
- >Rob stated the Annual Town meeting is May 9 and all warrants need to be submitted by March 30.

DIRECTORS REPORT

>Linda stated a spring flyer would be distributed to the schools the end of February. She said Belchertown will be hosting a 3/4 grade jamboree for the end of the basketball season on March 5/6 while the 5-8 graders will be participating in play-offs. All towns involved will be splitting the cost of the jamboree unfortunately we will be unable to provide a concession stand to help cover a portion of the cost. It's Linda's recommendation to consider a "Friends of the Rec" to help fundraise and become involved with events.

Next meeting is Wednesday, March 9, 2016 at 6:15 p.m. in the Recreation Conference Room.
Chris made a motion to adjourn. *Wilbur seconded motion, passed 3-0-0.*

Meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.