



# LEOMINSTER RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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Judith Sumner  
Director of Recreation

## LEOMINSTER RECREATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 4:37p.m.
2. **COMMISSION ATTENDANCE ROLL CALL:** Maureen Donatelli, Chairperson; Jeff O'Neill, Vice Chairman; Tom Bissonnette, Doug Cormier; Theresa McEwen; Judith Sumner, Director of Recreation; Lisa Comeau, Assistant Director; David LaLiberty, guest.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETINGS:** Motion to approve the minutes made by T. McEwen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Cormier. All in favor.
4. **PROGRAM and STAFF UPDATES**
  - a) **Office Staff** – right now Deborah Mathieu is just working on Thursdays and Emilyne Reardon was cut back and not working until March 17<sup>th</sup>. We need to stay within the 1,039 hours per calendar year for both, so it is better to reduce hours now during the slower season. Job postings went out for summer jobs. We don't know what we are going to have for school facilities yet for the summer.
  - b) **Maintenance Staff** – We were able to keep Darryn Hume on during the winter months because he was paid out of the Youth Works program this past summer, so we still had money in the budget. He is working under a winter job description, so there is someone here to help DJ. Bill said he hasn't been feeling that well and the cold is getting to him and only works a couple hours a day to do the trash at the parks.
  - c) **Program update**
    - 1) **Basketball** – Lindsey English and Daniel Ducksworth have been handling all the basketball. It has been working out great. She is very efficient and has good communication skills. L. Comeau has been working closely with her since she became Assistant Director and is now handling programs since we do not have a Program Coordinator any longer. We had a couple issues with COVID – we had to cancel games last Saturday for grades 1-2 because of a few positive cases. We are making sure we have plenty of backup coaches. This year we only had 34 kids signed up for the high school league, we couldn't even get 60. Masks must be worn in the gym, including players. We need to find out who is allowed in the gym for spectators for the high school league. J. O'Neill says the MIAA rule right now on spectators for high school basketball games is only parents, grandparents and immediate family members can attend the games. The Board of Health Director recommends we follow the MIAA COVID rules. Games start Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>. We have contact tracing individuals at the door to all the gyms collecting contact tracing forms for everyone that enters.
    - 2) **School Vacation Programs** – the Mayor contacted J. Sumner and wanted to see more indoor school vacation programs. J. Sumner found a few companies that offered S.T.E.A.M. and other programs. Deborah Mathieu, with the help from L. Comeau, gathered information on different programs.
      - a) **Snapology** – We are going to try a new company called Snapology to offer a couple S.T.E.A.M. programs for us in our program building. We are going to try them in the summer as well. Copy of flyer given to Commission.
      - b) **Winter Event** – Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> at Barrett Park from 12noon – 2pm. There will be ice rescue, a story walk, hiking, bon fire, smores, hot chocolate and more. Copy of flyer given to Commission.
      - a) **Programs in City Hall Auditorium – February School Vacation:** Free Family Game Time on Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> from 12noon-3pm. We have a lot of games for a variety of ages. Copy of flyer given to Commission. We are going to hire a magician as well and thinking about hiring someone to do hula hoops. The library has a magic show and is doing hula hoops that week as well. Or we have someone that does a magic show which includes magic lessons for kids ages 7-12. It's a little different than just hiring someone to do a magic show. T. McEwen recommended Animal Adventures. We have had them come to our summer programs many times. The kids love them. Right now, we only have 3 time slots at City Hall. We will have to figure out the schedule and who to hire, trying to do something a little different than the library

is doing. Also, another suggestion from L. Comeau was to purchase some science kits that families could come and pick up and put together at home; either free or charge \$5-\$10. We have found kits that are \$12-\$15. It was very popular last year when we handed out free gingerbread kits.

- 3) **Summer Program Fee** – We recommend going up \$10 and the Commission agrees. We are still offering them for a cost way under many other summer programs in the area. It was discussed possibly going up on pool fees and swim lessons. L. Comeau thinks that we shouldn't go up on pool fees this year because we will be getting a new pool manager and we just went up last year. T. McEwen agreed and made a motion to go up \$10 on summer program fees with no increase on pool fees, 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Cormier.
5. **MAINTENANCE REPORT- written** – DJ is a good worker and Darryn is very helpful at cleaning up after the storms here at Barrett, plowing the parking lot, keeping walks clean, helping take care of the pond for skating etc.
6. **PROJECTS/GRANTS- UPDATES**
  - a) **Frankie Fortuna Skate Park & Pump Track – Estimated Expenses handed out.** At the end of the fiscal year, we had \$14,000 left in our Expense Account and wanted to transfer it over to our Capital Account to be used for the skatepark project and it went before the City Council and was approved. And then we also had \$80,000 left over in our Salary Account that they approved to transfer to our Capital Account for this project. Cost is up higher now than in the original budget when we applied for the grant because the cost of construction went from \$40/sq. ft. and now it is up to \$60/sq. ft. The original grant budget for adding a few more parking spaces to the existing parking lot was \$10,000, but now we can't back into the road out of the existing parking area. Will need to redesign the parking area and move it up higher so cars can turn around and not back out. McCarty Engineering did an estimate for the parking lot and drainage so it will be about \$146,000. Applied for \$48,000 from CDBG for the 3 new parking spaces, one being handicapped accessible. CDBG money not available until July 1<sup>st</sup> and the state says we need to have the project, including the parking lot, done by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Working on timing and trying to get the skatepark out to bid. Greg has been very busy with many other projects but hopefully it can go out to bid soon in order to meet our deadline. Also, we need to have legal counsel write up the transfer of the land next to the parking lot that the school department voted to turn over to the City. Then it needs to be voted on by the City Council to be turned over to the Recreation Department. We are short \$152,500 of which if we can get \$48,000 from CDBG then we would only be short \$104,500. Wendy Wiiks said that the American Rescue Plan Funds would help pay for the balance but keep the cost down as much as possible.
  - b) **Engineering and permitting for Colburn Pond Dam** – Greg just let J. Sumner know that she can hire the same company, GZA, that has been doing all our dam inspections and who assisted with writing the grant. They just need to send us the scope of work for the project so we can submit a purchase requisition to Greg in Purchasing to obtain a PO. GZA said we are not ready this grant round to apply for the grant to repair the dam because we do not have the engineered plans yet. This may be put off another year. All the engineered plans and permitting for this grant must be complete by June 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - c) **Barrett Park Improvements -Phase II** – The State split that grant up into two years. The design and permitting will take place this fiscal year FY22 done by June 1<sup>st</sup> and then in FY 23 will be the construction phase. Andrew Leonard will be doing all the plans to get ready to go out to bid and award the bid with construction to begin July 1<sup>st</sup>. Lisa and Judy will be working on a playground design.
  - d) **Trail Mapping updated-Montachusett Regional Planning Commission** – The Trail Stewards are working on finishing up the trails on Hill St. and the mountain bikers wanted to connect Leominster State Forest trails with some of our trails on Wachusett Street and some other connections. So, we are not ready to get all our trails mapped out yet. There is a Trail Stewards zoom meeting tonight at 6:30p.m.
  - e) **Hill Street Trail, parking lot and kiosk** – L. Comeau has been working closely with Dick O'Brien on this grant. DPW was very helpful with digging out the parking lot and will be bring in grindings in the spring. L. Comeau has also been working with Greg to get prevailing wage rates and a PO for chipping the brush that was cleared. We just got the PO from Greg for a company we are hiring to do the chipping. This grant should be finished this spring.
7. **OLD BUSINESS**
  - a) **Pool MOU** – We must update the MOU. Paul Faucher went over it and made his recommendations. There are some things in there that the State was taking care of in the past and now we would be, like paying RH White to open and close the pool, not sure if we want to do that. Copy of Ray's recommendations given to the Commission. J. Sumner will present all the information to the Mayor.

Connie Breed did a seasonal comparison from the last couple seasons. We are in the negative every year. Payroll is listed on the comparison and should be counted, however; we get a separate salary account for the pool that helps. Technically if you are running a business you are supposed to count all income and expenses. Technically the payroll is more than what is listed because Youth Works paid a good portion of the payroll in 2021. Plus, some of the water bills were taken out of the expense account and not out of the pool account. We did get some money in our budget for the water bill. J. Sumner only wants to do the MOU for 1 year, that way the new Director can renew the MOU.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Pickleball Requests – David LaLiberty:** He is not here in an official capacity. J. Sumner started with mentioning the approval by the Commission to chain and lock the courts during the winter, so no one goes in there and shovels the snow off the court, damaging the surfacing and so that no one gets hurt on ice etc. Snow is a good insulator on the courts helping to keep cracks from forming and opening. Pickleball said they would monitor to make sure no one would shovel off the courts if we don't chain it. Anyone that has a key they would have sign an agreement that they would be responsible to make sure that snow is not cleared off the courts and that you are playing at your own risk. If they do not abide by the rules, they will get their key taken away from them. They want to be able to bring their portable nets in if there is a nice day after we take down the nets for the season. The nets must come down for the season because the snow pulls down on them and lifts the concrete footing. The posts also get taken out and the holes plugged because of frost heaving and cracking around them. David understands that we should lock them at some point because there is going to be that time of the year to play outside in that type of weather would be ridiculous. But once we chain them it is something to deal with to say when are you going to take them off in the spring? What's the good time to chain them? His proposal is to chain them when Wachusett Mountain opens, meaning it is cold enough for them to make snow, and then when day light savings time changes over in the spring, unchain the courts. Daylight savings time this year is March 13<sup>th</sup>. That is still early and is still winter. The mountain usually closes the first week of April. T. McEwen suggested if we are going with the Mountain opening date then we should stick with their closing date. The Mountain usually opens around November 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> and closes usually around the first week of April. Another part of his proposal said this; the rule would be, once the chain is off, any time that there is snow on the court you do not play. Pickleball players have squeegees that take the water off the courts after it rains and towel dries the courts, they are very cautious. J. Sumner said the High School tennis team usually starts their games in April and they use all six tennis courts. And they ask that we open the courts in March but obviously it is pending weather. If there is snow on them, we do not open them. We usually open the courts around April 1<sup>st</sup> and we have opened them earlier in March, but it is pending there is no snow or ice on the courts, no storms in the immediate forecast or below freezing temperatures. Plus, we must have time and the staff in maintenance to get those courts cleaned off from any debris or leaves before the nets can go up. Last time they were here, the Commission gave them use of chalking the first two tennis courts. Instead of chalking it for 1 pickleball court, they are being chalked for two pickleball courts on each using their portable nets instead of the tennis net that is there. J. Sumner stated that we have not gone through a season yet, where the High School used the courts and they had requested the use of all 6 courts. So, we should not mark those up if it will create any issues with the LHS tennis team. That's the only issue that might be a problem. We will have to contact the tennis coach and find out. David LaLiberty understands if that is a problem then they wouldn't chalk the tennis courts during the LHS tennis season, that would be the rule. We need dry weather to take the nets down, they must be dry when put away for the season. J. Sumner's recommendation is taking the nets down week of November 1st, as soon as the nets are dry (pending rain etc. in the forecast), then pickleball can use their portable nets until the first snowstorm, when we chain the gates for the season. And in the spring, even though the snow is off, we must be careful there is no ice on the courts before we unchain them. The courts will be unchained pending weather and can be played on with portable nets at their own risk until we put the nets up. And in November we will take the nets down in November, making sure they are dry, and pickleball can use portable nets until the courts are locked for the season which is pending weather. It is up to the discretion of the Recreation Director and maintenance to determine when the courts are opened. J. O'Neill made a motion to lock the courts the middle of November pending weather; and unlock the courts April 1<sup>st</sup> or earlier pending weather, 2<sup>nd</sup> by T. McEwen. All in favor.
- b) **Annual Report** – Gave three years of annual reports to the Commission. FY'19, FY'20 and FY'21.
- c) **American Rescue Plan Program Funds** – Gave the list to the Commission of all our Capital Improvement requests that were going to be submitted under the American Rescue Plan. We are trying to add the Lassie League parking lot to the list. T. McEwen went to the last Lassie League board

meeting and suggested that they do a fund raiser to help raise some money toward the parking lot.

**9. FACILITY REQUESTS** – Project Apples is using the program building the first Wednesday of the month for their program.

**10. OTHER**

- a) Judy is retiring August 1,2022 but has not written her official letter of retirement.
- b) Sonny called today and he is stepping down from the Commission. He loved everyone and wanted to thank everyone. He appreciates everything everyone has done on the Commission, and he will miss everyone. Let him know if there is anything he can do to help, but he is just not feeling well enough to be coming to the meetings. He said it was time to step down. He doesn't want us to send him any more emails or information on Commission meetings. We should have a plaque made and send a card. We need to think of someone to replace him. J. Sumner would like to have a program person on the Commission.
- c) North Leominster Little League will be merging their majors little league with American Little League and the t-ball and minors will remain separate for this year and then next year will be a full merge. Two separate boards for this year.

**11. MEETINGS and EVENTS**

- a) **Next Regular Commission meeting will be held Tuesday, February 15, at 4:30 pm. with the License Agreement Meeting with all new league presidents to follow at 5:30 p.m.**

**12. ADJOURN** – 6:04 p.m. motion to adjourn made by J. O'Neill, 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Cormier.