

Burlington Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2021

Commissioners in Attendance:

Chairman David Norden, Commissioner Paul Raymond, Commissioner Tom Murphy, Vice Chairman Steve Nelson, Commissioner Kevin Sullivan

Staff in Attendance:

Director of Parks & Recreation Brendan Egan, Program Coordinator Kelly Lehman, Acting Superintendent of Park Maintenance Bill Baker

Chairman Norden called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Chairman Norden announced the virtual meeting reminder pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting law imposing strict limitations of the number of people who may gather in one place. This meeting of the Recreation Commission is being held via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. Voting will be done by a roll call vote.

FY22 Budget

Presented by Director Egan

Director Egan announced that we have received the guidelines and been asked to prepare a level funded budget, as well as a back-up budget with a 5% decrease. The level funded budget number will level fund the expense accounts and take into consideration contractual obligations (union contracts, pay increases, etc.). The level funding number is less than what we went into last fiscal year with because we took a reduction of \$8,000 for Celebrate Burlington. So, a level funded budget will be calculated from after last September's Town Meeting.

Director Egan will plan to schedule a meeting to approve the budget on or before February 10th.

Capital Items

Capital items will be based on need and in priority order for services for the department. Based on the 10-year plan, we have 4 items with 2 postponed from last year.

1. **Accessible Van:** Historically, we have rented a van or borrowed the Burlington Youth and Family Services (BYFS) vehicle for the Therapeutic Recreation (TR) programs. Director Egan stated there would be a cost savings over time. The Parks & Recreation Department has been renting vans for about \$3,700 a year for the summer programs; and spending just under \$10,000 during the year for transportation for the Out and About and Spectacular Saturday programs. That totals about \$13,000 a year in rentals.

The price of an accessible van is about \$55,000 which would pay for itself over 5 years. The van could be used for TR programs and to help provide transportation for other programs. Last year we spoke to Herb Chambers about sponsorship, donating, or being involved in the purchase of a van before the Covid pandemic and turn in the economy.

Discussion:

Commissioner Sullivan asked Egan if he was able to get any more information about a state grant that the Council on Aging had received for their van. Director Egan was unable to get any information on it after multiple attempts. Commissioner Sullivan also asked Director Egan if he felt that the entirety of the \$10,000 for bus transportation would be able to be reduced with this new van. Director Egan believes that \$8,000 to \$9,000 would be able to be saved with the addition of the new van. Lastly, Commissioner Sullivan asked Director Egan about the relevance of a new van at this time when in-person activities are not able to be done. Director Egan agreed that it needs to be prioritized.

Chairman Norden asked how many participants normally attend the field trips; inquiring about how many buses need to be rented. Program Coordinator Lehman stated that 14-20 participants usually attend a Friday night outing and that they will continue to use the Burlington Youth and Family Services van in addition to the new one. Program Coordinator Lehman stated that there will be a need to have a wheelchair accessible van for participants who use a chair to be able to attend programs. The cost increases dramatically for vehicles that are wheelchair accessible because they are so limited.

2. **Sunshade at Wildwood Park:** This is a proposal for a 25ft x 50ft extended hip shade structure with six posts, and 14 feet at its highest. The shade would cover the larger play structure at Wildwood. Installation includes six steel reinforced foundations to set the posts. The estimated quoted price for the actual shade structure for just under \$12,000 will remain from last year. We would purchase the shade structure from a state contract, but we will need to go out for bid for installation quotes, which in the past were about \$25,000. The Commission is asking for \$40,000 for the warrant article to account for any changes or fluctuations.

Discussion:

Vice Chairman Nelson asked about the location and if the 2nd play structure would also be covered. Director Egan explained that we can get a second piece that adds on to one of the support poles. This extension would not require a warrant because it is less than \$10,000. Commissioner Sullivan asked if we could do the installation. Acting Parks Superintendent Baker agreed to look further at the installation specifications to determine if it is something we could install. Vice Chairman Nelson suggested using an outside contractor for the installation to cover the town to collect on a breach of warranty claim. Acting Parks Superintendent Baker will do the research and the Commission will discuss installation options at the next meeting.

3. **Overseeder:** Director Egan explained that an overseeder creates slits in the turf and drops seed from above a preset rate. The s current overseeder is about 30 years old, does not work properly and the company is no longer in business to help repair it. A new seeder is about \$17,000 and could save the staff a day to a day in a half seeding the town.

Discussion: The Commissioners agreed that they support this warrant article to maintain the work and maintenance of the fields.

4. **Aerator:** Director Egan explained the aeration process of getting air, water and nutrients into the root system to promote growth and to get the roots deeper into the ground. The walk behind aerator was approved last year in the FY21 budget. Director Egan held off purchasing the aerator until the maintenance facility was completed. In the meantime, Director Egan conducted more research, spoke to the vendor, and consulted with Tom Irwin. Director Egan stated that the cost difference between the walk behind and tractor mounted aerator is about \$4k. He suggested the Commission use the FY21 warrant article, which was for the walk behind

version, and purchase the tractor mounted unit. He feels we would be able to absorb the \$4k in the operating budget. He suggested that if we order it now, it would be available to use by June.

Discussion: Commissioner Murphy suggested checking with the Administration on the potential to purchase a different model aerator. Commissioner Sullivan mentioned that the unit looks similar to one we already own. Director Egan stated the model he is referencing is a deep tine aerator and the current request is for a core aerator and explained the difference between the two.

Chairman Norden suggested placing the warrant articles in the following priority order:

1. Overseeder
2. Aerator
3. Shade structure
4. Accessible van

Commissioner Murphy made a statement to clarify that the aerator request would now be \$4,000 which is the difference in cost between the models.

Director Egan suggested the Commission discuss the Capital Budget and take a final vote on the warrant articles at the next meeting. In the meantime, Director Egan will continue to research applying for a grant for the accessible van; and research the ability to use last year's warrant article on the aerator.

The next Recreation Commission meeting will be scheduled for 3:00 pm on Feb 10th

Chairman Norden asked for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Murphy made the motion; seconded by Commissioner Sullivan.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Commissioner Sullivan - aye
Vice Chairman Nelson - aye
Commissioner Murphy - aye
Commissioner Raymond - aye
Chairman Norden - aye

VOTE: 5-0-0

Chairman Norden adjourned the WebEx meeting at 4:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terese Castellano