East Haddam Recreation Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2025

Attending: B. Free; T. Goodie; C. King; B. Thiele; F. Tremblay
Absent: C. Grillo; P. Laffan; M. Roberts; J. Kehlenbach
Guests: L. Conroy

1. **Call to Order** – Mr. Tremblay called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

   The agenda reflected the standard order of business; therefore, its approval was waived. Mr. Tremblay stated he would like to amend the agenda to include approval of the October 21, 2024 meeting minutes.

3. **Approval of Minutes – December 16, 2024 and October 21, 2024**

   MOTION MADE BY MS. FREE, SECONDED BY MR. GOODIE, TO APPROVE AS WRITTEN, THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 16, 2024. UNANIMOUS AYE.

   MOTION MADE BY MR. TREMBLAY, SECONDED BY MS. KING, TO APPROVE AS WRITTEN, THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 2024. UNANIMOUS AYE.

4. **Committee Reports** – Director Conroy provided the following committee reports:

   - Music on the River – All of the bands have been selected and she will send out the signed contracts this week. The concerts will be held between July 14th and August 18th and 5 of 6 locations for rain-dates have been arranged.

   - Disc Golf – Additional holes at the disc golf course should be completed this spring. A tournament is scheduled for May 24th and no baseball or soccer will be scheduled at Nicols Field on that day to accommodate parking for the event.

   Ms. Conroy responded to several questions from the Board.

5. **Director's Report** – Ms. Conroy provided the following reports:

   A. Winter Review

      - Basketball went very well and the student staff was great. There were two away games which were good experiences for the players. Ms. Conroy reviewed the registration stats for each age group and noted that she plans to make some tweaks to the gym schedule next year.

- Late sign-ups for the Abrakadoodle Art and the Mad Science classes always pose scheduling challenges, but they both worked out well this season.

- Pickleball had eight 2-hour sessions scheduled per week and league games will be scheduled for Sundays starting in April. Pickleball lessons and clinics are going well.

- Boot Camp and Indoor Soccer registrations are solid; indoor soccer court time was increased from 1.5 to 2 hours.

- Registrations for 18+ basketball are down a bit; however, 30+ basketball is doing well and registrations are growing. Volleyball registrations remain steady.

- Open gym for home schoolers is going well with an average of 18 students/parents attending. The program is being moved to the afternoon which fits everyone's schedules better.

- The first Puzzle Palooza was a big success. The next event is scheduled for April 10th and there are already two teams wait-listed.

Ms. Conroy stated that she held open gym sessions in February whenever the gym was not booked and provided she was in the building. She noted that participants had to sign a waiver to use the gym. There was a brief discussion about the impact of the winter weather on the Rec programs.

B. Spring Preview

- The outdoor Pickleball courts will open April 1st.

- Ms. Conroy reviewed the registration status for the K-1st grade and 2nd-3rd grade indoor soccer program which begins March 19th. Outdoor Youth Soccer is scheduled for April 26th through June 7th.

- The Food Explorers program was shifted from being offered to 4th graders to the Elementary School students because the feedback Ms. Conroy had received was that the program is too basic for 4th graders.

- A Lego program is scheduled for March 20th and a Safe Boating Course will be offered on April 29th and 30th.

In response to information provided by Mr. Goodie, Ms. Conroy stated she would look into the state's CARE learn-to-fish program and its YOUth Fishing Passport.

Ms. Conroy reported that the Rec Department will begin accepting registrations for summer camp on April 1st. She stated that all of the field trips have been arranged and she will be releasing details in mid-March. She reviewed the basic camp schedule and

noted that there is a good solid staff returning this summer. She also reviewed the following summer programs:

- The Noises Sports Academy is scheduled for the first two weeks after school lets out. Soccer, softball, baseball, basketball, cross country, cheer, and volleyball programs are planned sessions. Ms. Conroy noted that snow days could have an impact on when the summer programs begin.

- Other summer programs she is looking into include: Food Explorers, Skyhawks tennis, pickleball, and flag rugby.

- Two 3-week basketball clinic sessions are planned and she just began conversations with someone who offers clinics run by UConn basketball coaches for other coaches to attend.

Ms. Conroy reported that the CT legislature has proposed HB 06952 which requires, among other things, that the staff of municipality run camps provide background checks using the fingerprint method which is much more expensive and time-consuming than the background checks the Rec Department currently runs; and age restricted staffing levels which would discourage hiring 16 and 17 year olds as camp counselors. Ms. Conroy stated that the language of the proposed legislation is directed toward municipalities and, if passed, would have a significant negative impact on the Town's summer camp program.

C. Budget Update

Ms. Conroy called the Board's attention to the draft narrative she had prepared for the Recreation Commission's FY2025-2026 budget and reviewed the metrics the department had achieved in FY24-25. She stated that, as of June 30th, the Commission's Special Revenue fund had a balance of $129,578.00.

Ms. Conroy reviewed the proposed FY2025-2026 Rec Commission budget and noted that, other than a $9.00 increase in the Dues & Fees line, the only other increase was a 6.5% increase to the Salaries & Wages line. She stated that she had submitted requests for three Capital projects; however, her priority was the Beach Volleyball Court Capital request.

Ms. Conroy stated that she plans to use any end-of-year funds remaining in their Building Maintenance budget to purchase new pads for the gymnasium. She noted that, if necessary, she will use funds from the Commission's Special Revenue account to supplement the cost of the mats.

6. **Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business discussed at the meeting.

7. **New Business**

There was no new business discussed at the meeting.

8. **Adjournment**

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, MR. GOOIE MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. TREMBLAY, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UNANIMOUS AYE.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Sharon Wheeler
Recording Secretary