

East Haddam Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2025

Attending: B. Free; C. Grillo; C. King; J. Kehlenbach; B. Thiele; M. Roberts

Absent: T. Goodie; P. Laffan; F. Tremblay

Guests: L. Conroy

1. **Call to Order** – Mr. Grillo called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

MOTION MADE BY MS. KING, SECONDED BY MS. FREE, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

3. **Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2025**

MOTION MADE BY MS. FREE, SECONDED BY MR. THIELE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 24, 2025 AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

4. **Committee Reports**

- **Music on the River** – Ms. Conroy reported that the brochures for Music on the River have been sent to previous donors and noted that there has been some attrition in that list. Consequently, she stated that QR codes have been added to the brochures to facilitate electronic donations and the brochures will be distributed at all of the concerts. She further advised that the Committee has decided to do a direct mailing to all households in Town rather than include inserts in the East Haddam News which has had a low response rate. She stated that the direct mailing will increase expenses; however, the Police and Historical Society told her that they have had good success with direct mail appeals. Ms. Roberts commended Ms. Conroy and Cathy for their work on the brochures.

Ms. Conroy also reported that the MOR website is being updated and should be released on April 25th and she reviewed a list of the bands participating.

- **Disc Golf** – Ms. Conroy reported that a disc golf clinic with Pro Keith Sykes is scheduled for May 18th. She also advised that a tournament is scheduled for the Memorial Day weekend. There was a general discussion about parking for the events.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Grillo, Ms. Conroy discussed the Volleyball program and stated it will be reassessed mid-May and, most likely, will not be scheduled during the summer months. She advised that the High School coach will be offering a girls' volleyball open gym this summer and she plans to schedule a similar program for 7th and 8th grade girls.

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

A. **Spring & Summer Review**

- She reviewed registration numbers for the Soccer spring Pre-K, 1st – 2nd grade, 3rd – 4th grade, and 5th – 6th grade programs.
- Registration for Food Explorers at the Elementary School is full and will begin on April 23rd.
- She reviewed registration for the Open Gym Basketball for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders and advised that the volunteer coaches from the winter programs will stay on.
- The 18+ and 30+ basketball and 16+ soccer programs average around 15-18 attendees and she expects those numbers to pick up when the college kids return to Town this summer.
- The outdoor pickleball courts opened on March 29th and the inside courts will only be available Wednesday and Friday evenings and Sunday mornings for pickleball during the months of July and August. She stated that the outdoor courts are first-come-first served basis with the exception of Adult beginner-intermediate sessions scheduled for Wednesdays in July and August from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Ms. Conroy stated that the program can accommodate up to 30 players and will be supervised.
- The Skyhawks' Beginner Pickleball Clinic and Tennis Camp, for ages 7 to 12, are scheduled in June for Mondays thru Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- A Pickleball program for ages 65+ will be offered on Mondays in June, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- CT DEEP will conduct a state boating certification class on April 29th and 30th.
- First Aid, CPR, and Stop-the-Bleed classes will be offered in May and June.
- The home-school open gym program will continue through the end of May but will not run through the summer months.

Ms. Conroy reviewed the following summer programs:

Day Camp

- Registrations for camp and most of the field trips filled up quickly and there is currently a waiting list.
- She is considering increasing the maximum number of campers from 115 to 125.
- There were eleven requests for scholarships. The average scholarship is 75%-90% of the cost. The balance of the scholarship fund at the beginning of the year was \$24k and \$6k has been awarded for this summer's program. Ms. Conroy advised that the fund is replenished every year with 50% of any profits from the camp program.
- Staff interviews have begun and 21 out of 28 staff members from last year are returning. Ms. Conroy stated that she hopes to hire an art specialist, sports specialist, and 8 counselors.
- Day camp will be held at Cave Hill Resort 3 days this summer.
- She distributed a list of the camp programs and reviewed the typical week's schedule.

Other Programs

- She will be hiring one beach attendant.
- 6 out of 7 of last year's lifeguards are returning; however, due to scheduling needs, she would like to hire two additional lifeguards.
- Due to an adjustment in school closing dates, she is working on rescheduling the Noises Sports Academy dates.
- The Food Explorers Camp will be held in the Middle School's Consumer Science room which has kitchen facilities.

- B. Budget Update – Ms. Conroy reported that the Rec Commission's proposed FY2025-2026 was submitted with a 5.25% (\$9,170.00) increase over last year's budget. She stated that the increase is primarily due to increases in Salaries & Wages. She noted that she has not been informed of a need to reduce the budget at this time; however, that could change if the Town's budget fails referendum. She stated that she thinks the Volleyball Court at the Town Beach capital project is still in the budget for next year.

6. Unfinished Business

In response to a question from Mr. Grillo, Ms. Conroy stated that she would follow-up on the status of the electronic message board for in front of the Municipal Office Complex.

7. New Business

- A. New Purchases – Ms. Conroy reported that when determining the location of the septic for the playground addition at the Town Beach, it was determined that a new septic tank is needed and the leaching fields need to be moved. She advised that the cost of the project is projected to be \$25k which will be taken out of the Rec Department's Maintenance budget line and from the Special Revenue fund. She stated the work is scheduled to begin the week of April 28th, pending the Health Department's approval of their application, and she does not expect it to impact the playground.

Ms. Conroy advised that she plans to replace the old wooden tables at the skateboard park with ones similar to the metal tables by the tennis/pickleball courts. There was a general discussion regarding the lack of shade by the skateboard park and Ms. Conroy stated she would look into purchasing resin tables rather than metal ones.

- B. Accept Pickleball Gift – Ms. Conroy distributed pictures of a pickleball racquet holder that had been made and donated to the Recreation Commission by **Peter Rutledge**. Ms. King explained how the holder also helps keep track of the play rotation.

MOTION MADE BY MS. KING, SECONDED BY MR. KEHLENBACH, TO ACCEPT A GIFT OF A PICKLEBALL RAQUET HOLDER FOR THE OUTDOOR COURTS FROM **PETER RUTLEDGE**.
UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Conroy distributed a copy of the department's FY2024-2025 budget and reported on the balances in a number of funds, including Music on the River (\$16,371.91), the basketball program (\$11,844.00), and day camp (\$150,000.00).

8. **Adjournment**

Ms. Conroy advised that the next Commission meeting will be held on June 16th.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Sharon Wheeler
Recording Secretary