

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**Public Parks & Recreation Committee**  
**Town Hall Council Chambers**  
**March 11, 2015, Wednesday**

Present: Jane Hackett, Chairperson  
Michael Molisse, Vice Chair  
Michael Smart, Councilor  
Arthur Mathews, Councilor

Not Present: Thomas J. Lacey, Councilor

Also Present: James Clarke, Director of Planning & Community Development  
Kate Marshall, Economic Development Planner  
Kenan Connell, Director DPW  
Steve Reilly, Interim Recreation Director  
Tom Slattery, WPS, Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds  
Cathy Torrey, WPS, Hall Rental Facilitator  
Kevin Mackin, WPS, Athletic Director  
David Proule, WPS, Business Manager

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Hackett called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. She noted that Councilor Lacey was unable to attend due to a family commitment. She also noted that the agenda item “Field Maintenance Plan” would be taken out of order.

James Clarke introduced Director Kenan Connell to review the Field Maintenance Plan. Mr. Connell first made brief remarks regarding the suggestion to centralize town maintenance duties.

*“The town has spent a considerable amount of time and resources over the past several years attempting to centralize as much labor and as many positions as possible in an effort to reduce costs town-wide, as well as providing a source of individual accountability for job responsibilities. The truth is we do have centralized maintenance as it exists today in many facets. Working together is the key; regardless of what the highest rank of responsibility is, or which building the tractors or mowers roll out of on a given day, all of the town’s grass still needs to be mowed. To my knowledge at least three of the most recent directors of Public Works including Robert O’Connor, Jeff Bina and myself, have determined the idea of centralized maintenance in regard to combining the Weymouth School maintenance personnel with the DPW maintenance personnel is an endeavor that does not necessitate restructuring. What we really*

*need is restored labor. An evaluation of the town's fields was completed by a hired consultant, Activitas, and the identified issue with the fields was not directed towards regular maintenance duties but clearly blames overuse of the fields. A statement was made at the presentation of that report which indicated that even if the maintenance staff of the Boston Red Sox were to be hired to service, the end result would be the same: failure due to the reluctance or perceived reluctance or inability to take the fields out of use so that treatment and healing could occur to the damaged turf. I would like to offer to this discussion that in my own experience here in Weymouth, now here a year and a half, I've had an extremely cooperative experience working with the Weymouth School maintenance staff and many instances of problem solving in the best interests of the town. We do in fact purchase many materials together in bulk under DPW procurements in an effort to save dollars. The School maintenance director completely handles snow and ice removal operations on school properties but the invoicing is routed through DPW, making the expenditures eligible for FEMA and MEMA reimbursement as well as allowing deficit spending which otherwise would not be possible. Materials such as sand and salt are furnished to the schools from DPW procurements. With eight school properties, this is a massive workload that is handled by the schools and thereby relieving the DPW supervisory staff to be free to handle the near 1,000 roads and town properties. DPW actually appreciates the fact that the schools are a separate entity. Lastly, I believe that the school administration and the maintenance director may share a reluctance to create a formula to centralize the fields because they have legitimate concerns about ensuring that the school needs are the priority and that when scheduled events require certain labor activities, that they actually get done. With school administration in charge of their own staff, the work assignments are guaranteed. If the town took over, the determination of priority may take on a new meaning as the town's needs are much broader in scope.*

*With all of the above being said, it's important to note that the town and schools are working extremely well together to maximize the labor and materials available. Admittedly, both departments are dramatically understaffed and cannot possibly provide all of the services necessary to adequately maintain the areas defined in their individual job scopes. DPW alone has more than 85 greens town-wide. We maintain 49 from spring to fall, while the others are adopted, as well as 5 major fields, 9 softball fields, 13 Little League fields and DPW mows 28 locations around town. The DPW roadside mower is assigned to 132 locations and we have 8 cemeteries that we open and close annually. 130 trash barrels are emptied weekly from December until March, and more than 200 trees on average are worked on yearly. It's an enormous workload for only 7 employees in the Park & Tree labor force. I'd go on to talk about vehicle maintenance, DPW administration, and other things that we centralize, but I wanted to get the gist out there, in trying to grasp the push to centralized maintenance, and I was hoping we could interact on that a little and maybe you could give me the history if there is a specific reason we were targeted.'*

Councilor Hackett opened it up to discussion.

Councilor Smart responded that these two departments were not specifically targeted. The move was made back in tougher times to focus on a short list of those departments where dual duties and responsibilities might exist, that may have been duplicated, and could be combined as a way to save money for the town. It wasn't a targeted move but that was the reasoning. He believed it was a good idea to combine the maintenance of DPW and schools with one director in charge and disseminate crew responsibilities. Mr. Connell responded that there are several obstacles to it that include the limited number of personnel, contracts, entitlements and wage scales. It isn't simple to combine them.

Councilor Mathews added that the genesis was in 1995 and the division of services was in the language of the town's charter. The discussions have taken place over many years. He understands that obstacles exist in combining, but his concern is the permitting for fields; the price for field rental - \$15 per quarter doesn't even cover the cost of the gas to mow it. He isn't sure the committee looked at this or just focused on new fields. Mr. Connell responded that they did look at this and it will come up further in discussion.

Vice Chairman Molisse asked if the 7 employees in Parks & Tree division shift to other departments as necessary. Mr. Connell responded that it is reactionary; if a job requires additional labor they pull from other labor areas as needed. It's reciprocal between the DPW departments because of constraints of the enterprise funding. The department has minimal staffing for a town of its size and they have to manipulate staff as the day's needs dictate. Maintenance staffing is lacking and they are looking to increasing staffing and along with it bringing in more fields will allow them to rest others. The meals tax revenue this year will help with some field needs and bring things back to a better quality.

Chair Hackett noted that as the new committee chair, her focus is looking for improved coordination between user groups and the scheduling of maintenance and fostering an improved coordination in the upcoming season. She noted there was a lot of good feedback on the work on baseball fields and she will also be looking for quality of service like this going forward. Mr. Connell noted that there was a lot of volunteerism which started off helpful but in some cases wound up being more detrimental. Chair Hackett requested that with the new field permitting policy in place that schedules are shared with the DPW so that they are not performing maintenance during practices.

Tom Slattery added that there are no foremen in the schools. There are 59.5 employees. They looked at the fee structures and reviewed the mowing schedule for school fields. There is a centralized schedule in place for mowing and good communication between the town and school side. Councilor Smart asked how many of the 59.5 employees are dedicated to the fields. Mr.

Slattery reviewed the schedule; 4.5 are laborers and he reviewed their duties. Councilor Mathews asked how hours are dedicated to the maintenance for the turf field at WHS. Mr. Slattery responded that it's minimal, depending on the use. The turf is groomed and swept twice a month on average. The laborer maintains the grounds following a detail- 1.5 hours to sweep and 2 to groom. The first turf field was a learning process, and they take that experience to extend the life of the new ones as they come online. Mr. Connell noted that the new field at Legion will have budgeted funds for a ten-year contract for professional field maintenance.

Chair Hackett asked if there is equipment needed specifically for fields. Mr. Connell responded that the current fleet is sufficient for the needs. Equipment has been purchased and they have been aggressively acquiring what is necessary. Mr. Slattery noted that the schools need equipment and will address further as the new fields come online.

Councilor Smart asked for a copy of Mr. Connell's comments. Mr. Connell responded that they were in draft form but he will provide them as requested.

Vice Chair Molisse asked if the spring schedules are delayed due to the bad winter and he asked if back up plans are in place to get the fields ready. Mr. Connell confirmed that it is delayed and Tom Slattery reviewed the preparations underway.

Jim Clarke noted that over the last two years, the maintenance has been well-coordinated between departments. He echoed the prior comments and provided the presentation that was given earlier to the School Committee. Tom Slattery provided introductory remarks. There were comments from the public regarding the inability for other groups to use the turf field at the high school. In order to get a new field they would have to open more time to other youth groups. The schedule will now include more free time to rent the high school field to groups that want to use it. Jim Clarke presented the following power point presentation of the working group's findings:

### **Weymouth Turf Study-Permitting & Fees**

March 11, 2015

#### **OVERVIEW**

- Working Group Organization
- Goals & Objectives
- Mullin Field –Current users, policies & procedures
- Weymouth School Sports-scheduling
- Weymouth Youth, Adult & Non-Weymouth Groups-scheduling
- Fees, Revenues & Expenses
- Synthetic Turf Field Replacement Fund-based on success in renting fields

- Tournament Play
- Summary

### **Working Group Organization**

- Town and School Staff representation
- Unanimous agreement that coordinated turf fields fees and permitting are essential for success

### **Town Members**

- Jim Clarke –Director of Planning & Community Development
- Bob O’Connor-on behalf of DPW
- Steve Reilly-Interim Program Director – Recreation
- John MacLeod-Project Manager
- Kate Marshall-Community Development Planner

### **School Members**

- Tom Slattery – Director of Maintenance
- Cathy Torrey – Hall Rental Facilitator
- Kevin Mackin – Athletic Director
- David Proule – Business Manager

### **Goals & Objectives**

- Develop joint policies and procedures for permitting of the synthetic turf fields at Mulling Field (WHS) and Arlanson Field (Legion Memorial Field)
- Review current user schedule at Mullin Field and if possible, allow more use by Weymouth youth groups
- Budget revenues and expenditures for both fields on an annual basis
- Create one revolving account for both fields
- Set a permitting process and a fee structure that:
  - Covers personnel and operating costs for supervised use of the fields
  - Allows for a discounted rate for Weymouth Youth teams
  - Allows for funds to be set aside to offset future synthetic turf replacement costs on success of field rentals
- Joint scheduling for both fields to include:
  - Weymouth school sports groups (get priority at Mullin Field)
  - Weymouth youth groups
  - Adult and outside-of-Weymouth groups
  - Potential for tournament play on several weekends per year

**Current Mullin Field Summary**

- Current Users
  - Weymouth school groups
  - Weymouth youth groups
  - Adult Groups
  - Outside-of-Weymouth groups
- Current procedures
- Current fee structure

**Weymouth Athletics**

- Incredibly exciting opportunity for all Weymouth student athletes) from the youth organizations through high school) to play on two beautiful new fields
- It has been a pleasure to work with this group, and we quickly identified the goal of maximizing the usage of both facilities for the youth of Weymouth
- Having two turf fields for practice and competitions allows us to be far more creative with the scheduling of these fields for all Weymouth students

**Hours of Use**

- Turf field hour for rent April through mid-November (34 weeks)

| <u><b>Mullin Field</b></u>   | <u><b>Arlanson Field</b></u>  |
|--|---|
| Weekdays, 7-10 pm, 4 days per week, totaling 12 hours per week   | Weekdays, 6-10 pm, 4 days per week, totaling 16 hours per week                      |
| Weekends, Sat 1-10 pm, Sun 12-5 pm, totaling 14 hours per week   | Weekends, Sat 9 am-9 pm, Sun 12 pm – 9pm, totaling 21 hours per week                |
| Potential for turf field rental to non-HS groups is 26 hours per week, or <b>884 hours over 34 weeks</b> | Potential for turf rental is 37 hours per week, or <b>1,258 hours over 34 weeks</b> |

**Potential for turf rental at both fields is 2,124 hours max →1,285 hours at 60%**

**BUDGET**

**Revenue & Expenses for BOTH fields**

**Revenue – Fees**

- \$80 per hour for Weymouth youth groups
- \$150 per hour for adult groups and outside-or-Weymouth groups

- a la carte items
  - lights-\$25 per hour
  - press box-\$25 per hour (includes microphone, sound system & scoreboard)

**Labor Costs**

- Arlanson Field - Legion Field
  - Full-time, Wed-Sun 3-10 pm, \$40,000
  - Part-time Mon-Tue 6-10 pm, \$13,600
  - Assumes 60% rental Sat 9 am-3pm and Sun 12 pm-3 pm
  - Total labor for both fields is \$74,800

Revenue Summary-based on 60% rental

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 200 hours at \$150/hr =  | \$30,000         |
| 1,085 hours at \$80/hr = | \$86,800         |
| <b>total revenue</b>     | <b>\$116,800</b> |

Expenses Summary-based on 60% rentals

|                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Labor                      | \$74,800         |
| Synthetic Turf Maintenance |                  |
| Contracts                  | \$21,800         |
| Miscellaneous Supplies     | \$15,000         |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>      | <b>\$111,600</b> |

**Revenue minus Expenses for BOTH fields +\$5,200 based on 60% rentals**

**Weekend Tournament Play Hours**

Columbus Day & Memorial Day weekends, 28 hours each weekend

- Fri-3 hrs
- Sat-10 hrs
- Sun-10 hrs
- Mon-5 hrs
- 3 Pre-season (March) weekends, 20 hours each weekend
  - Sat – 10 hrs
  - Sun – 10 hrs

| <u>Mullin Field</u>                                     | <u>Arlanson Field</u>                                   |
|---|---|
| 2 holiday weekends, 56 hrs @\$200/hr, totaling \$11,200 | 2 holiday weekends, 56 hrs @\$200/hr, totaling \$11,200 |
| 3 pre-season (March) weekends, 60 hrs @                 | 3 pre-season (March) weekends, 60 hrs @                 |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| \$200/hr, totaling \$12,000   | \$200/hr, totaling \$12,000                                       |
| Expenses for holidays (\$1,120/weekend) and pre-season (\$800/weekend) totaling \$4,640 | Expenses for holidays and pre-season weekends \$0                 |
| <b>Potential net revenues for tournament play totals \$18,560</b>                       | <b>Potential net revenues for tournament play totals \$23,200</b> |

Potential net revenues for tournament play at both fields is \$41,760

### SUMMARY

- Town & school collaboration maximizes field resources for all
- Additional turf field time available for Weymouth School Athletes by afternoon use of Arlanson Field
- Lower rental fee for Weymouth youth sports groups and more rental hours available
- More school teams can practice on turf field right after school
- Revenues budgeted to cover expenses through one account
- Turf maintenance contract extends life of the fields
- Potential for rental revenue to be set aside for future turf replacement

Cathy Torrey and Kevin Mackin reviewed the rental of the turf field at the high school. Chair Hackett asked if the track was also replaced. Councilor Smart responded that it wasn't included in the proposal. The discussion also included special accommodations that will be needed in order to meet MIAA requirements for finishing seasons on time. Cathy Torrey reviewed the increase in requests for rental of the new field. Once the fee structure is in place, she expects to receive more requests.

Jim Clarke reviewed the revenue and fees. Councilor Mathews asked if the percentage of rental at WHS at 60%? Cathy Torrey responded that it was less. Many groups were turned away in order to keep it available for Weymouth youth.

Jim Clarke noted that the price point was lowered for youth groups and set for outside of Weymouth, adult groups and a la carte items.

Councilor Mathews asked if the employees at Legion will be DPW or school? Mr. Clarke responded that it is still in discussion as to which is more appropriate. He also asked what the employee would be doing in the non-use months? Mr. Clarke reviewed that there will be other duties and a job description and duties are being developed. Vice Chairman Smart asked for a list of which fields are maintained by which department. Mr. Slattery responded that for the most part, field responsibility is delineated by location north or south of Washington Street, with the



exception of fields attached to schools. Legion will be the responsibility of the town, and coordinated with the schools.

Mr. Clarke then reviewed the revenue and expense summary for the committee. There will be a professional contract for the maintenance of the new fields in order to extend the life. Based on a typical year, it should be a positive revenue stream.

Steve Reilly reviewed the tournament play plans. There is a demand for turf fields and these weekends are prime time for tournaments. Area fields are being rented for an average of \$200/hr. and these weekends would have to be blacked out in the schedules. The purpose is to generate funds to help take care of the fields.

Councilor Mathews asked how the \$200 hourly rate was arrived at and he asked if the Weymouth Youth sports groups will be held to the same price. Mr. Reilly responded that it is a business decision set to look to the future replacement costs. Councilor Mathews noted that he likes the idea of putting funds aside for future replacement. Cathy Torrey noted that players pay a higher fee to play in tournaments; in the past Weymouth was not getting the benefit of those higher fees by charging the former lower rates. Jim Clarke noted that these are premium times and the user is getting two fields and a block of time. Chair Hackett noted that the decision was made to black out these times and it will be held. Mr. Reilly responded that \$120/hr was cost prohibitive to the youth groups. The change will let them get on the fields more than they have in the past. Chair Hackett asked if the plan has been vetted through Municipal Finance- what will be set up for accounts, how and who will oversee? Mr. Proule reviewed the process for setting it up as a separate revolving account. Municipal Finance will oversee the account and there will likely be joint accounting. Mr. Slattery reviewed the current hall rental policy; it was noted that CFO McKinney has been involved in the discussion.

Vice Chair Smart noted he has had some inquiries regarding the health and safety of athletes using turf fields. Has off-gassing been part of the discussion? Mr. Clarke responded that Activitas looked into it and have not brought forth specific health issues. They are aware there are some concerns and they will continue to review.

Chair Hackett asked the timetable for opening Legion. Mr. Clarke responded full opening will likely not occur until June. The contractor has been working but certain areas are inaccessible. They are a few weeks behind schedule. The field will not relieve schools at this time. There are many requests for the field. Steve Reilly noted that the focus will be on in-town youth groups first. A public calendar will be posted for use. There is interest in camp use this year. Chair Hackett asked if there will be a different rate for camp use. Mr. Reilly responded that the price point will be investigated. Camp structures will need to be further reviewed. Chair Hackett noted that they need to have some flexibility for the use and expect to see interesting requests. It

remains to be seen what the market will bear, in-town and outside. Mr. Clarke noted that this is a budget, and it is based on their best estimate. Tom Slattery noted that money isn't the major consideration. He noted that renting to some of the adult groups can be detrimental. He suggested screening candidates. Councilor Mathews suggested a "poison pill" to deter costs from damage, etc. Chair Hackett noted that opening it up could produce a wonderful summer recreation program; they could see a market for more professional camps that would service Weymouth children.

### **Field Maintenance Plan for Spring and Summer**

Steve Reilly reviewed and noted that a letter went out to user groups of permit groups. This letter informed them there would not be a change in rates in spring but would in fall 2015. They plan to send out expanded permit request form, that established policies, require acknowledgment. He noted the history, in order to make the process work for all. There are a lot of crossover requests. The recreational Advisory Committee has been looking at it. Groups will have to make some accommodations to avoid situations. They asked permits only be requested for fields that will actually be used and freed up more time for the groups. Where permits were not requested, they could tighten up and target those areas for maintenance. A new grass field permit schedule was approved by the Recreation Advisory Committee and submitted to the Mayor. He highlighted the key items- fee schedule that could work here, and create some accountability and to generate meaningful revenue to contribute towards their upkeep and to prevent taking permits unnecessarily. He provided a handout of the proposal.

Town/School – permit / no charge

Youth not for profit –\$100/field rental fee/ \$5 per player user fee (per player per season) with hardship provision

Youth Organization - \$200/field + \$5 per player user fee

Chair Hackett noted that fees would increase from the current \$25 to \$1300 in the proposed plan. Councilor Mathews suggested approaching the youth organizations before implementing. He agrees there needs to be an increase, but wants to see it well-communicated. Steve Reilly responded that they have spoken with some of the user groups. Some are ok with it, knowing there needs to be some way to fund the field upkeep, but some don't want to put the burden on their teams and it's understandable. Councilor Mathews responded that they can show that by investing money it will improve the quality of the fields. Vice Chair Molisse agreed.

Chair Hackett noted that the cooperation is palpable within the working group. She appreciated the work across budgetary lines and is looking forward to seeing this carried over to Legion. Accept there will be mistakes; they've learned from the high school and can carryover to Legion and showcase it for Weymouth as much as possible. There is a fine line between turning it into

tournament rental spots than a way for kids to be out playing as often as possible on fields that are safe. It will trickle down to other sports and will free up some space for the organizations.

She appreciated the spirit of cooperation. She has concerns for the financial structure and the mechanics going forward. She will report these findings out to the Town Council.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 8:06 PM, there being no further business, a Motion was made by Councilor Molisse to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Smart. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Jane Hackett-Chair of the Public Parks and Recreation Committee

Voted unanimously on 6 April 2015