

# *Park and Recreation Commission*

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## **Minutes**

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, May 9, 2011 in the City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

By roll call, members present: Andrew Cota, David Mikos, James Benanto, Red Clynch and Ronald Sill. Beverly Moran arrived at 7:40 pm. Nick Serednitsky was excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell and Athletic Director Joseph Orazetti were present.

### **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

Motion made by Red Clynch and second by Ron Sill. Move to accept the agenda, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion made by Ron Sill and second by David Mikos. Move to accept the minutes of April 11, 2011, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

### **PUBLIC PORTION:**

No one from the public was present.

### **CORRESPONDENCES:**

No correspondence was presented. Mr. Benanto noted that he has not been receiving his e-mails. This will be checked.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS:**

**Parks & Recreation Director's Report:** Mr. O'Connell reported that the Board of Apportionment and Taxation is seeking to cut the proposed 2011/2012 recreation budget by \$10,000. They have asked for suggestions on these possible cuts noting that the action would be a worst case scenario. Members discussed the possible choices. Mr. O'Connell presented a suggested list (attached) of potential cuts. Half of the cuts would be by reducing program subsidies and the other half would come for equipment and field maintenance, recreation equipment and the closure of the skate park. Chairman Cota strongly supported the recommended payroll requests. It was noted that the subsidies to the programs are provided in an effort to keep the registration fees as low as possible for the residents. It was noted that the Derby Veteran's Community Center continues to perform well. The director and the staff work very hard to develop and support the programs and activities at the center. Revenues have exceeded the projected estimates each and every year. This year the amount should be about \$70,000. Members wondered why the field maintenance equipment falls under the Parks & Recreation budget rather than Public Works. Mr. O'Connell indicated that Witek Park has the set budget line item as the park is maintained by a private contractor overseen by the Board of Alderman. Under equipment maintenance the line item includes not only the maintenance of the fields but also the Derby Veterans Community Center, the field house and the Little League field house. The water account and the gas account are difficult to predict as they are dependant on the weather conditions. If it is very dry, there is more need for the fields to be irrigated. If the weather is cold, the buildings require more heat.

Mr. Benanto wondered if the program funds and the participation numbers could be calculated so as to assess the best value for the buck. He questioned whether elimination of a program would be more cost

effective than nibbling away at each line item. Mr. O'Connell noted that much of the costs for the programs are related to the costs for referees and this is something beyond the control of the program. The cost for referees varies per program. Some of the programs such as basketball can be handled with lesser costs for referees whereas Pop Warner is higher. It would be difficult to calculate funds verses numbers because of that factor as well as other factors such as uniforms, equipment, dues and insurance.

Members discussed how some of the services and expenses included in the Parks & Recreation budget actually apply to High School programs. Mr. O'Connell noted that the tax board does calculate some of the expenses as in-kind services to the Board of Education. Mr. Orazetti concurred that the budget supports school program expenses so the tax board is not seeing a true figure for the cost of recreation in the City.

Ms. Moran arrived at 7:40 p.m.

Members went back and forth regarding the cuts. None were pleased with the proposed cut in the budget because it will have an impact on the city's youth and it will inevitably result in an increase in registration fees which will also impact each and every family involved in the programs.

David Mikos left at 7:50 p.m.

Mr. O'Connell stated that upon inspection many trees at Ryan Complex were deemed bad and had to be removed. The money planned for the emergency lighting of the bleachers was reallocated to cover the cost of removing the trees.

**High School Athletic Director's Report:** Mr. Orazetti noted that he fully understands the budget demands and greatly appreciates the continuing support from the Parks and Recreation. He was pleased with the tree project and has confirmed with the tree surgeon that the area is now safe. He has asked for a report in writing from the surgeon.

At this time Mr. Orazetti presented a request (attached) from Emmett O'Brien Technical High School to for the use of the Ryan field for a game.

Motion was made by Red Clynych and second by Ron Sill. Move to add to the agenda the field usage request from Emmett O'Brien Technical High School. Motion carried unanimously.

Emmett O'Brien Technical High School has added their own football program to their school after it was determined that they could no longer participate in the Derby program. They do not have a suitable field and are requesting use of fields in Derby and Ansonia. They would like to play in Derby for their first game during their season, tentatively September 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>.

Members discussed the pros and cons of this request. Concern was voiced as to the wear that occurs annually on the field and adding usage is always an added concern.

Motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by Red Clynych. Move to allow the use of the Ryan Field football field to Emmett O'Brien Technical High School for a game on September 14, 2011 with rain date as September 15, 2011 with it understood that Derby will have the exclusive right to decide whether field conditions, due to weather, require that the game be postponed and with it understood that the necessary expenses including, but not limited to, police protection and medical coverage is paid by Emmett O'Brien Technical High School. Motion carried with James Benanto opposed.

**NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:**

Nothing was presented.

Motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by Ron Sill. Move to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

*These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.*