

**WYCKOFF DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
November 17, 2014**

Tom Valente opened the Recreation Board Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Recreation Office with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act. "This Regular meeting of the Wyckoff Department of Parks and Recreation Board is now in session. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting has been posted on the bulletin board in the Memorial Town Hall and the Recreation Office; a copy has been filed with the Township Clerk, *The Ridgewood News*, *The Record*, and *The North Jersey Herald and News*, all papers with general circulation throughout the Township of Wyckoff." At least 48 hours prior to this meeting the agenda was similarly posted, filed and mailed to said newspapers.

Members Present: Tom Valente, Russ Whiteman, Chris Vanuga, Peter McGuire, Doug Arone, and Heather Alnor

Members Absent: Ed Pettit, Jeff Eischen, Rob Lahue, Sue Buchanan, Moe Ismael

Staff Present: Recreation Director Andy Wingfield, Township Committee Liaison Brian Scanlan

Guests Present: None

The minutes of the October meeting were discussed. A motion to approve the minutes of the 10/20/14 meeting was made by Doug Arone and seconded by Tom Valente. The motion was carried.

Recreation Director's Report:

Travel Sports Coaching Item:

Brian Scanlan reported to the Board that there is a concern regarding a potential conflict of interest when Wyckoff Travel coaches also coach outside Club teams at the same level with some of the same players on both teams. He presented to the Board a potential policy change that would restrict coaches who coach at the club level from also coaching for Wyckoff Travel sports teams. The spirit of the policy would be for our travel coaches to inspire team unity and display commitment to all players and also to discourage parents from controlling two teams in order to eliminate scheduling conflicts between the teams. Mr. Scanlan also advised that should the Board make a policy change in this case, current coaches should be grandfathered and that this policy should take effect with new teams in the future and not for those teams already formed and approved. A lengthy discussion ensued in which the Board agreed with Mr. Scanlan that should a conflict exist where a coach is putting his outside team's interests first, and not catering to the needs of his town team, conflicts could arise where the Board may have to act. The Recreation Director pointed out that the Township currently has one coach that fits the description of coaching a town travel team and a club team at the same level and that this is not a common occurrence. However, with the increasing level of popularity of club teams, it could become more common so he agreed that this could be an issue that the Board will see more often in the future. Several Board members expressed concern about restricting volunteers who have the knowledge, experience, and time to coach our teams, especially those that are either the only ones to volunteer and/or have the support of their town team. Mr. Arone introduced the idea of handling these situations on a case by case basis if and when it presents itself again. The Recreation Director would be required to advise the Board if he is aware that any of his

recommendations are coaching outside club teams and the Board could then review those recommendations with more attention to the details of that particular situation to identify any potential conflicts or to assess whether or not there are more suitable candidates for the position who have volunteered. The Board agreed that this would be the best way to handle these situations so the Recreation Director will draft a policy change for next month's meeting that addresses this issue.

Travel Sports Tryouts Procedural Issues:

Two questions were brought up by residents this month to the Recreation Director which were addressed with the Board. First, a parent of a town baseball player who made the A team at his level requested her son be rostered on the B team instead so that he could commit to his club baseball team and fill in for the B team when he was able to. The Board was unanimous in its discussion that the commitment level for our A teams and B teams should be the same and, therefore, our policy that requires players to be in attendance for all games and practices applies to both teams. Based on this, the Board agreed that the player could choose to stay on the A team or be moved to the B team with the above stipulation in mind. Second, a resident whose son was not selected for Travel Basketball this year called the Recreation Director to ascertain why his son was not selected. After being given the explanation that the evaluators, consisting of two former high school coaches, a current AAU coach, and a former player at Colgate University, none of which have children younger than 8th grade, felt that his son needed to improve on his skills before selecting him to the highly competitive level of travel basketball, the gentleman stated that parents should be allowed to observe the tryouts since the Recreation Department is part of the local government and transparency is required at all levels of government. After explaining to the gentleman that it has been policy for years that parents are not allowed to observe tryouts for several very good reasons, the parent advised that he would like to attend the next Recreation Board meeting. He was not in attendance but the issue was addressed by the Board anyway. The Board was again unanimous in its thoughts that parents should continue to be restricted from observing tryouts as there is no benefit to be gained from it and the children at the tryouts, who are already in a high pressure situation, could be further intimidated by the process if there are parents watching. The Board voted on this potential change of policy and it was unanimously rejected. One thing that the Board agreed with the parent on was that the communication to the parents and children who are not selected to the teams is in need of improvement. The Director will start to look at new ways of getting more information to those players so that they can work on specific skills that were lacking at tryouts in order to better their chances of being selected in the future.

Travel Basketball Tryouts

Tryouts for Travel Basketball are complete. The Recreation Director reported that the Township will be represented at every grade level again for both boys and girls. On the boys side, due to the overwhelming numbers of children trying out who showed the ability to compete at a high level, two teams, A & B, were formed at each grade level from grades 5-8. A team of 3rd grader boys and a team of 4th grader boys will also represent Wyckoff in Travel Basketball this winter. The Director also reported that teams were trimmed down to a maximum of 10 players each based on the repeating feedback from coaches year after year that carrying more than that made it difficult to rotate players into games which inevitably caused angst among the parents and children who did not receive as much playing time as others. Since we have two teams at each level, there were still 20 boys selected at each level to represent the Township. On the girls side,

we have six teams competing for Wyckoff this year with several new girls having been selected during the tryout process. The Director also reported that he communicated with some of the levels' parents prior to distributing the letters since in some cases, 17 children out of 37 were not selected to the teams. The email that was sent was shared with the Board and the Board felt it was a step in the right direction in terms of helping parents and children to understand the process of tryouts and how competitive and, therefore, difficult it is to be selected to a travel team.

Travel Basketball Coach Recommendations

The Recreation Director submitted a full listing of Boys and Girls Travel Basketball coaches. The list was reviewed in detail after which a motion was made by Russ Whiteman and seconded by Peter McGuire to accept the recommendations of the Director. All in attendance were in favor of the motion.

Recreation Basketball Coach Recommendations

The Recreation Director submitted a full listing of Boys and Girls Recreation Basketball coaches. The list was reviewed in detail after which a motion was made by Heather Alnor and seconded by Tom Valente to accept the recommendations of the Director. All in attendance were in favor of the motion.

Fall Season is Complete

The Director reported that the Fall season officially came to an end this weekend with the culmination of Recreation Soccer, Cheerleading, and Football. Football specifically ended on a very high note with all four of its A teams winning their respective Super Bowls on Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon, and our B program also ended on a positive note with final postseason victories at the Senior and PeeWee level over Paramus, Hawthorne, Midland Park, and Upper Saddle River. At the Junior level, an idea was presented to the Recreation Director and the Junior coaches to have an intersquad game amongst our own B teams. The three teams were divided up into "Green" and "White," referees were assigned to the game, the Concession Stand was open, and a Township resident donated hours of his time, food, a grill, and more to make the final night even more special for the Juniors. It was stated that the game and the festivities afterward were a complete success and that the competition was the best that either team had seen all year. Prior to the completion of the season, the Director also reported that based on last month's meeting between the Director, Police Chief, DPW Manager, and Township Administrator, the street lights along Woodland Avenue have been turned on, a painted crosswalk has been completed between the two fields, and plans to trim the tree branches around the lights are in motion to make football practice dropoff and pickup much safer for our participants.

Open Space Grant Application / 2015 Recreation Equipment Bid

The Director reported that the Township is applying for a Bergen County Open Space Grant which would help fund the entire resurfacing of the Memorial Roller Hockey Rink. Cracks in the rink's playing surface have become more and more difficult to repair and the 50% contribution from the Open Space Grant would eliminate the safety concern at the rink while requiring the Township to have this project completed at half the cost. Additionally, the 2015 Recreation Equipment Bid, a cooperative project between the Departments of Wyckoff, Oakland, and Franklin Lakes, is being advertised this week. The joined efforts of the 3 towns with Wyckoff as the lead, creates tremendous competition among area vendors who are vying for the opportunity to provide equipment, uniforms, and other items to our three towns. Savings are maximized due to the combined quantity of items required to operate the departments in the three towns. This bid opening will take place on December 9th.

Summer Sports Camp Extensions and Renewals

The Director reported that the Sports Camps that were originally bid on and won for the 2011-14 summers for Football, Basketball and the Sports Squirts Camp have expired. Feedback on these camps is terrific and attendance is high indicating the need and desire for the continuation of these camps. The Director requested that the Board review his recommendation to renew these camps and the Board unanimously approved. Additionally, the initial two years for the Summer Sports Camps for Bergen's Best Soccer Camp, North Jersey Lacrosse Camp, Tennis Dynamics Camp, and the Grades 5-8 Summer Camp run by the Wyckoff YMCA are up and per Resolution #13-108 that awarded these camps to these vendors, a two year extension is possible based on the recommendation of the Recreation Director. These camps are also very well attended and feedback is always positive. A request was made for the Board to also approve the two year extensions for these four camps and the Board was in full agreement.

Registration Numbers for 2014

In beginning to prepare for next year's budget, the Director reported to the Board that registration numbers are up 8% across the Board. It was noted that our new Online Registration process makes it extremely simple to sign up and the interest level in Recreation Basketball and our 2014 Summer Camp which moved to Lincoln School this past year are major factors in this increase in participation. In November, we surpassed 2,000 registrations since we began taking registrations online in September.

Recreation Basketball Referee Fee Increase Request

The Director asked the Board to review his request to increase the amount that the Township pays its Recreation Basketball referees. The fee has been \$25 for at least 10 years and an additional \$10 is paid if the referee works a game alone. In 2014, the employment status of referees and other recreation functions that are trained and assigned by the Recreation Office changed from that of a vendor to that of a part time seasonal employee. Based on this change, these workers will receive less pay from the Township due to tax implications and other fees associated with being a Township employee. Other local recreation departments pay their referees around \$40 per game and they use two referees meaning that \$80 is spent at each game while our referee expense per game is only \$35. Local basketball facilities pay their referees \$45 per game. The Director advised that it is going to become increasingly difficult to retain our referees due to the low amount we are paying them along with the associated fees coming out of

their pay for being considered employees of the Township. The Board agreed that a \$25 base fee is low for the work being performed and should be increased within reason so as not to expend more money than we have in the basketball budget. The Director is confident that an increase of \$10/game will not require the need to increase fees in 2014, nor will it be necessary to request a budget increase in basketball, but a \$5 increase in registration fees in 2015 is likely. Any change in the salary ordinance would not become effective until the new year.

Open Comment Period:

None

Report from Board Members:

There were no reports from board members.

New or Old Business:

Tom Valente inquired about the status of Recreation Baseball in the spring of 2015 going to a “Majors/Minors” set up in which the younger beginners could play separately from the older or more experienced players or if any other changes were in the works to address the issues expressed by some parents last year that 3rd and 4th grade recreation baseball players should not be combined due to the vast difference in abilities between the 3rd graders who were beginners and the experienced 4th graders. The Director advised that, as of now, the plan is to separate the 3rd graders from the 4th graders the way it was done prior to combining the 3rd/4th graders. Once registration takes place in January and the number of participants is more clear, the Department will have a better idea of the direction to take the program.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Wingfield
Director of Parks & Recreation