

**Town of New London  
Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes  
December 16, 2020**

Recreation Commission Members Present: Justin Garzia, Chairman; Carol Kinzler; Lyndsay Harkins; Janet Kidder

Others present: Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator; Joe Cardillo and Chris Lorio, Budget Committee, Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer, Pete Smith, Outing Club

The meeting was called to order at 11 am by Justin Garzia, Chair. Roll call attendance was taken of Recreation Commission members.

Justin announced that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the potential budget savings if there is a change to part-time director or seasonal beach manger.

Kim reviewed the budget options for full-time, year-round part-time and seasonal beach manager only:

Kim first noted that the budget as originally submitted to the Selectmen has been reduced in the area of waterfront staff wages by about \$8,000, so that line has been adjusted for all three budget options. The thought being that since the Recreation Commission has expressed a desire to have the next director spend more time at the beaches, there will be less need for waterfront staff who are working as beach managers. Also, historically, the highest expenditure has been about \$50,000, including staff acting as beach managers. Taking these two issues into consideration, along with the need to have enough to offer competitive wages to attract the best staff, \$55,000 is the suggested amount needed.

Review of the two part-time options:

The **part-time year-round position** is estimated to be about 1,240 hours @\$22/hr. This is calculated at 10 weeks@40 hrs - 42 weeks@ 20 hrs ; Jan-June & Oct-Dec: 20 hrs/week, July-Aug: 40 hrs/week, and Sept - 40 hrs/2 week; 20 hrs/2 weeks. This would allow for some programming throughout the year with the main focus being the beaches. \$2,000 beach equipment is added to the budget since there will likely be reduced revolving funds available to purchase beach equipment as in the past. \$1,600 is added for winter ice rink maintenance, in the full-time budget it is presumed that full-time staff takes care of the rink as part of the job. Reductions in conferences and training, travels and meals and advertising lines reflecting less need by the part-time staff. The part-time year-round Recreation Director option is what Sunapee and Newbury have.

The **seasonal beach manager** option is the barebones model, allowing only the management of the two beaches. This budget includes 600 hours @\$25/hr. April-Sept. The breakdown is:

April/May - 30 hrs/month (this time is used for advertising for staff, hiring staff, getting the beaches ready for opening); June - 96 hrs (less hours in June until school is out, then full-time); July/Aug - 160 hrs/month; Sept - 80 hrs (getting through Labor Day then winding down, doing employee evaluations, closing beaches, etc). This model would not allow for special events throughout the year. As described above, this budget also includes the \$2,000 beach equipment line and \$1,600 for ice rink maintenance if the town continues to maintain the rink and reductions in line items for conference expenses and advertising.

Kim stressed that the part-time budget and seasonal beach manager budgets are guesstimates, the town has not had a part-time recreation director for 20 years so there is no historical information available on how many hours the part-time staff worked.

The three budget options:

	<b>Full-time Director</b>	<b>Part-time Year-round</b>	<b>Seasonal Beach Manager</b>
Director Salary	\$61,412	\$27,280	\$15,000
Waterfront Staff Wages	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000
Ice Rink Maintenance	\$-	\$1,600	\$1,600
Fulltime Health Insurance	\$22,662	\$-	\$-
Fulltime Life & Disability	\$545	\$-	\$-
FICA/Medi	\$8,906	\$6,294	\$5,355
NH Retirement	\$8,634	\$-	\$-
Workers Comp	\$3,038	\$3,038	\$3,038
Telephone	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200
Computer Licenses & Fess	\$3,900	\$3,900	\$3,900
Computer Support	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600
Beach equipment	\$-	\$2,000	\$2,000
Travel, meals, van fuel	\$2,000	\$500	\$500
Conferences and training	\$1,000	\$500	\$500
Dues & Subscriptions	\$200	\$200	\$200
Advertising	\$2,750	\$1,000	\$500
Office Supplies	\$1,000	\$750	\$500
Lifeguard and Swim Supplies	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100
Van Maintenance & Repairs	\$750	\$750	\$750
Special Events	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$-
Van Lease	\$1	\$1	\$1
Outing Club	<u>\$95,000</u>	<u>\$95,000</u>	<u>\$95,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$276,698</b>	<b>\$206,713</b>	<b>\$190,744</b>
Proposed FY2022	\$181,698	\$181,698	\$181,698
Difference w/Outing Club	+ \$95,000	+ \$25,015	+ \$9,046

Carol asked about the funds from the revolving fund that have been used in the past for beach expenses, should those expenses be put into the budget. Kim noted that she added \$2,000 for beach equipment to account for the loss of the funds. Justin explained that in the past, picnic tables, docks and other items have been paid from the revolving. It was noted that the Outing Club may take over the maintenance of the ice rink so the \$1,600 could be removed in that case. Carol asked about the liner. Justin noted that the life of the liner is about 3 years, barring someone putting a skate through it and the cost is about \$2,000.

Justin explained his analysis of the recreation revolving fund. The programs have generated an average of over \$14,000 per year; the spending on the beaches, rink liner and the van is about \$13,000 that came back to the town, more or less year-to-year. Justin noted that the funds in the revolving fund will essentially go away with just the swim lesson funds coming into the fund which will likely be close to breakeven. Things like Jack Frost or Strawberry Festival might money and other years not, the summer camp has in the past made \$10,000, but didn't include the Recreation Director's time. There was a discussion of how much time the Director spent in the day camp. Justin noted that the \$13,000 that came to the town via the recreation department are not reflected in the budget.

Joe Cardillo noted that Kim has said that the revolving will go away, but he did not think the recreation revolving fund should go away, it could still be used for swimming lessons and sailing lessons and whatever other programs are run by the Recreation Department. Kim noted that she did not mean to imply that the revolving fund would be discontinued, only that with less programs, there will be less programs fees to be added to it and thus less funds available to be spent on recreation equipment and programs. Swim lesson and sailing lesson fees will go in and the staff teaching the programs will be paid out of it – it will be more of a zero-sum proposition if no other programs are run. Joe noted that he is okay with a zero-sum proposition for the fund and disagreed that the revolving fund came back to the town. Kim noted that the funds came back to the town in that taxpayer funds are not needed to purchase the items, as they would have if not for the availability of the revolving fund. Chris Lorio noted that when comparing years of the revolving fund, the Covid year is an anomaly and shouldn't be considered when comparisons are made, all agreed.

Justin noted that the comparisons of the three options is very helpful. He suggested that the revolving fund impact should not be ignored. Chris asked if there is financial information from the OC to compare these figures with. Justin noted that they have seen the financial information included in their application but not by programs. It was noted that the OC is not making money on its programs or breaking even at this point. Kim noted that the OC has submitted its 2019 IRS Form 990 and she has gotten prior years that are posted to the IRS website.

Joe Cardillo noted that as a Budget Committee member he knows that it is important to evaluate all of the information that is available, however he has not seen 990's on other nonprofits so he does not know if they are breaking even or operating at a loss. He believes that this is a leap of faith that he is prepared to take. He would see it working if the Recreation Commission is an active participant to share space, share programming and share conversations with the OC. If it does not work, then the town goes out and hires a full-time director and stops funding OC. He believes the Recreation Commission has worked hard to show how it can work with a part-time director. Chris Lorio noted that he struggles to find the rationale to get rid of a full-time rec director and take a leap of faith to let the Outing Club take over programming that the town has done successfully for at least 10 years. He believes the town will

lose a lot. There are a lot of challenges with saying here is some money for a director and for some programs, questioning why don't we give some money for OC programs and keep the full-time director that we know is successful, the numbers show it and the programs show it. Chris noted that he is in favor of giving the OC funding to increase their programs.

Joe noted that he remembers back 20 years ago when there were attempts to get an agreement with the OC that never happened, he agrees with the need to be fiscally responsible. He has heard Selectmen over the years say that the two groups should work together, and it has never happened and he sees this as an opportunity to pool resources to be more efficient and effective for the entire community. Joe disagreed with checking on where every nickel and dime is spent by the OC as we don't do that with other groups. Chris noted that he has spoken with Pete on several occasions and he doesn't want to 'rob Peter to pay Paul' and he feels that New London should have a full-time director. Joe Cardillo noted that he was unaware of Pete's position on that. Chris noted that he has said it several times. Lyndsay noted that she would like to hear Pete say that as she has not heard it either.

Carol noted that the questions she has heard from the community is 'why do we have both?' (the OC and the Recreation Department). Chris noted that we have both because the town doesn't do children's sports, we do the camp for kids, but we do other programming not related to kids' sports. Carol agreed, and does not see a problem with having both, and pointed out that Pete also stated that there is no duplicative program happening.

Joe noted that the town has always been sensitive to make staffing decisions when the positions are open, as opposed to making the change when the position is filled and would require eliminating a position. He looks at this situation, with the open position, now is the time to try; he is not convinced that having both organizations with full-time is necessary; this could be win-win. Chris noted that this leap of faith is a complete turnaround, there are a lot of unknowns, he feels that the town could do both and be better off with more programming. He felt that planning to come back in 12 months is not likely to happen and it will take a few years to bring the department back. If the full-time has gone well why would we go to part-time. Joe suggests that perhaps things haven't gone as well as Chris thinks. Chris noted that he was not saying that it has been perfect, only that it has gone well.

Justin noted that at the minimum they need year-round part-time, not seasonal. He has concerns about hiring and retaining a person to fill the position. The town must have a more formal attachment to what goes on daily, weekly or monthly at the OC, quarterly and annual meeting is not enough. This plan would get the town closer to having access to fields, the Recreation Department does not have appropriate facilities and he sees this as a way for the town to have access to more facilities, but more frequent contact with the OC is necessary. Lyndsay agreed with Justin's observations. Janet noted that the town should continue to have a full-time rec director and that person will increase the programming we have, she does not want to lose the Strawberry Festival, Jack Frost and other community programs, she does not think the other town partners will be able to lead the programs. As a businessperson she feels it is important to bring people to town. With regard to the \$95,000 she feels that the Budget Committee should decide the amount that is worthwhile to give the OC. Carol agrees with Janet on the importance of the community activities that rec has supported and would hate to see them go; she is attracted to the part-time as she is not clear on what the rec director does in the winter. Carol does not like the summer only option as the town would lose too much. Carol would agree to stipulating on any OC funds that there must be stronger communication including board membership on the OC or on the Rec Commission. Great programming for the town is great for the town.

Pete Smith asked if there is a model for the other nonprofits to be supervised by the town or be on their Board. Justin noted that they have never been approached for funding of this scale, and this funding request requires a discussion of changes to the Recreation Department operations from full-time to part-time, while the Recreation Commission is being asked to ensure adequate programming is maintained. Justin asked what the concern was about it. Pete noted that he would need to be able to explain it to his Board and if there needs to be changes in their bylaws. He is just looking for examples of how it works with other organizations. Justin noted that communication between the two groups must be increased. Pete agreed. Joe noted that from a Budget Committee member perspective he would expect for this amount of money there should be a seat for a New London Recreation Commission person. Pete agreed.

Chris Lorio asked Pete for his opinion on full or part-time Recreation Department. Pete noted that he does not think the town should 'bite its nose to spite its face', the town should remain flexible, the town will easily be able to hire part-time. Chris noted that earlier in the meeting he raised the 'rob Peter to pay Paul' analogy. Pete noted that this is a reorganization/restructuring time and the appropriation will have to be revised depending on how things are going. Pete stated that halfway through next year they will know if it is going well. Pete apologized but he had to leave as he had a 12:00PM meeting to attend.

Justin noted that another meeting would have to be held to discuss what they heard today, noting that they may not come to a consensus. Lyndsay agreed but asked that they make a decision even if they do not come to a consensus. The Commission agreed that they would limit public input at the start of the next meeting so that the remainder of the meeting will discuss their recommendations.

Lyndsay asked about the skating rink; Justin noted that Bob Harrington is on board with setting it up, the timing is in question and Bob will be contacted. Justin did put in the stakes, using the diagram he has for the set-up. The liner should not go in until the ground freezes or it will be a disaster as the ice won't freeze. Janet was under the impression that when the OC was talking about the ice rink, they were talking about Woodward Park, not the town's rink. Carol noted that her recollection was that the OC would take care of both. Justin noted that they said they would entertain it, but it was not a definite yet.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 22, 2020 at 10:00 AM. The Commission agreed that allowing people to speak a maximum of 2 minutes per person capped at 20 minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:22 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Hallquist  
Town Administrator