Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes  
4:30 pm  
May 7, 2014

Present: Vice-President Peggy Condon, Commissioner John Frankenthal

Staff: Nicole Vickers, Beth Keen, Mickey Boyle, Keith Schmerer, Kelly Rathke, Jordan Allsup, Elliott Bortner, Traci Wicks, Joann Able

- Supt. of Recreation Nicole Vickers welcomed Ms. Condon and Mr. Frankenthal. She indicated that there have been a number of changes to staffing and responsibilities. She announced Elliott Bortner’s promotion to Recreation Supervisor and Jordan Allsup being hired as Recreation Coordinator.

- Ms. Vickers explained that the meeting would cover Fall and Winter 2014 cost analysis and Marketing report. She referenced the memo explaining some of the details regarding how the program budget is calculated with regard to direct and indirect costs. She explained that our revenue is budgeted to cover approximately 75% of the cost of administration budget, public information and the cost of our use of the Harrison and Western gymnasiums, with the remaining 25% compensated for by recreation programs. She said that the cost analysis shows $45,433 that contributed to this cost for 2014.

- Ms. Vickers gave a brief overview of the Cost Analysis, pointing out that for both the Fall and Winter sessions, participation had increased. The net gain for Fall was down a bit, mostly due to increases in administrative and facility costs being up somewhat this year. Winter was up across the board, as promised at the last meeting. Ms. Condon commented that although she has a good understanding that the class cancellation numbers are high in certain areas, such as Adult and Family programming because we are offering a large selection of classes, she wondered whether it can reach the point where we may be offering too many. She asked for any input from supervisors on this topic. Ms. Keen responded that Adult programs can be very streaky season to season, and although offerings have been cut back somewhat, we still attempt to offer a variety. Ms. Condon responded that this is not a particular concern for her, but she would appreciate any input that will help her understand the process better. Ms. Vickers asked the supervisors to address this issue as needed during their reports. She also asked that each supervisor start their report by listing their areas of responsibility.

- Recreation Supervisor Elliott Bortner: Mr. Bortner’s current areas of responsibility are Toddler, Youth, Adult, Family, AOA, Cultural Arts and most Special Events. He will report on Teen programming, as he was in charge of it for Fall and Winter. Fall 2013 The Zombie Apocalypse was a very successful event, led by Mr. Schmerer, Mr. Younie and Mr. Bortner. They were very proud to have achieved attendance of 330 for this event, which was up from the previous year’s Halloween Hikes event, even though Zombie Apocalypse was a one-day event versus two days for the Hikes. Mr. Bortner noted that the net gain was a bit lower, but said some additional money was spent on safety issues. Four Teen programs were held, but only one ran. The Babysitting program, which is a consistently popular co-op program, had 12 GPD participants and 7 BPD. Mr. Bortner reported on Toddler and Youth programming, although Mr. Boyle was responsible for these for Fall and Winter 2014. Revenue for Toddler was slightly lower than last year. Mr. Boyle had changed the structure of Toddler programming by splitting the Fall season into two sessions rather than one. This worked well to keep costs lower for families, but expenses increased somewhat, affecting overall revenue gains. Youth programming profit was up almost $4,200.00. This is a significant increase and Mr. Frankenthal asked why this may have occurred. Mr. Boyle responded that he believes that the population is aging up. Cultural Arts saw a profit of $750.00 from classes and productions. There is no past data to compare to, but this represents a 4% profit. Mr. Frankenthal asked what constitutes the expenses for this program area, beyond rent and other facility expenses. Ms. Vickers indicated
Recreation Supervisor Elliott Bortner: con’t
that a large amount went to production costs related to set building, costumes, etc. It is expected that these expenses will decrease over time as existing props, flats and costumes are able to be used in future productions. Another significant cost is both the scripts and rights for plays. Director and staff salaries also contribute to expenses. **Winter 2013-14** Teen programming for Winter included the Babysitting class, which again ran with good participation. One ski trip, the IPRA overnight ski trip to Chestnut Mountain was successful, with 12 participants. Toddler programs saw an $800.00 in profit for Winter, hopefully signaling the desired effect of the scheduling changes put into place for Fall. Youth was down a bit for Winter. The perennially popular Drawing & Painting for Youth program was slightly down, but is back up to normal levels for the Spring. Cultural Arts saw a 3% profit over Fall. Ms. Vickers excused Mr. Bortner from the meeting in order to prepare for the Screen Free Week event scheduled for tonight.

- **Recreation Supervisor Beth Keen:** Ms. Keen is responsible for Dance, Cheer, Martial Arts, Contracted Athletics, Pizza Palooza and supervises Senior Coordinator, Diane Rowe. She will report on Adult and Family programming, which she supervised for Fall and Winter. **Fall 2013** Pizza Palooza loss was slightly less than last year due to increased sponsorship and a bit more attendance. Fall Dance numbers were up, with the two Nutcracker performances typically increasing Ballet registration. In General Athletics, the Volleyball programs have been very successful, with higher registration numbers in all classes. Lacrosse continues to grow as well. All Star Sports Instruction numbers continue to be strong, although down a little for Fall. Family programming was comparable to last year and Adult was up. In Senior programming, we took over an additional AOA Fit for Life class that is held at St. Mark’s Church. This has increased revenue, but Ms. Keen noted that the fee for this drop-in program is still $3.00. **Winter 2013-14** Dance registration numbers were down somewhat. Ms. Keen noted that two new dance studios, one in Mill Creek and one in LaFox, opened in the past six months, which could be affected registrations. Nevertheless, numbers were still strong and some classes were consolidated, resulting in a small increase in fees. Archery typically does well in Winter, and although numbers were down a bit, it was still strong. Ms. Condon asked how many people are involved in archery. Ms. Keen responded that a number of recent films featuring archery increased the popularity of it significantly. ASSI for Winter was also down from last year, but still good. Martial Arts rebounded to normal levels in Winter.

- **Recreation Coordinator Jordan Allsup:** Having only joined the team a few weeks ago, Mr. Allsup reported he will be responsible for Teen programming and Birthday Parties, and will be assisting Ms. Rathke with Camps, Kids’Zone, Day off Trips. He had no formal report, but did comment that he was working on reviewing Program Evaluations for all areas.

- **Recreation Supervisor Kelly Rathke:** Ms. Rathke’s responsibilities include Friendship Station Preschool, Kids’Zone, Summer Camp, Day-off Trips, Specialty Camps, and supervises Mr. Allsup’s program areas of Teen and Birthday Parties. **Fall 2013** Ms. Rathke reminded the Board Members that Mr. Bortner had reported on Teen and Birthday Parties, having most recently been in charge of them. Day-off Trips and Winter Break Camp for Fall were down. Ms. Rathke explained that with the Christmas and New Year’s holidays falling mid-week this year, the number of days for the Winter Break Camp were fewer than they had been in recent years. She anticipates this will change as these holidays fall differently in future years. **Winter 2013-14** Ms. Rathke reported that Spring Break Camp saw good numbers, and waitlists for this camp were able to be accommodated. She stated that Preschool, Summer Camp and Kids’Zone programs are each reported to the board annually, so are not addressed at this meeting.
• **SPRC Facility Manager/Aquatics Manager Mickey Boyle:** Mr. Boyle now oversees Stephen D. Persinger Recreation Center operations and Sunset and Mill Creek Pools, as well as Parents’ Night Out and Men’s Basketball and Volleyball leagues. **Fall 2013** Mr. Boyle reported on several Special Events that he had overseen for Fall and Winter. Parents’ Night Out registration can be somewhat sporadic, but overall revenue for this program is still consistently good. Halloween Hayday revenues bounced back from last year, with similar revenue numbers, but better control of expenses resulted in a profit rather than a loss. The Polar Express event was revamped this year, with the trip being changed from a train ride to Wheaton and lunch at Gino’s East, to the train going to the Elburn, with lunch at the Boxcar Restaurant located near the station. This change was a big improvement and was well received by participants. The event saw an increase of 160 participants and a 20% increase in satisfaction rating in the top box scores on evaluations. Ms. Vickers commented that this was a wildly successful event, so motivation is high to keep the format as is. She added, however, that the event will need to be renamed, due to copyright issues. Kite Festival was a very well attended event this year, primarily due to the presence of wind, which is critical to its success. The giant kites flown by professional kite flyers attracts people to the event. **Winter 2013-14** Just Dad ‘n Me Dance was a good event, but participation dropped for the first time in recent years. Revenue was still very good, but not at the usual level. Mom & Son Night also saw a slight decline in attendance. Men’s Basketball has fluctuated a bit, but Mr. Boyle pointed out that we have been much more stringent with regard to collected fees for these programs, which was an issue in the past. Mr. Younie commented that there had been some teams who did not pay in the past, however, he added that the cancellation of some winter dates due to the severe weather caused the season to be extended. In some cases, this affected participation in subsequent season registration

• **Athletic Supervisor Keith Schmerer:** Mr. Schmerer’s responsibilities are largely unchanged. He is responsible for Gymnastics, Tumbling, is liaison for Geneva Baseball Association, manages use of Western and Harrison gyms, oversees outdoor athletic fields and assists with the 5K races. **Fall 2013** Gymnastics was down for Fall. Mr. Schmerer commented that a new gym had recently opened on Randall Road last year and we seem to be seeing the effects of that now. Despite that, revenue did not decline significantly. The biggest decline was seen in the younger age classes. Harvest Hustle numbers were slightly down for this year, by approximately 50. We began using the online registration site signmeup.com, which proved to be a success, with about 50% of participants registering through the site. Mr. Frankenthal asked if surveys were sent out. Mr. Schmerer said that survey comments were positive for both 2012 and 2013. However, the City of Geneva began holding a 10K morning race on the same date as Harvest Hustle in 2012. Mr. Bortner will lead this event in 2014, but Mr. Schmerer will continue to be part of the team and efforts are already underway to increase participation this year. **Winter 2014** Gymnastics participation was again down, but revenue was up. This was due to the fact that, while registration for younger age classes was down, that of higher age and skill level classes was up slightly and those classes are higher cost programs. Gymnastics Team is holding steady. Efforts to boost enrollment in the younger age classes will be a focus in upcoming seasons. Mr. Schmerer addressed Ms. Condon’s earlier question regarding cancellation rates, explaining that efforts were made to try offering some different time slots for Tumbling classes for Winter to improve participation. Although the cancellation rate for these classes was high, successful efforts were made to transfer the participants from the cancelled classes to others that were running and also to consolidate some classes Basketball Leagues for 3rd – 8th grade level were on par with last year. Same with the travel league. High School Basketball increased by 40-50 participants. Super Shuffle participation was affected by 10 degree temperatures on race day. Despite being down 300 runners, the race committee was actually surprised by the number of participants given the weather. The post-race party at SPRC had high attendance and the move to this venue kept costs down. Ms. Condon asked how many race registrants did not show on race day. Mr. Boyle responded that only about 50 did not show, so not a significant number.
• **Sunset Facility Manager/Fitness Supervisor Joann Able:** Ms. Able oversees facility operations at Sunset Community Center and recently took over Fitness programming. **Fall 2013/Winter 2013-14.** Ms. Able began by siting that at the last Recreation Committee meeting, it was reported that both Spring and Summer 2013 sessions for Fitness were down in attendance and revenue year over year. However, Fall and Winter were comparable to last year, so it appears the downward trend has been slowed. She also pointed out the significant difference in the number of held classes for Fall 2013, at 98 classes held versus Winter 2013-14 with 64. This change was due to the removal of Sunset Nursery Drop & Play programs from the reporting for Winter, with the pending closure of the Sunset Nursery. At this point, Ms. Able is still evaluating the Fitness programming, reviewing the history of class offerings to determine classes that have consistently not run, and replacing them with new programs. Overall revenue for Fitness is still very strong and evaluations consistently receive top box scores upwards of 90% in all areas. Mr. Frankenthal asked how we promote new programs such as those highlighted here. Ms. Vickers responded that in many cases, their addition to the brochure is enough to generate attention. In cases where we feel more marketing may be helpful, Ms. Wicks will be brought in to create effective marketing strategies, such as social media, eblasts and other low-cost tools.

• **Marketing/Public Relations Supervisor Traci Wicks:** **Fall 2013/Winter 2013-14** Ms. Wicks report will be similar to the sponsorship report that was presented to the full board in February, in which sponsorship money was somewhat down. This report included monetary donations only. She added however, that we have a lease agreement with the Plan C Building where Playhouse 38 is housed. With that factored in as a sponsorship, the total exceeds the $10,000.00 goal set for the year. Additionally, in-kind sponsorship is very strong. The total of monetary and in-kind sponsorship was $44,000.00. Social media continues to grow, with Facebook “likes” at 1,144. Twitter has not proven to be a good promotional tool, but has been very useful for specific types of communications, such as swim lesson cancellations, etc. Email marketing continues to grow with 10,000 emails currently receiving marketing. The goal is 15,000. Open rates are very strong at 22-25%, with event and facility emails experiencing open rates of 60-70%. The national average is 11%. Enhancements to the website continue. Return on investment reports continue to show that brochure blow-in cards garner the best returns at low cost. Duties for our Marketing Assistant, Natalie Seidel now include management of social media, acting as staff photographer, and this year will be on-site coordinator for Neighborhood Cookouts, Concerts in the Park and Movies in the Park. Ms. Condon asked whether there were plans to move this position to full time. Ms. Vickers responded that consideration of the addition of full time positions is a lengthy process, with careful consideration of all aspects. Mr. Frankenthal commented that the addition of Playhouse 38 and Mill Creek Pool present additional marketing needs and asked how this will be managed. Ms. Wicks responded that Playhouse 38 was added to this year’s budget and Ms. Vickers added that because the acquisition of Mill Creek Pool was strongly suspected prior to the completion of the budget, she was able to earmark some administrative budget funds for its marketing.

• Ms. Vickers addressed the goals, commenting that while some seem repetitive year to year, these are goals that are always worth keeping on the list in order to maintain them at a high level. Mr. Frankenthal asked how some of the goals are arrived at. Ms. Vickers responded that they are a combination of input from her, Ms. Lambillette and staff. Some are included in staff performance evaluations. She went on the review the goals from 2013-14 and highlighted some specific items and presented the 2014-15 goals. She closed the meeting by thanking Ms. Condon and Mr. Frankenthal for their time, attention and input.

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Secretary