

**WYCKOFF DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD**  
**May 10, 2021**

Doug Arone opened the Recreation Board Regular Meeting at 8:03pm via Zoom conference call 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: Doug Arone, John Giovacco, Jeff Eischen, Jen Saxton, Moe Ismael, Mike Ferrara, Tom Valente, Rich Sica, Chris Perneti, Sue Buchanan, Chris Beane

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Recreation Director, Andy Wingfield

Township Committee Liaison to Recreation Board, Tim Shanley

The minutes of the April 12, 2021 meeting were discussed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Tom Valente and seconded by Jeff Eischen. The motion was carried.

**Recreation Director Report:**

**Recreation Soccer Proposal – Torpedoes Soccer Club**

The Director reported to the Board that the Torpedoes Soccer Club had reached out during the month to ask how they could help the Recreation Soccer program. After lengthy discussions, they have offered the following:

- To hold a summer camp during the week of August 2<sup>nd</sup> for every player that has signed up for Recreation Soccer. It will be held at Pulis Field from 9am-noon for 3 days and will cost the participants nothing. A free camp run by Torpedoes trainers for our players.
- To “scholarship” all Torpedoes players’ Recreation Soccer fees if they want to play in town. They are going to advise their players that the Torpedoes will fund anyone that wishes to play Recreation Soccer in addition to Torpedoes Soccer from Grades 3-8.

The Director asked the Board if they saw any downside here to which there was none. The Board opined that this could benefit both groups equally and was please at the offer of a legitimate free soccer camp for our players. The Director will reach out to the Torpedoes and accept their offers.

**Repeating 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Policy Discussion:**

The Director advised that he was asked recently if children that are taking a “prep” year after 8<sup>th</sup> grade before they attend high school could still participate in Recreation programs at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. After lengthy and robust discussion, the Board reiterated its position from two years ago that there are many opportunities for 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates to continue to participate in sports outside of Recreation and that opening the door for sometimes older, bigger, faster, stronger, and more mature children to potentially play with participants that are at least 2 years younger would not be beneficial to either the older or the younger players. Another concern is that those that would participate if it were permitted would be taking a spot from someone who has been

playing for years, especially in travel sports such as basketball, and that the younger children will be forced out of the program if the graduated 8<sup>th</sup> grader makes the team. The Board's official position is that those children that matriculate from 8<sup>th</sup> grade should take advantage of other opportunities in Pop Warner Football, AAU Basketball, Club Baseball, and other outside organizations and not be permitted to participate at the Recreation 8<sup>th</sup> grade level for any programs.

### **Travel Baseball & Softball Program – Spring and Summer**

The Director requested a minor change in our list of programs, specifically to add the spring season to our current "Summer Travel Baseball & Softball" program. The history here is that when travel baseball and softball began in town, it took place after the recreation season and teams that had been formed for the summer simply practiced in the spring separate from their rec teams. As time went on, spring "scrimmages" started and about 15 years ago, we saw the first signs of official spring leagues in which teams could participate and play games in the spring as part of their "spring training." Today, the travel baseball and softball teams simply participate in two separate seasons; a spring season and a summer season. The fee that the Recreation Department collects is only for the summer season and the parents pay the expenses for the spring season which includes payments to the coaches to reimburse them for the spring league fee (around \$250), spring umpires (between \$240 - \$480 depending on age level), and excess tournament costs above the \$350 that the Recreation Department reimburses for. The Director's idea is to simply add the spring season into the summer season and increase the amount we charge to account for the spring expenses. This way, the parents pay one fee at registration and they pay for their uniforms. The constant collection by our coaches for spring fees would be a thing of the past which would be a welcome change for the parents and coaches. The Board agreed, including several that have coached or are currently coaching, that this will be a more effective and efficient way of handling our travel baseball and softball fees. John Giovacco motioned to include the spring season in our registrations and to increase the fee to account for those additional expenses, and Rich Sica seconded the motion. The Board was unanimous in its approval. The Director will make the changes necessary after evaluating the costs involved in adding the spring season expenses. He will then forward to the Township Committee for review.

### **Boys Lacrosse – Program Director and Coach, Sal Sassano, Stepping Away**

The Director reluctantly announced to the Board that Sal Sassano, the boys lacrosse program director, and a coach in our program, for the past 20 years, will be stepping away at the completion of this season. Sal started the Wyckoff lacrosse program 20 years ago and has coached and directed the program ever since. He has been the backbone of our program, not only coaching, but also training coaches, scheduling all practices and games, and keeping the Director apprised of any issues related to lacrosse. At its peak, Sal was the Director of a program with more than 230 boys, and ran it just as effectively as when the program started with less than 100. Board member Jeff Eischen exclaimed that there have been few, if any, that have had the impact on any program, possibly in the entire state, than Sal has had on Wyckoff Lacrosse. The Director advised the Board that Sal's last home game, coaching our 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys, is scheduled for May 22<sup>nd</sup> at Pulis Field and asked that members of the Board be there to thank him and to wish him well. Tim Shanley proposed that a Proclamation thanking Sal for his volunteer service is in order and asked the Director to author one in order for it to be presented to Sal at that game. The Director will get working on that Proclamation and will remind the Board prior to the game.

### **Registrations for Fall Activities Ending:**

The Director advised the Board that registration for recreation soccer, flag and tackle football, cheerleading, and girls volleyball officially concludes on Sunday night, May 16<sup>th</sup>. Late fees begin after May 16<sup>th</sup> and we will continue to take registrations until we are full. A wait list may be started when the program fills up. Summer clinics and Summer Day Camp registration officially ends on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Facility Use/Rental Applications Review:**

The Director requested the Board review the following field use applications, based on the Township's procedure of involving the Recreation Board in the approval process for field rental after a review of the paperwork by the Recreation Director and Township Administrator. Two applications were discussed by the Board and approved for use/rental. The applications at this meeting included the following:

1. Bergen Shootout – this is a football camp company run by some of the Ramapo High School football coaches operating under the National Organization of Coaches Association Directors. Their request is to host a high school, non-contact, 7 on 7 football tournament at Pulis Field on Saturday, July 17<sup>th</sup>. There are no conflicts on the field that day and the paperwork, including insurance, is in order.
2. Wyckoff YMCA – the Wyckoff YMCA would like to hold their baseball classes at the Community Park facility baseball fields during the weeks of June 28<sup>th</sup> and July 26<sup>th</sup>. Neither week conflicts with any of our programming or camps that we are hosting and the YMCA has submitted the proper paperwork, including insurance.

The Director advised the Board that that his review of the applications, Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreements, and Certificates of Insurance for these requests determined the applications to be in order.

Finding the application in order and discussing the history of successful use by both programs, the Recreation Board unanimously approved all of the above applications after a motion to approve them was made by Doug Arone and seconded by John Giovacco.

### **Men's Softball:**

The Men's Softball program is starting its 2021 season tonight at Memorial Field. The program is up to 9 teams (up from 8 in 2020, down from 10 in 2019) and will compete in town until early August. 183 residents, men 27 years of age or older, registered for the program this year. The Director also advised the Board that there is a ground swell of resident women who may want to start up a women's softball league. They are gathering on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the spring and funding the play themselves and it is possible they want to rejuvenate the women's league that we used to have before interest waned and the league folded several years ago.

### **Covid Protocol Update:**

Two weeks ago, the CDC updated its protocols in regard to wearing masks outdoors. The new rule states that fully vaccinated individuals need not wear masks when outdoors as long as the crowd isn't large and social distancing can be maintained. Naturally, our coaches have been asking if they can remove their masks now if they are fully vaccinated. Subsequent to the CDC issuing new guidance, the NJSIAA, the governing body for New Jersey sports, issued its own

guidance, requiring high school coaches to continue to wear their masks during practices and competition. The Board discussed this at length and ultimately agreed that our protocol should more closely follow the athletic association guiding high school sports and that all coaches should continue to wear their masks, simply to continue to make all of our participants and their parents feel comfortable. We will continue to monitor the changing protocols and will adjust when possible.

**Memorial Basketball Courts:**

In a follow up to last month's meeting regarding the loud music, foul language, and litter at the Memorial basketball courts, the Director advised that new signs have been purchased prohibiting such things, and they have been mounted around the facility. The sign at the tennis courts was also updated.

The Board adjourned at 9:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Wingfield  
Director, Wyckoff Parks & Recreation