

**DRAFT**  
**CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Date/Time: September 2nd, 2014 at 5:15pm Location: City Hall (407 Grant Street) – Board Room  
Members Present: Gary Gisselman, Robert Mielke, David Nutting, Tom Neal, David Oberbeck (c),  
Others Present: William Duncanson–Director, Peter Knotek-Assistant Director, Karyn Powers-Recreation  
Superintendent, Maryanne Groat-Finance Director

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. It was noted that there was a quorum present and the meeting was called to order by Chairperson Oberbeck at 5:15pm. No public comments.

Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Mielke, second by Gisselman to approve the Park and Recreation Committee August 5th, 2014 draft minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Summer Programs – Report on Summer Recreation Programs – Powers reported that there were two British soccer camps, three dog gone pool parties, eight weeks of morning and after playgrounds at four locations, nine weeks of morning and afternoon tennis camps, three sessions of evening family tennis lessons, three sessions of swim lessons, nine weeks of open swim at Schulenburg Pool and ten weeks of open swim at Memorial Pool held this summer. By partnering with other organizations the department held a Splash Into Safety Day, a free swim day, a free swim week and provided financial assistance for swimming lessons. The department continued its partnership with the Wausau School District to provide summer playground opportunities at Riverview and Jefferson elementary schools for their Monday through Thursday summer school. The department also provided employment and recreational leadership opportunities for more than 35 people. Powers gave attendance numbers for the programs. Questions were answered.

Fee Directive – Discussion and Possible Action on Revising Park and Recreation Fees – A fee schedule had been previously distributed. The majority of fee changes are for building rentals where labor and material cost increases of about 3% are reflected. Administrative fee increases reflect both labor cost and time increases. New fees include administrative fees for replacing annual boat launch passes and selling units of tickets at a discounted price for Sylvan Hill tubing. Duncanson said that pool fees were left the same but an improved Kaiser Pool will be open next summer. There will be increased costs because more staff will be necessary to run the pool. He questioned if a higher daily fee should be charged at Kaiser or if the fees should be kept the same during the time that all the pools are being reconstructed. Staff does recommend leaving the season pass price the same which is good at all of the pools. Powers said that both Weston and Rothschild charge \$4.00 daily pool fees but that Rothschild had more discounted price breaks. She said something to recognize is that the numbers at the two pools did not go up by significant amount over Kaiser. A lot of Kaiser Pool swimmers did not go anywhere. She did not feel daily pool fees should increase by a big amount. Gisselman would like the pool to be used as much as possible and did not want the fees raised too high either. He would rather look at it after all the pools are remodeled. Powers mentioned that there is a financial assistance program which is mainly used for reduced family or individual season pool passes. Neal felt they could strike a balance by not pricing fees too high but having reasonable increases for logistics, manpower and to manage the flow. Oberbeck felt as a new pool is redone it makes sense to bring up the cost to reflect the additional staffing and that should be expected as the other pools are redone. Nutting was interested in seeing a proposed breakdown of the increases including any discounted price breaks and he could understand a reasonable increase. Duncanson asked if Committee could approve the fee schedule as presented with the exception of the daily swim fees and next month staff will bring in numbers differentiating between Kaiser and Memorial Pools for this next year. Oberbeck questioned how a dollar increase would reflect for the additional staff. Neal felt any proposed increases should show what percentage operating cost is being seen. Powers noted that with increased attendance more concessions will be sold and that will also help offset expense. **Motion** by Neal, second by Mielke to accept the fee schedule as presented except for the daily swim fee and to look at that number next month. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Aquatic Facility Project – Status Report on the Reconstruction of the City Aquatic Facilities – Knotek said that the general construction and the pool slides contracts were awarded to Altmann Construction for \$1,786,000. The

contract for the construction of the Kaiser Pool and associated plumbing went to Badger Pools for \$934,900. Demolition and site grading will be finished by the end of this month. The pool mechanical room and pump pit will be finished by the end of October. Substantial completion needs to be done by June 20, 2015 and final completion by July 1, 2015. Knotek discussed some of the staging options for the remaining two pools. He said the thought now is maybe there is a better way to get the other two pools done without have them both down at the one time. He said that staff is still trying to coming up with the best staging scenario for the remaining pools to get the best funding possible.

400 Block Fees – Discussion and Possible Action on Revising the 400 Block Fee Policy – Neal said he had talked to Jacobson about becoming a member of the board of Wausau Events. There may be situations where he has to abstain from voting. Some members thought he would have to abstain from discussion as well as voting. Duncanson noted that Groat was on Wausau Events as well. Duncanson said when the 400 Block was designed and improved the thought was that the uses there would be a revenue stream that would help offset costs. He wanted to make Committee aware of the process for collecting fees and how it's working. The City has an events policy in place that lists fees and regulations no matter where they occur. A 400 Block policy and reservation form with fees was developed. A resolution in 2012 resolved that the revised 400 Block fees be implemented and assessed to individual events in accordance with the City services and equipment usage fee determination schedule but organizations currently exempt on the matrix schedule remain exempt. Organizations receiving direct City funding, along with the Christmas, Labor Day, Memorial Day, and United Way parades are exempt from rental fees and are eligible for in-kind services up to \$5,000 per event. This applies to certain types of events like free events of wide interest and admission events that are open to the general public sponsored and/or organized by a not-for-profit group, club or community group. The second resolution in 2012 reinforced that the rental fees apply to all events that are not exempt.

Before events are held they are reviewed by supporting City departments who are supposed to estimate what their costs will be. After the event, it is the supporting department's responsibility to notify the Clerk's Office of what their actual costs were which the Park Department does. If all of the combined costs are over \$5,000 that amount is charged to the event sponsor. Unfortunately not all the departments turn in costs. Because of this Duncanson doesn't know if anyone is being charged. Over the last number of years some of the events that the Park Department has collected fees from have gone under the umbrella of Wausau Events and now pay nothing. So far this year the Park Department has collected \$2,500 in revenues. Oberbeck has felt that the fees that were associated with the 400 Block should be charged but others had said it wasn't fair to charge back to organizations that were receiving funds from the City. Duncanson said there are great things going on the 400 Block that benefit the City in many ways. The main thing with the set-up is when Wausau supported an event it didn't want to give them money and then take it back, however the effect of the process and how it is working is that the cost of supporting these events is taking away from park and recreation programs and facilities and the ability to provide those services is being impacted. The City has to decide what services it wants to provide and how they want to do it. If the Committee and Council decide to stay as they are then they need to recognize that park and recreation services will continue to be diminished and that has to be accepted.

Oberbeck questioned if there was a budget established for these types of events or were they just coming out of the department budgets. Groat said it's coming out of the department budgets for the in-kind services. Oberbeck felt a budget should be established so they know what is being expended on the Block and then it could be adjusted. Right now events could be added that would impact the budget and there is no money there. He believes room tax dollars should be paid accordingly to each type of organization but when those monies are used up it should also come back for their events to pay for services that are being provided from the City so they can establish and work within their budget. He recommends a budget be established within the park and recreation budget that allocates funding for this and if it goes over then it goes back for budget modification for additional dollars rather than just a tab basically. Gisselman questioned if private events are matching their expenses for putting on the events. Duncanson said fees are being collected but those are small. It covers direct costs but not everything. Groat said it was really two things, one is the work that City staff do to facilitate the event. That is the \$5,000 maximum that the City will allow workers to assist with. Then there is the fee to have an event at the 400 Block or in a park. Right now in the current policy someone who receives room tax dollars is exempt from having to pay either. They don't have to pay to rent the 400

Block nor do they have to pay the fees of City staff helping as long as it's under that \$5,000 threshold. The easy thing to do initially would be not to exempt anyone from paying the 400 Block fees. Knotek said but still maintain in-kind for other city services. Oberbeck felt an organization should say what type of services they need and the cost associated with that and then the City should decide whether to support it or not. Mielke asked if Duncanson had department costs for the "Rock the Block" or the "Komen for the Cure" events. Duncanson said he could get those. Oberbeck said those numbers should supplement the budget otherwise its taking away from the normal budget. Duncanson said there is a lot of value to what is happening on the Block and use should not be discouraged. He doesn't know an equitable way to do it but what he would like is to not have to keep on absorbing increasing costs annually. Oberbeck said it may be moving money into the park department or having an accounting system where room tax dollars are given but services used are paid back and the City can also become a sponsor of these events but that is room tax dollars also. Other sponsorships could be looked for as well. Nutting said the concerts are already sponsored by Marshfield Clinic. Oberbeck questioned if that went to Wausau Events or towards the event. Knotek said it pays for the band. Nutting said this discussion has occurred before and the pools are not here to make money and that is true of the parks in general. They have to be sure that the Parks Department has the money to maintain this amenity for the quality of life that is put out to the area. Oberbeck said unfortunately we aren't using the room tax dollars to pay for the expenses of the Block it's going to Wausau Events. Groat said that the room tax fund does give the general fund \$180,000 a year to offset expenses. Oberbeck said the parks budget hasn't changed and other parks are being neglected at the rate of \$65,000. Duncanson said the department was able to hit the targeted budget at zero percent increase by reducing maintenance. In the supplemental budget \$20,000 was requested to cover water costs. He also asked for \$35,000 to cover 400 Block costs. He also has supplemental items looking at new costs coming on with more segments of Rivers Edge Trail and the east riverfront redevelopment area. The department cannot absorb more work. Either a decision is made that parks aren't maintained at the same level or it is going to cost more money. Mielke said he knows the City is trying to provide services to everyone but its simple economics that they can't afford it. Neal questioned if the department could request a contingency line in its budget. Groat said departments used to have contingency within their budget but then there was criticism from some aldermen when the money wasn't spent. Duncanson said at this time he is requesting supplemental monies at the budget meetings.

**Motion** by Gisselman, second by Mielke that everyone pays the appropriate fee established by the policy for the 400 Block whether it's City sponsored event or not. Amendment by Oberbeck to also add in the costs as far as the \$5,000 into a budgeted amount and that's not an increase to budget but a real cost that should be adjusted as a budget modification to 2015 towards the Park and Recreation to accommodate the numbers they have. Groat said that the Department of Public Works is the heavy lifter of a lot of events not the parks so would they really want it in the parks budget. Oberbeck said the correct amount should be appropriated to the budget, it's just being absorbed right now and the final budget should be adjusted to accommodate the costs of the 400 Block. Groat said that more of the most expensive events for City staff time don't happen on the 400 Block. Two of the most expensive events are the Blues Fest and the Balloon Rally which are held elsewhere. Oberbeck withdrew his amendment. He restated that the motion is that all entities pay the fee and the exemption is removed. The fee is established by the fee policy. If more is needed they would ask the City in their request in their room tax for additional funding and if the City says it's appropriate they could do it at that point. Motion **carried** by vote with Neal abstaining, Oberbeck, Mielke and Gisselman voting yes, Nutting voting no.

Nuisance Geese Discussion and Possible Action on Reducing the Negative Impacts of Geese on Public and Private Property – Duncanson said resident giant Canada geese live in urban environments, have no predators, high survival rates of their broods, and explosive population growth potential. Communities have problems because the geese eat continually, damage grass, defecate profusely leaving areas degraded and unusable. In 2007 staff initially looked at a management activity but determined not to have one. The federal government will do round-ups with communities paying the cost. The estimated cost is \$5,000 to significantly reduce the population. Duncanson suggests that Wausau in conjunction with Marathon County go into a joint effort to reduce the goose population so he requests a supplemental request to the 2015 budget of \$2,500. He said the federal government has steps the community must go through. They first want communities to try different treatment and environmental management methods. Duncanson described some of the different techniques that can be used to control them but basically it is just moving the problem. In a round-up, a public meeting is held which APHIS would conduct. The community would have to try and make an effort of removing nests or destroying eggs which is very labor intensive. The round-up would take

place in June when the geese are molting and flightless. APHIS would herd them into pens, put them in cages take them to facility where they are asphyxiated. There are two options for the carcasses. One is for food pantries where testing costs are involved and \$10 per goose for processing. The other option is for animal use facilities such as zoos which involve lesser testing costs and no processing fees. Duncanson said that many communities around the State have had round-ups. The estimated costs are for the food pantry option. **Motion** by Mielke, second by Nutting to add on the supplemental budget request to the 2015 budget of \$2,500 for a goose round-up.

Athletic Neighborhood Park – Discussion and Possible Action on Dedicating Athletic Neighborhood Park - Committee set the date of Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm for having a dedication of the park. A plaque of all the donors that made the project possible will be unveiled.

Project Update

Athletic Park Perimeter Wall Repair – The project includes tuck pointing, damaged wall cap replacement and minor foundation repair. It will go out to bid August 30 and bids are due on September 16.

Athletic Neighborhood Park Playground Netting – Staff is awaiting revised design from Becher-Hoppe Associates

Future Agenda Items – budget, dog park, street tree standards, Brockmeyer Park

Next Regular Meeting – Tuesday, October 7th, 2014 at 5:15pm (possibly a tour of the Eau Claire River Conservancy followed by the meeting at the Curling Club or City Airport.

Adjourn - Motion by Mielke, second by Gisselman to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.