

**MINUTES  
WORKSHOP  
DOVER CITY COUNCIL  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MAY 7, 2003  
6:00 PM**

1. DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEWS

Those present: Mayor Nossiff, Mayor Pro-Tem Dunnington, Councilor Keays, Whitmore, Mayberry, Christenbury, Hindle and City Manager Beecher. Councilors Quigley and Tweedie were absent.

A. RECREATION/ARENA DIVISION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Pete Lavoie stated that this meeting was a continuation of the community services budget presentation. Pete, introduced Gary Bannon, and Krista Feely recreation program director and several UNH students. Gary proceeded with the slide show. (see handout in 5/7/2003 council folder) for details.

The Mayor interrupted when Gary mentioned the Senior Center and how the McConnell Center is involved. Gary explained the center is in addition to the regular senior center on Third Street. This will just add to their programs. They would like to integrate both programs but he added they are not competing with the center on Third Street.

Hindle asked when the study report of the arena would be available; Gary said it was due May 28<sup>th</sup>, hopefully before the budget is adopted.

Whitmore commented she appreciated the opportunities the recreation program provides for citizens. She hopes it can continue. She observed in the slides they were covering the cost of the programs, in reality this is not true; the costs exceed the revenue of the programs. She wondered if kids from outside our community paid what resident kids pay. Gary says there are all different circumstances, and there are really not that many non-resident kids involved. They do charge more to them in swimming lessons, he listed programs that differentiate between in resident and non resident. She then asked about the adult programs and whether they are a citizen or not. Gary says they are run by affiliated leagues/groups with no mandate. He feels most programs are 90% or better residents. He gets this information from the rosters. She asked if he could share what we charge the Seacoast Swim Association. Gary says \$57 or \$58 per hour, and the market rate is \$75. per hour as that association had funded a heater and covers for the outdoor pool years ago so they were locked into a raise of under a 2 ½ % increase per year. She would like Gary to get the City Manager to keep current with the revenue and what the costs are. On the arena she has a question on the budget line items of revenue that is around a million dollars and last year he only brought in \$720,000. Whitmore continued, what are we expected to bring in this year in reality. He is hoping to bring in close to \$800,000 or \$900,000 as he is now around that range. She concluded we are looking at a shortfall for again next year of \$300,000 if we do not change our model. She is looking forward to the study coming in and the positive changes that will occur.

Mayberry clarified we entered into an agreement 12 years ago with the Seacoast Swim Association and, why did we enter into an open ended contract. He feels faced with no pool or an increase the SSA would choose the increase. When he was on the last council, they appropriated a million dollars for fields; he wondered what is the status of these fields. Gary explained where we are on the five new fields near Garrison School off Mast Road and that they will be able to be used this spring.

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Mayberry asked do we have any public /private discussions on these fields for cost sharing. Gary replied they have approached assorted groups to fund different items like bathrooms, etc. Mayberry makes it clear he supports recreation programs; he just wants to insure that every child can participate. We must adjust the rates of these facilities to the market rate, if we do not do this, then the programs will be gone. Gary is hoping to do this. Christenbury asked if the SSA contract is in his possession. Gary will provide it for them. This is a regional recreation budget not just Dover's and the Dover taxpayers are paying for it. Christenbury does not believe the taxpayers should have to subsidize these programs. He found it interesting the hotel rooms Gary mentioned in his presentation, are not in Dover. Christenbury continued, we are subsidizing business opportunities in Portsmouth, Manchester, etc. He hopes those businesses will make a healthy donation to these programs. These rates are way out of whack. The pool situation is particularly disturbing, this is the first time he has heard about the SSA contract. He feels Gary is going in the right direction. He clarified; this council has not said anything about closing the Jenny Thompson pool or any of the summer events. They, the council have not taken a position on any of this that was the department. He sees a heavy subsidy of non- residents, and rates must be adjusted. If Dover residents are not interested in the programs, then we should eliminate them. Recreation programs are heavily utilized by parents and children.

Hindle commented on the Fosters article in tonight's paper. He thanked Gary and Joanne Dodge (who was present) for looking for additional programs for the seniors. We should not leave not only any child behind but he wants to leave no resident behind.

Dunnington has a concern with resident and non resident users; he asked is this something Gary keeps track of. Gary says yes, and he will get the file for them. He stated he has software that keeps the numbers separated; swimming programs bring in non residents, basketball, etc is 99% Dover residents. They have done this in memberships for instance in the playground programs, he has many subsidized applicants that cannot afford to pay the full cost.

Keays says he has been very active all his life in sports; the fields in this city are a disgrace. He worked for 2 days at WPS to get it in shape, did Gary even notice. He mentioned other fields he has taken care of. What is the city doing to keep their fields up, nothing, nothing. What is the recreation department doing to maintain these fields, not much. Gary says there is no money in the budget to maintain the fields and he does not want to cast blame but he is not in charge of the upkeep of the fields; that is Paul Chalue who takes care of the fields. Recreation does not manage this. Keays says they have a softball program up at Guppey, how much do they charge for that. Gary says they pay \$5.00 per player outside of the budget to go towards new fields. Keays wondered why they don't take a rake and rake the fields. Mayberry wondered how much we charge for basketball per person. Gary says some leagues are \$100. but they get \$5.00 per player. Gary continues to try to explain the goals of the fund. Mayberry has concerns with the amount of money paid. Gary explained how the school is involved with receiving some of these funds from these programs. Mayberry continues, if we do not raise the rates on these programs, they will be gone.

Whitmore says who is paying the light bill on the Guppey Park field. Gary says the softball league has been paying for it themselves as it is directly billed to them.

The Mayor thanked Gary for his presentation. He compared Gary to the Ever Ready bunny, he just does not stop.

## **2. OTHER BUSINESS**

## **3. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayberry moved seconded by all, all in favor.

Judy Gaouette  
CITY CLERK