

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, February 2, 2006**

MINUTES

Board members present: Coleman Hillman, Vice-Chairperson, Sam Brown, Patrick Dugan, Dorothy Gass, Robert Harper, Jody Payne and Robert Richardson.

Board members absent: Andrew Roper and Lisa Wainger Rush.

Recreation, Parks and Community Services staff and others present: Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks & Community Services (RP&CS) and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Coleman Hillman, Vice-Chairperson, at 5:30 p.m. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Sam Brown motioned, seconded by Robert Harper, to approve the regular minutes of January 5, 2006. Motion carried with all in favor. Sam Brown motioned, seconded by Robert Harper, to approve the executive session minutes of January 5, 2006. Motion carried with all in favor.

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES OVERVIEW

Director Phil Rollins introduced Cynthia Brown, Community Services Division Manager, who provided an overview of the Division. The Department of Community Services merged with the Department of Recreation and Parks effective April 1, 2004, forming the department of Recreation, Parks and Community Services. Ms. Brown provided several handouts that described the Division's mission, a Division overview, the purpose and goals and an organizational chart. The Division works with Federal, State and local agencies and citizens to identify community concerns and problems and to make the best use of resources to find solutions. Programs are primarily funded by grants with support from the County.

Sections within the Division are: Prevention programs, Teen Court and teen programs, Highway Safety efforts and VISTA.

- Prevention – Walter Biscoe, Prevention Coordinator, manages the following prevention programs: Second Step, Guiding Good Choices, Strengthening Families, and Communities Mobilizing for Change in Alcohol. The CSAFE program provides increased enforcement and works with Division of Parole and Probation, Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Social Services, and the State's Attorney's Office.
- Teen Court and Teen programs – Kelsey Bush, Teen Programs Coordinator, works with the St. Mary's Teen Court Program in which non-violent, first time juvenile offenders have the opportunity to make restitution while staying out of the juvenile court system. He also works with Project Graduation, Freedom Fest and teen dances and programs.
- Highway Safety – Jackie Beckman, Highway Safety Coordinator, works with State and local law enforcement on programs to address community concerns such as drunk and impaired driving and inattentive driving. Programs are also in place to increase seat belt usage. The Division collaborates with the Health Department on child safety seat education. Programs are also provided for teen and senior driver's education and the Topsy Taxi safe ride home initiative.
- VISTA – Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) Mark O'Malley, Rebecca Hill, and Lori VanGorden, have each committed from one to two years to work in the County to address poverty issues and assist low income families. They are currently working on a variety of Prevention and outreach programs.
- The Division also supports a number of Boards and Committees. They include: The Human Relations

Commission, Commission for Women, St. Mary's Interagency Children's Council, Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Victims Advocacy Committee, and the Community Health Advisory Commission.

Mr. Rollins commended Ms. Brown and her Division on the wide variety of successful programs available to the public.

Coleman Hillman asked how programs are advertised. Ms. Brown stated that programs are advertised through the website, media, local libraries and Departmental Program Guide.

MID-ATLANTIC RECREATION AND PARKS YOUTH SPORTS ALLIANCE SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

Mr. Rollins introduced Arthur Shepherd who provided some background information on the Mid-Atlantic Recreation and Parks Youth Sports Alliance Sportsmanship Award and this year's local nominee. Mr. Shepherd introduced Mr. Jim Sewell as the County's local nominee. Mr. Sewell lives in St. Inigoes, has been involved in the administration of youth sports in St. Mary's County for many years and is currently the Vice-President of the St. Mary's National Little League. Mr. Sewell thanked the Department for the nomination and stated that he attended the State award's banquet in Annapolis on January 30th. He stated that the ceremony was a wonderful experience; he, Kenny Sothoron, Delegate Bohanan and Senator Dyson attended the ceremony. Vice-Chairman Hillman presented Mr. Sewell with a certificate of appreciation for the R&P Board and the Department.

RAISING COMMUNITY STANDARDS IN YOUTH SPORTS INITIATIVE

Mr. Rollins updated the Board on the status of the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports Initiative. The draft initiative was endorsed by the R&P Board in December 2003 and was discussed again on several occasions in 2004. The initiative was considered by the BOCC in April 2004, but not adopted. Mr. Rollins plans to again propose the initiative to the BOCC on Tuesday, February 7, 2006 for consideration. If adopted by the BOCC, the program would begin starting in fall 2006.

Recommendations are based on changing the culture of youth sports through reform, education and accountability. He provided a handout on the program which included an overview of youth sports in the County, strategies for implementing the program and program costs. The proposed initiative would require a standard user group application, training for league administrators and coaches, a code of ethics for parents, coaches screening, a smoking policy, a crisis intervention plan and liability insurance (all the volunteer leagues now have liability insurance).

Arthur Shepherd stated that leagues are already doing some of the items listed in the initiative. The plan would ensure that all the volunteer leagues would all have the same training and background checks. The crisis intervention plan will help coaches and administrators deal with inappropriate behavior that could arise during games and events. It is anticipated that the cost of the initiative would add about \$6.85 per sports league participant. That includes costs for: coaches training (two per team) - \$4.50 per participant; coaches screening - \$2.25 per participant; and administrator training - .10 per participant. For less than \$7 per registrant, parents will be assured that coaches and administrators have had training and background checks.

Patrick Dugan asked if the leagues are aware this proposal is moving forward. Mr. Rollins stated that leagues were briefed on the program on several occasions in 2004. If the BOCC endorses the proposal, staff will meet again with the leagues. Mr. Shepherd stated that the major concern of the volunteer sports leagues was the cost to implement the program.

Robert Harper motioned, seconded by Patrick Dugan to support the proposed Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports Initiative as presented by staff.

ST. MARY'S YOUTH FOOTBALL PROPOSAL

Mr. Rollins briefed the Board on staff's proposal for St. Mary's County Youth Football. This proposal is being brought forward in part as a result of an incident that happened at Fifth District Park last November during a football game. Under this proposal, RP&CS would serve as the league administrator for the new program. Community based youth football organizations would be established in the northern, central, and southern areas of the County. The primary purpose of these organizations would be to establish football and cheerleading teams in various age and weight

divisions; fundraise to support their organizations; register youth in their areas for these teams; and purchase, maintain and store team equipment.

These community organizations would enter teams into a County-wide league and the league would be administered by the RP&CS Department. The Department would establish league age and weight divisions (to be determined) and supervise weigh-ins; establish league rules and regulations; assign practice facilities; prepare game schedules; coordinate the scheduling of officials; supervise game fields; and provide other league administration. Football organizations would pay an annual "franchise fee" to the Department for each team entered into the league. This fee would be used to pay for referees, site supervisors and other league expenses. A committee or board would be established to work with the Department and provide input on establishing rules and regulations, establish age and weight categories, etc. Staff thinks this will take the load off a few people and spread the responsibility more equitably.

This proposal for youth football league administration is modeled after successful programs in Charles and Calvert Counties. Both Counties have managed youth football in this way for many years (Mr. Rollins was involved in establishing this model in Charles County more than 25 years ago). There is another youth football organization that wishes to get started in the County; but, staff feels that having two separate leagues competing for players and limited facilities will present additional problems. The Southern County Youth Football group has agreed to support the County proposal and join the St. Mary's Youth Football league if plans for implementation move forward.

Staff has met with Charles and Calvert County park officials and is prepared to move forward with implementing this for the fall 2006 season. Members of the Pigskin program and the new Southern League would be invited to work with the County to develop the new league. The hope is that many of these current league officials and coaches will become the community youth football organizations. However, due to the nature of this sport, if some members of these leagues choose not to participate in the proposed program, the Department does not recommend that public fields be made available to them (this is the way Calvert and Charles Counties handle this).

There will be County costs associated with the new program. The Department will need an additional FTE position in FY07 to help handle the football league administration (and to help manage the Raising Community Standards Initiative with other youth sports leagues). Staff has also proposed that \$25,000 in County funds be made available annually to fund a scholarship program for low and moderate income families who are unable to pay the full fee for participating in football or *other youth sports* programs. Also, if the existing Pigskin league/teams choose not to participate in the new football league, the County may have to provide start up loans to the community youth football organizations to purchase football equipment. Staff feels that this proposal, along with the Raising Community Standards in Youth Initiative, will provide accountability and significantly improve the youth sports environment.

Robert Richardson asked if staff would be going out to communities to explain the new program. Mr. Rollins stated that information will be provided to citizens through the media and then meetings would be held in different geographic areas of the County to inform citizens about the plan and to solicit information from them.

Patrick Dugan stated that he had a daughter in the Pigskin Cheerleading program and was dissatisfied. He decided not to stay in the league, but didn't think of turning to the County to solve the problem. Mr. Harper stated that since the current league is using County facilities the public perception is the County should be able to provide some assistance when problems arise.

Dorothy Gass stated that her child played in the Pigskin Football League for several years. As a parent, she didn't think she could speak up when she had complaints for fear of future ramifications.

Sam Brown expressed support for staff's proposal. He felt the same group of dedicated parents would be part of the operations of the new league and be part of the committee helping to set the rules and regulations.

Robert Harper motioned, seconded by Robert Richardson, to endorse the Recreation, Parks and Community Services proposal for the St. Mary's County Youth Football League and Cheerleading to include the proposal to hire one full-time staff person in FY07, for \$25,000 in funding for the youth sports scholarship for low to moderate income families, and be prepared to underwrite the start-up expenses of the league if needed with the understanding the program would become self-supporting. Motion carried with all in favor.

Staff plans to present the proposal to the BOCC on Tuesday, February 7, 2006 for consideration; Board members are encouraged to attend.

RP&CS FY2007 OPERATING BUDGET INFORMATION

Mr. Rollins provided a handout of the draft RP&CS FY07 budget submission. The handout included FY05 actual expenditures, FY06 approved budget, FY07 baseline budget and the FY07 requested budget.

The request represents an approximate 9% increase. The Recreation Activity Fund requested budget for FY07 is \$2,887,592, which represents a decrease from FY06 in the amount of \$180,276 (result of reducing hours of part time staff and personal service contracts). The Wicomico Shores Golf Course Enterprise Fund requested budget is \$1,311,934, which represents an increase of \$62,255 (result of merit and cola increases, fuel, electric and overall operating costs increases).

Mr. Rollins noted that the main increases in the requested budget for Administration are costs associated with merit and cola increases and the additional funding for a Sports Specialist. Parks Division changes and increases are due to Tyrone Harris' position being transferred from Administration to the Parks Division, conversion of two seasonal hourly employees to one full time merit employee, increase in waste disposal, mileage, electric, grass cutting and air conditioning unit replace at the Hall of Fame building at Chancellor's Run Regional Park. Museum increases include the addition of a Piney Point Lighthouse Museum site supervisor, some additional part time hourly help, postage, fuel and costs involved with the tour boat. Community Services increases include the addition of a Teen Court Coordinator (since the County can no longer receive a VISTA volunteer for the program), postage, fuel, mileage and meals.

Mr. Harper asked about the level of input the Board should provide with regard to the Community Services Division and budget. Mr. Rollins stated that needs to be clarified, since it wasn't addressed during the reorganization. Mr. Rollins mentioned that Kelsey Bush, Teen Coordinator for the Community Services Division, now manages the Teen dances for the Department. The Teen Court Coordinator position requested in the FY07 budget would also help administer teen programs.

Those present agreed that Chairman Andrew Roper would send a letter to the BOCC asking for direction on this matter.

OTHER BUSINESS

Vice-Chairperson Hillman asked if one of the upcoming Program Guides could be direct mailed to every household in the County. Mr. Rollins stated that's a good idea, but funding for direct mailing isn't available within the Department's budget. The guides are distributed to the schools, as an insert in the Enterprise, available at the County libraries and on the County website.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Jody Payne and Dorothy Gass, nominated Andrew Roper as Chairperson and Robert Richardson as Vice Chairperson for 2006. **Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Dorothy Gass, to approve the slate of nominees. The motion carried with all in favor of the motion.**

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County will be held on Thursday, March 2, 2006, at 5:30 p.m., in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on March 2, 2006.