

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD  
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
Meeting of Thursday, April 3, 2008**

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Patrick Dugan, Chairperson; Robert Richardson, Vice Chairperson; Richard Buckler; Robert Hicks; Thomas Nelson; David Phalen; Andrew Roper; and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Coleman Hillman.

**RECREATION, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT:** Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks & Community Services (RP&CS); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Board meeting was called to order by Patrick Dugan, Chairperson, at 5:35 p.m. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Andrew Roper motioned, seconded by David Phalen, to approve the minutes of March 6, 2008. Motion carried 8-0.**

**FY09 BUDGET UPDATES**

Mr. Rollins referred to a budget handout which was provided to the Board. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the recommended budget to take to public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, April 22, 2008 at Leonardtown High School. Mr. Rollins briefed the R&P Board on the plans for the creation of a new County Department of Human Services. The Division of Community Services, the Marcey House, Local Management Board and Mental Health Authority will all be moved into the new Department effective July 1, 2008. He noted the Department of Community Services was merged with Recreation and Parks in April 2004 and will be moved to the new Department of Human Services effective July 1, 2008. The Community Service Division budget of \$427,530 will be moved to the new Department; this will have no adverse financial or other impact on Recreation and Parks.

Lisa Wainger-Rush asked if any feedback was received on the Board's letter to the BOCC on reconsideration of the request for an additional Groundskeeper position to be included in the FY09 budget. Mr. Rollins stated that he has not received any feedback on this. Mr. Rollins stated that the BOCC will take this and other requests under consideration during upcoming budget work sessions.

**GREAT MILLS SWIMMING POOL**

Mr. Rollins and Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, presented information on the budget for the Great Mills Pool. Mr. Shepherd stated that the pool is 25 yards by 25 meters and includes zero depth entry for maximum accessibility. The pool offers swim lessons, early bird lap swim, water aerobics, birthday parties, therapeutic swimming and hosts school, league and Special Olympics swim teams. The challenge has been to recruit and retain qualified staff and lifeguards for the 80 hour per week operation. Mr. Shepherd referred to handouts provided to the Board on attendance and fees and revenues and expenses. He noted that attendance was up for the first two months of this year as compared to the same period in 2007. The pool generated \$177,304 in revenue in FY06, while expenditures totaled \$328,477, leaving a shortfall of \$151,173. In FY07 \$166,453 was generated in revenue, while \$310,110 was expended, resulting in a deficit of \$143,658.

During a recent budget work session, the BOCC supported providing \$50,000 in general funds in the Recommended Budget for the Recreation Activity Fund to partially subsidize the operation of the Great Mills Pool. The BOCC also

asked staff to look at ways to cut some of the financial loss experienced at the pool. As personnel and utility costs account for 85-90% of the budget, staff examined options for reducing costs by reducing the hours of operation. It was noted that the pool has never been projected to be completely self-supporting. Prior to the pool being opened in 2003, staff estimated that the pool would generate between 50% - 70% of the needed revenue through user fees. For the last two fiscal years the pool has generated about 54% of the needed operating budget from fees and charges. The shortfall has been subsidized from other profit-making programs in the Recreation Enterprise Fund.

Ms. Wainger-Rush asked about the economic impacts of the pool water temperature. Mr. Shepherd stated that a one degree temperature change significantly affects the costs associated with heating the pool. The Red Cross recommends 78-82°; the Great Mills Pool is set at 81° to accommodate all the various users of the pool.

Mr. Rollins and Mr. Shepherd presented some proposed changes to school year hours of operation to reduce costs associated with operating the pool. The plan calls for closing the pool Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. and consolidating water aerobic classes from five days per week to three. The total hours of operation at the pool would be reduced from 80 hours to 58 hours per week during the school year. The 22 hour per week reduction in operating hours (28%) would reduce personnel costs by about \$23,000.

Closing the pool weekdays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. during the school year is projected to impact a small number of lap swimmers. However, the pool will be open from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for lap swimmers as well as daily from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Ms. Wainger-Rush stated the plan looks reasonable based on current usage and the need to identify savings. Robert Hicks asked if it's possible that a surge in attendance could change the situation. Mr. Rollins stated that traditionally, this type of pool doesn't break even. Water parks and leisure pools might draw more users and produce more revenue. Ms. Rush stated that maybe some additional advertising might help; she's talked to some people who don't know the pool is there. Chairman Dugan asked if changing the pool operating hours would make it more difficult to hire staff; Mr. Shepherd stated that it could, but he thinks they can find staff to work during these hours.

Mr. Shepherd stated that birthday parties have proved to be very popular at the pool. Staff is exploring the possibility of offering full service parties at the pool.

Mr. Shepherd stated that an alarm system has been placed in the bath house; no major incidents have been reported. The pool bubble has been vandalized two times this season. Staff is looking into installing a vandalism deterrent camera at the pool. Chairman Dugan stated the blower is loud inside the bubble; Mr. Shepherd stated the blower is set to be replaced and the new unit shouldn't be as loud. Chairman Dugan asked if an indoor aquatic facility would have lower energy costs; Mr. Shepherd stated that you would still need to heat the air and water, so a significant savings is unlikely. Mr. Rollins noted that Calvert County is considering an indoor aquatics facility for an estimated \$15 million.

**Robert Hicks motioned, seconded by Lisa Wainger-Rush, to endorse staff's recommendations to change operating hours at the pool during the school year. The motion carried 8-0.**

Chairman Dugan inquired about the recent Easter Festival held at the Governmental Center. Mr. Shepherd stated that it went very well and had the largest attendance to date for the Festival.

## **CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATES**

- **Three Notch Trail** – Mr. Rollins reported that the developers of Wildewood are moving forward with a section of trail as part of the Wildewood Condominium project. Design and engineering on Phase IVA, from Wal-Mart to Chancellor's Run Road, is complete and this section will be out to bid shortly. Design and engineering is also moving forward on Phase V, from John V. Baggett Park in Laurel Grove to MD 5 in Mechanicsville; this section is anticipated to be under construction by late 2009. Construction is continuing on Phase II of the trail from the Northern Senior Center to just past the County line to Deborah Drive in Charles County; this section should be completed later this summer.
- **Seventh District Park** - The new playground, basketball court and expanded parking are complete. The

restroom/concession building officially opened for use on April 1. The entrance road and parking areas at this park will be paved within the next few weeks.

- **Chancellor's Run Park Ball field Lighting** – The light poles and fixtures have been installed for the Chancellor's Run Park ball field lighting project. It is expected that SMECO will run the service for the project shortly and the lights should be operational within the next few weeks.
- **Central County Parkland Acquisition** – Mr. Rollins reported that appraisals have been received on three properties. The Board discussed this further in Executive Session.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Dugan asked if a fence could be installed between the entrance road and soccer field #1 at Chancellor's Run Regional Park for safety. Mr. Rollins stated that there was a fence there, but it was taken down because it was deteriorated; staff will look into replacing the fence.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Andrew Roper motioned, seconded by Robert Hicks, to meet in Executive Session to discuss matters of property acquisition as provided for in Article 24, Section 4-210(a) 11. Motion carried 8-0.**

**Present:** Patrick Dugan, Chairperson; Robert Richardson, Vice Chairperson; Richard Buckler; Robert Hicks; Thomas Nelson; David Phalen; Andrew Roper; Lisa Wainger-Rush; Phillip Rollins; and Kathy Bailey.

**Authority:** Article 24, Sections 4-210(a) 11.

Time held: 6:30 p.m. – 6:55 p.m.

#### **SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, May 1, 2008, at 5:30 p.m., in Room 14, of the Governmental Center, in Leonardtown.

The May meeting was subsequently canceled; the next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 5, 2008.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on June 5, 2008.