



PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, July 16th, 2024 6pm

Conference Room – Main Floor Admin Building
130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville GA, 30523

Roll Call

- ☒ Joe Elam
- ☒ Peggy Fortson
- ☒ Cassie Head
- ☐ Angela Haughton
- ☒ Keith Deyton
- ☒ Shelley Tullis

Also in attendance – Director – Brooke Whitmire & Office Supervisor/Rental Coordinator - Karen MacLeod

Old Business/Minutes

1. Old Business
 - a. Updates on revision Recreation Advisory Board By-Laws
Peggy shared current revision of by-laws. There was discussion around how the group wanted the wording to be included for the addition of a 7th member. It was discussed that the group would like a representative in an athletic capacity to be included. Possibly someone from the Habersham School Systems. A written resignation was received from Mr. Kowalski. It was also discussed that another duty would be added to the Recreation Advisory Board to review a draft of the department's annual budget prior to it being submitted to county finance.
 - b. Updates on gate by soccer fields
Received a quote for \$600 just to fabricate the gate. It would be up to county facilities supervision employees to install it. There was some discussion around other options like bollards which would be easier to mow around and make way for county vehicles to pass through when needed.
 - c. Updates on playgrounds
No updates on playgrounds. Awaiting the decision for the FY25 budget from the BOC.
2. Approval of June 2024 Minutes
Motion made by Keith, seconded by Peggy – motion carried 5-0 to approve June 2024 minutes.

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New Business/Current Events

1. Written Report – Director, Brooke Whitmire

Director Whitmire went over her department's cost recovery percentages (included in this packet). There was much discussion over all the questions being brought up surrounding the gymnastics program as they have over a 55% cost recovery rate. Whitmire explained that in the past couple of years, the department was tasked with being more transparent about what it takes to run our programs. Since they've worked to do that and to bring in all expenditures and revenues to be run through the department, the budget from this year looks a lot different that it has in years past. Prior to FY24 the gymnastics program utilized outside booster boards to purchase many of their team uniforms and paid gymnast's registration fees and things for meets. The booster boards decided to disband, and the department was asked to bring things in house, so this caused the expenditures to go up, but revenues went up along with those direct costs to cover those things. However, overall, it caused the expenditures to be significantly more than what it had been in past years.

2. UGA Carl Vinson Departmental Report – Preliminary Findings

The written report of these findings is included in this packet. There were over 1,000 responses to the community survey put out and used to compile this information. Many from the community want to see more recreation services, more maintenance of existing buildings, and more green spaces for walking/hiking/biking. The challenges highlighted in the report are the fact that the department is understaffed for what they already provide, which makes adding any new offerings even more challenging because it would require more staff. It is also challenging and makes managerial control of the department very difficult that much of their day-to-day operational controls are handled by an outside department within the county. Many members of the community want to see additional facilities and a reduction in the "centralization" of services in Clarkesville. They want more accessible opportunities and facilities in other parts of the county.

3. Discussion pertaining to private rentals at the Dewey Tench Pavilion

A board member reported neighbors that live within a few miles of the Fairgrounds Facilities and the Dewey Tench pavilion reported noise disturbances to them during private events being held at the Fairgrounds. The group discussed possible remedies to this and decided to look more closely at the rental policies in the next meeting. Staff members were present to go over how rentals are handled and explained that the department follows a policy in which preference is given first and foremost to community events held at the facility, then, to Habersham County Residents and other County Departments and Partners. Only then, once those requests are filled are any private rentals considered. Currently, there are 5 private rentals for 2025 as compared to 10-20 other events being held in the facility.

4. Departmental Cost Recovery Review

Director Whitmire went over each cost center in the department's budget, and it's cost recovery rate. (Report attached to the packet) She compared our average to the national average as reported by the National Recreation and Park Association for agencies of the same size and population as ours. Typically, in a rural area with a population of around 20,000 – 49,999 the cost recovery for a department is 23%. For our main budget the cost recovery is 28.9%, the gymnastics program is 55.5%, and the fitness center is 100% beating the national average on all accounts.

5. Recreation Advisory Board Social Media Presence

Tabled for next month's meeting.

6. GRPA District and State Swim Meet Updates

Vice Chairman, Cassie Head reported on the recently held GRPA district swim meet. Over 150 swimmers were hosted at the aquatic center from 9 teams across northeast Georgia. The Habersham Hurricanes had 6 1st place winners, 4 2nd place winners, and 8 3rd place winners, as well as 18 relay teams that qualified for the state competition!

7. 2024 Remaining Meeting Dates – all held at Habersham County Administrative building beginning at 6:00p

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| a. February 20th | g. August 20 th |
| b. March 19th | h. September 17 th |
| c. April 16th | i. October 15 th |
| d. May 21st | j. November 19 th |
| e. June 18th | k. December 17 th |
| f. July 16 th | |

Upcoming Events

1. July 15th – 19th – Soccer Clinic Rental
2. July 15th – 18th – Volleyball Camp Rental
3. July 19th – HCSO Car Seat Event
4. July 22nd – 25th – Volleyball Camp Rental
5. July 22nd – 26th – Weather permitting – fall sports evaluations
6. July 29th – HCSO School Supplies Event
7. August 2nd – 3rd – Private Wedding Rental

Adjourn

Motion by Joe Elam

Seconded by Shelley Tulis

Time: 8:21p