

**WYCKOFF DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**November 15, 2021**

Doug Arone opened the Recreation Board Meeting at the Wyckoff Recreation office at 195 Woodland Avenue at 7:30 p.m. with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act. “This Regular meeting of the Wyckoff Department of Parks and Recreation Board is now in session. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting has been posted on the bulletin board in the Memorial Town Hall and the Recreation Office; a copy has been filed with the Township Clerk, *The Ridgewood News*, *The Record*, and *The North Jersey Herald and News*, all papers with general circulation throughout the Township of Wyckoff.” At least 48 hours prior to this meeting the agenda was similarly posted, filed and mailed to said newspapers.

Members Present: Jen Saxton, Rich Sica, Doug Arone, Chris Beane, Tom Valente, Mike Ferrara, John Giovacco, Chris Perneti, Jeff Eischen

Members Absent: Sue Buchanan, Moe Ismael

Staff Present: Andy Wingfield, Recreation Director

Tim Shanley, Township Committee Liaison

Public Present: Yes

The minutes of the October 18, 2021 meeting were discussed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Doug Arone and seconded by Chris Perneti. The motion was carried.

Prior to the Recreation Director’s Report, the Board met with a father whose daughter had tried out for the travel softball program. The gentleman spoke with the Board about the tryout experience and questioned whether or not the tryout results were in line with the program’s objective to have an unbiased vendor evaluate the participants, report the results back to the Recreation Department, and whether or not those results were truly unbiased. His observations were based on the fact that the Wyckoff Travel Softball Director, who has a child in the program, was present for this level’s tryout, and that the results were given directly to him prior to them reaching the Recreation Department. Additionally, the father asked the Board why the teams had been formed the way they were based on grade, rather than based on age the way we have always done in the past and the way that it was advertised prior to tryouts. The Board asked the Director about these concerns. The Director explained that the evaluations were completed by Challenge U, a professional softball training center in Wyckoff and that, yes, he had discovered after the fact that the Challenge U staff did ask our softball director and a couple other dads to help run the stations at the tryouts so that they could focus fully on the girls and not worry about hitting the ball, feeding the pitching machine, etc. In a conversation with Challenge U, the Director was told that the gentlemen that stayed had zero input into the evaluations and only performed the functions so that the staff could concentrate on getting the results and putting them to paper. The staff at Challenge U advised the Director that they did not ask, nor did the fathers that helped at the tryout offer any advice, recommendations, or feedback whatsoever. The Director was comfortable with that response but acknowledged that they should not have been there. The Director will make it clear in the future to all vendors that they must have enough staff to run the tryout and rank the participants accordingly. Additionally, the Director acknowledged that the girls softball tryout results have passed through the softball Program Director for the past several years and that the Program Director has forwarded them on to the Recreation Director. It was also acknowledged by the Board and Director that this brings in an obvious perception that the results are somehow changed prior to getting to the Director. The Director advised that this would obviously come to an end as well with the softball tryouts. The Board questioned if this

happens during our travel baseball or basketball tryouts and the Director explained that it does not. The participants in those two sports are left with the staff of the evaluating group and all results are presented directly to the Recreation Office. The Board requested that softball follow the same guidelines going forward and the Director acknowledged and agreed to ensuring this.

As for the makeup of the teams and switching to grade based teams over age based, the Director advised that when the results were sent to the office, the Program Director presented a scenario in which all 3/4<sup>th</sup> graders could play together, all 5<sup>th</sup> graders could make up the u10 team, all 6<sup>th</sup> graders could make up the u12 team, and all 7/8<sup>th</sup> graders could comprise two teams, an A team and a B team as we do in all travel sports. Seeing that all classmates were together and the fact that very few girls would have to be cut under this scenario, and having researched and found that many towns are keeping their grades together nowadays, the Director agreed that the layout of the teams were well thought out and a good way to keep interest up in the program. If the teams are put together by the age limits, 3 different grades could be playing together meaning less chance for friends to play together. In travel baseball and basketball, this is not an issue because the age limits only span one year so, for the most part in baseball and all the time in basketball, teams are made up of a single grade. So in the end, the Director had agreed with the program director to put the teams out where grades lined up more like baseball and basketball. The Board agreed that on the surface this looks like a good way of looking at how to put softball teams together but the father advised that, at the 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade level, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders were split up between the two teams which goes against the logic presented.

The Board thanked the gentleman for his time and thoughts prior to him leaving the meeting. The Board then further discussed the situation at length. The Board agreed that the methodology made sense in terms of keeping many kids together from the same grade. They questioned though, whether it made sense to change the way the teams were put together after advertising that they would be formulated by the age limits. They also made it clear that no parents, regardless of their role in the process, should ever remain at the tryouts again and that all tryout results need to be sent directly to the Recreation Office in the future. The Board requested that the Director review this situation further, confirm that the parents that were present had no input and did not offer any advice to the Challenge U staff, and to report back to the Board next month with a conclusion.

### **Recreation Director's Report:**

#### **Girls Volleyball Season Complete:**

The Director reported that the Girls Volleyball season is complete, having culminated with playoff games and a championship game on November 9<sup>th</sup>. The program was, once again, a huge success. As reported earlier, the program moved back indoors this fall due to Covid restrictions becoming less strict. Coach Parks and his parent volunteers did another amazing job teaching the girls the game and competing amongst one another while having fun.

#### **Recreation Soccer Wrapping Up This Weekend:**

The Director advised that the recreation soccer season is coming to an end next Sunday. The coaches have been reporting that the season has been another successful one, competing amongst ourselves and limiting our out of town opponent to just neighboring towns such as Oakland, Franklin Lakes, Allendale, Upper Saddle River, North Haledon, and Mahwah. The modified rules we played under with no player or coach passes, and no strict rules regarding makeup games, referee reports, and more were well received and allowed our coaches to focus on coaching and our players to focus on enjoying their time on the field, not to mention the reduced

amount of administration required so that the Director's focus could be spread out among other sports. Every canceled game was rescheduled by our coaches and every scheduled game was played. There were no large margin victories and zero reports of unsportsmanlike behavior among the towns. In conversations with the leaderships of the towns mentioned above, the feeling is that this was a huge success and is something that all may want to repeat again next year. Our 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade boys team, led by Dave Calderon, lost in the 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade championship game by a score of 5-4 to Upper Saddle River. Coach Calderon was very proud of the team's efforts and expressed positive enthusiasm for the playoff system that the 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade implemented this year. The Board expressed their satisfaction on the success of the season.

#### **Boys & Girls Spring Lacross Registration Continues:**

The Director reported that Boys and Girls Lacrosse registration has been extended as we enter a more normal year so that all that wish to register without fear of a late fee or a wait list could do so. Registration will wrap up on December 31<sup>st</sup> at which time we will continue to take as many as we can but with a \$25 late fee.

#### **Roller Hockey & Wrestling Registrations Complete:**

The Director reported that Roller Hockey registrations continue to be higher after the increase in numbers due to the strict indoor pandemic rules last winter. Our clinic for grades K-3 has almost 40 boys and girls participating. We will also have two teams at the Midget level competing in the NJYRHA this winter. Over 40 boys and girls are also participating at this level. Our Junior level turnout was much better this year due to many of the midget level players from last year moving up, and we are able to have our own Junior team this winter as opposed to joining Oakland like we did last year due to the lower numbers.

The Director also reported that, after a year hiatus, our wrestling program would be starting up again this winter and that registration numbers are outstanding. Over 70 children are signed up to participate and our program is set to start practicing at Ramapo High School on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Football Season Complete – Super Bowl Champs:**

The Director reported that football season came to an end for our program on Saturday with all 3 of our teams winning their respective bowl games. Our Senior and Junior programs were the #1 seeds in their respective levels and both took home the "Title Bowl" championships with their wins in the final game of the season. The Seniors went undefeated while the Juniors only lost one game on the season. Our PeeWee program did not have the success as the older teams did this year but they won their end of season tournament and improved dramatically as the season went on. Our volunteer coaches should be commended for their efforts again. Football season requires anywhere from 5-7 nights a week commitment from our volunteer coaches and our guys do it with a smile and a passion to teach the game. The Junior and Senior teams will be recognized for their super bowl wins at the December 21<sup>st</sup> Township Committee meeting at 7pm.

#### **Travel Basketball Tryouts/Girls Head Coach Recommendations:**

The Director reported that travel basketball tryouts are complete for the girls and that the boys will be completed this week. The girls' results have been communicated with the families already and the teams will begin practicing this week. The Director presented a list of Head Coach recommendations for the girls teams to the Board. After a review, Jeff Eischen motioned to approve the entire list of coaches and Rich Sica seconded the motion. The vote to approve these head coaches was unanimous.

**Football Field Update:**

The Director complimented Scott Fisher, DPW Manager, for his department's tremendous work on the area outside of the turf field at Memorial. The "bleachers" that were constructed with natural stone built into the slope of the hill adjacent to the field are extremely unique and already have people in the community talking. Additionally, the Concession Stand shell is up and awaiting both interior construction and exterior beautification. Work will continue in the building through the winter so that we may have a final product by the spring or summer of 2022.

**Open Comment Period:**

No comments

**Report from Board Members:**

None

**New or Old Business:**

None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andy Wingfield  
Director, Wyckoff Recreation & Parks