

WYCKOFF DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
December 18, 2017

Tom Valente opened the Recreation Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Courtroom at 340 Franklin Avenue 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:, Moe Ismael, Chris Beane, Ann Smith, Sue Buchanan, Heather Alnor, Tom Valente, Mike Ferrara

Members Absent: Hayley Rooney, Rich Sica, Jeff Eischen, Doug Arone

Staff Present: Andy Wingfield, Recreation Director

Brian Scanlan, Township Committee Liaison

Guests Present: None

The minutes of the November 15, 2017 meeting were discussed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ann Smith and seconded by Mike Ferrara. The motion was carried.

Recreation Director’s Report:

Cooperative Recreation Equipment Bid Review:

The Director advised that the Cooperative Recreation Equipment Bid has been advertised and the sealed bids will be opened at 11am on December 11, 2017. This bid promotes healthy competition among sports equipment and uniform vendors which results in the Township benefitting from lower costs for its equipment and uniform purchasing. In 2017, 41% of the items on the bid of approximately 260 items cost LESS than they did in the previous year. That same, or better, savings is anticipated again in this year’s bid. The Director also reviewed with the Board that this bid not only benefits Wyckoff, but also Franklin Lakes and Oakland as the three municipalities work together on this project to increase potential quantities purchased which, thereby, reduces the cost of each item on the bid. By maximizing competition and quantity, the three municipalities realize excellent savings across the year in their equipment and uniform purchasing.

Winter Recreation and Travel Programs Have Begun:

The Director reported that most of our Winter programming has begun including Recreation & Travel Basketball for 3rd grade through high school, Wrestling for Grades 1-8, and Roller Hockey for Grades K-8. 1st and 2nd Grade Basketball and our Chess program will begin in January.

Recreation Basketball Head Coach Recommendations:

The Director presented the list of volunteer Head Coaches for the 2017-18 Recreation Basketball season. After discussion, Mike Ferrara motioned to approve the entire list of volunteer coaches and Tom Valente seconded the motion. All were in favor of approving the 2017-18 Recreation Basketball Head Coaches.

Football Update:

The Director reported that the Department is making two significant purchases for the football program that will further improve the safety of our participants and help the parents to be able to recognize their children on the practice field. For the 2018 season, the Department will be purchase Guardian Caps for all of our players and new practice jerseys with numbers on the back. The Guardian Caps will further improve the safety for our participants by cushioning the helmet to helmet or helmet to ground impacts that the players experience during practices. These Caps are attached to the exterior of the helmets and provide a significant cushion. The Director emphasized that he and the volunteer coaches will meet with every player prior to the season to explain the benefits of the Guardian Caps AND that having them on their helmets will not mean that they are 100% protected against concussion. The players will be told that they should still use proper technique and not feel that they can use their heads more now that they have cushions on them. Board members questioned whether or not the Guardian Caps could be used in games as well and the Director advised that he would research that and provide a response at the next meeting. The Director also noted that our current practice jerseys are worn, torn, and have expired their useful life expectancy so new jerseys would be purchased. Based on feedback from families after the season, a recommendation to put numbers on the backs of the jerseys so the parents could identify their child on the practice field will be followed.

During the last month, a parent of a senior football player expressed concern that his son may have suffered a concussion in a pre-season scrimmage but that it was not recognized or diagnosed by the coaches or the athletic trainer on site that day. A clip of the game film footage was shared with the Director in which the play in question shows the player being tackled and his head hitting the ground after the tackle. The parent is asking that a more stringent policy be put into place regarding injury recognition and protocol upon discovery that a player may have been injured. The Director, over the past month, has been in contact with the coaches of the program as well as the athletic trainer company we have used over the past 2 years. The Director and Board agreed that, while all coaches will be responsible to look for player injuries during the game, one coach will be put in charge of specifically looking for players that are injured during the game and escorting him to the trainer. That coach will stay with the trainer and player while the injury diagnosis takes place and will follow the recommendation of the trainer. If the player is allowed to re-enter the game, the coach will advise the head coach that he is cleared. If the player's injury is such that the trainer prohibits him from re-entering, the assigned coach will not give the player's helmet back to him and will advise the head coach that he is done for the day. Parents will be notified that the player must see a doctor and receive a doctor's clearance before returning to practice the following week. A doctor's note will be required to be submitted to the Director before he is allowed to play again. Furthermore, the Athletic Training service will be required to document, in writing, any and every player who they evaluate for injury, the player's injury details, and the outcome of the evaluation. This documentation must be presented to the Director upon request. Finally, this concern also helped lead the Director to the purchase of the Guardian Caps detailed above. The Director will communicate these new protocols to the concerned parent and will also advise all parents and coaches of the new protocol prior to the season in 2018 and beyond.

Recreation Board Member Term Expirations - Status:

Brian Scanlan informed the Board that he would be consulting with the Township Committee regarding the Board members whose terms were expiring on December 31st of this year. He advised that he would be recommending that all members whose terms were expiring be invited back for another term.

Open Comment Period:

None

Report from Board Members:

None

New or Old Business:

The Director asked the Board to consider the potential for a “Social Media Policy” for parents whose children participate in the program. A healthy discussion ensued regarding 1st amendment rights, the difficulty of placing a penalty on a parent, and the real issues that stem from parents unfairly criticizing the program’s volunteer coaches online for all to see. After much discussion, the Board recommended against a policy that forbids parents from saying or writing what they feel as it could impinge on their 1st amendment rights. However, it was recommended that a line be inserted into the Parent Sportsmanship Pledge wherein parents are asked to “refrain” from criticizing the program’s coaches on Social Media and, rather, either complete a Recreation Department Complaint Form or speak to coaches, the Director, or the Recreation Board directly with their concern or problem. The Director will insert a line into the Pledge and have it ready for the Board to review at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Wingfield
Director, Wyckoff Recreation & Parks