

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**JANUARY 22, 2009 – 7:00 P.M.**  
**LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Spadaccini, Deputy Mayor Peak (7:08 p.m.), Secretary Pelletier, Directors Tweedie, Beckman, Zingler, O'Neill, Kissmann and Farina

**ALSO:** General Manager Shanley

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

**Mayor Spadaccini** called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mayor Spadaccini.

**RECREATION:**

**Mr. Sprague** reviewed the layout of the core services chart and the definition of a self-sustaining program. The fees cover the cost of the instructor or officials, plus materials and supplies. They do not cover overhead such as electricity, cleaning, or field maintenance.

**Mr. Sprague** explained that the High School has two pools, one large, lap pool and an IOH pool.

**Mr. Shanley** asked Mr. Sprague if he is aware of another municipality with such a service.

**Mr. Sprague** replied that West Hartford and the Mansfield Community Center have indoor pools, but most are through private facilities. The funds for construction of the IOH pool were raised by the IOH group. The Board of Education gave them a place to put the pool with the agreement that the Recreation Department would manage it after it was constructed. Operational costs are approximately \$60,000, not including staff. The booster heater that was recently replaced is working well. The temperature must remain at 86°F and the air temperature needs to be even higher. Mr. Sprague said that the Board of Education has increased its day usage. Programs include swimming lessons for preschool through adult, open swim, adult swim, and exercise classes. Lifeguard training classes are also offered and provide a natural feeder for lifeguard staff.

**Mr. Shanley** explained the existing rotating maintenance plan for the outdoor pools. Every year \$50,000 to \$70,000 is spent to repair a pool, rotating through the six outdoor pools. The capital cost is planned for Verplanck in the upcoming year.

**Mr. Sprague** said that Swanson Pool at Robertson is planned for this spring. It will be water blasted, crack sealed, and painted. Joint sealing will be done at the same time.

**Mr. Shanley** said this happens to be a location with a camp and many aquatics programs take place there. Absent the investment for maintenance, there will be no aquatics with camp this year.

**Deputy Mayor Peak** asked how many summer camps have pools. Mr. Sprague answered Martin, Waddell, Robertson, and West Side. For those camps that do not have pools, the campers are bussed to locations with pools two or three days a week.

**Mr. Sprague** described the special events that the Recreation Department is responsible for, including Hershey's Track and Field Meets, Annual Fishing Derbies, Pride in Manchester Week, K-9 Kerplunk, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade socials, Relay for Life, and Rebuilding Together.

**Mr. Garman** said that even though Rebuilding Together is its own non-profit, it is coordinated through the Recreation Department. Mr. Sprague added that there is a tremendous amount of staff time spent on this activity.

**Mr. Shanley** explained that the program started with 14 homes per year and now has about 80 homes per year. In the last couple of years there have been 1,500 volunteers. It is an extraordinary program, but is also staff intensive.

**Deputy Mayor Peak** said that Rebuilding Together is one example of a non-profit or special event that the Town supports in significant ways. He thought it may be helpful to put a value on staff time and compare it to the value of work done.

**Mr. Shanley** said staff is trying to put together an accounting of costs, but it is difficult because the work is not done within the regular 40 hour work week. Staff people work more hours than normal and are not compensated.

**Mr. Garman** added that he and others involved in the project still work their regular hours. The hours are in addition to their regular work week with no compensation. He can give an idea of the percentage of time spent on Rebuilding Together.

**Deputy Mayor Peak** would like a breakdown of projects done through the Rebuilding Together program.

**Mr. Sprague** noted that the Earl Yost Tennis Tournament and the Fourth of July Fireworks are two other special events that the Recreation Department is involved in. The Fourth of July is a great Town celebration but a very expensive day.

**Mr. Sprague** directed Board members' attention to the listing of Facilities and Field Management and explained that this takes tremendous coordination and daily communication among the Board of Education, Field Services, and the Recreation Department.

**Deputy Mayor Peak**, noting the service level discussions, wondered if it was more logical to ask that field maintenance be reduced or ask for higher user fees.

**Mr. Sprague** said that the large users of the fields are Little League, the Soccer Club, and football. It has always been the policy not to charge the local non-profit youth organizations who are big users of the fields. For example, there are 13 Little League fields prepared daily during the season. The Board of Education is another user of the fields with the High School and Middle School teams.

**Deputy Mayor Peak** asked if there was a way to prepare some fields for a higher level of play.

**Mr. Sprague** explained that field preparation includes the daily preparation such as raking out and lining a field. Field maintenance includes mowing, fertilizing and irrigation. Class “A” fields are mowed three times a week. We could mow twice or even once a week. We don’t have to irrigate as much as we do, but we will have brown fields.

**Mr. Shanley** interjected that the problem is if we go a year or two without doing maintenance well, damage may be done to the field. Staff has looked at the possibility of closing down some fields.

**Mr. Garman** said that with program demands, we need every field we have and could use more. A field could not be shut down without cutting a whole user group.

**Deputy Mayor Peak** said that it does not sound like there is a way to do less preparation and asked if it would be more logical to review the fee schedule.

**Mr. Sprague** thought that given the choices, it would be more logical to assess a fee. He thinks given the choice, most groups would want quality for a reasonable fee. He would like the opportunity to discuss it with the Park and Recreation Commission and the presidents of the various organizations.

**Mr. Kissmann** asked if users of the programs are all Manchester residents or if the programs are open to people from out of town. Mr. Sprague believes all are Manchester residents, except in the swim club, which does allow non-residents.

**Secretary Pelletier** said she recollects a discussion with the Recreation Department about fees and it was decided that fees for youth programs will be held and fees for adult programs will be increased. She suggested the complete open door policy through the scholarship program may need to be addressed as well.

**Director Zingler** would like more information about what it costs to prepare a field vs. what is paid to rent a field.

**Mr. Sprague** said preparation of fields is done during the normal work day. If a private group is using a field on Friday night, the field would be prepared Friday during the normal workday. This would probably be the right time to look at the fees charged.

**Mayor Spadaccini** asked if it would be a big issue if a Class “A” field were only mowed twice a week instead of three times a week.

**Mr. Garman** explained that Northwest Park requires more mowing than most fields because of the type of grass. Mostly fields are mowed once or twice a week. If fields are not mowed properly, the ball won’t go through the field properly.

## **LIBRARY:**

**Mr. McDonough** reviewed the Library's Mission Statement and explained the role Manchester's Public Library has chosen, which is to focus on services to children and families, provide popular materials, and serve as a reference library. Manchester ranks 15<sup>th</sup> in size of libraries in Connecticut, 5<sup>th</sup> in total number of children's books loaned, and 1<sup>st</sup> for attendance of teens. Manchester ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the total number of books loaned, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the number of DVD's loaned and 5<sup>th</sup> for the number of audio books loaned.

**Mr. McDonough** explained staffing patterns, with half of the staff working the morning shift and half working the evening shift. Most of the "behind the scenes" activities take place during the overlap of the two shifts. Staff consists of one Library Director, one Assistant Library Director, one Administrative Assistant, 12 Librarians, 12 Library Technicians and a small number of part-time employees and pages. In the past decade, the Library has cut down on staff, locations, a bookmobile, and the types of books. Because it is part of a regional system, Manchester is able to offer downloadable audio books and e-books.

**Director Zingler** asked for an update on the RFID process. Mr. McDonough said that the RFID system has been in turmoil lately. Many libraries in CT are glad they did not go ahead with this system. The libraries that do have the system have found that the most practical, efficient implementation is complete implementation. Theoretically, Manchester could implement this at the Whiton branch but it has not looked cost effective for the Mary Cheney Library.

**Director Beckman** asked if Mr. McDonough has ever considered charging a fee for the classes on internet use. Mr. McDonough explained that Connecticut has a State Statute that says that basic public library services have to be provided for free. He is unsure if that Statute would apply to a class like that. Director Beckman asked if it has ever been considered to charge a fee for loans of DVDs. Mr. McDonough replied that DVDs are included in the State Statute he just mentioned.

**Mayor Spadaccini** said it seems that providing DVDs is an ancillary service to the library's basic functions and would fall into the same category as the fitness room provided by the Recreation Department. He suggested that purchasing new DVDs is something that Manchester can stop doing, since DVDs and videos can be obtained elsewhere for a modest fee.

**Deputy Mayor Peak**, knowing that the Board has to try to find areas of services that citizens can live without, asked if it has ever considered leasing space out to a private business, possibly even a video store. Mr. Shanley will ask the Town Attorney to look into this as an opportunity.

**Deputy Mayor Peak** noted that the beautiful downstairs room at Whiton Library is an underutilized space. Mr. McDonough said that this is not an ADA compatible space. Mr. Peak wondered if there was a way to use the space for something else, possibly renting it out as office space and gaining revenue for the Library. Mr. Shanley noted that it is a significant project to make it ADA compliant.

**Deputy Mayor Peak** asked what the options are to reduce costs and suggested reducing the number of hours the library is open, buying fewer materials, or shifting teen programming to the Teen Center.

**Mr. McDonough** said that one expense driver is having two buildings. Staff is relatively thin during the early morning and late evening. During flu season overtime is sometimes needed to cover vacancies. Those costs could be reduced if he was not trying to cover two buildings. A solution for a year or two could be trimming the hours of the Whiton branch. Mr. McDonough did not see much savings in shifting the teen activities to the Teen Center, as the Teen Librarian would still need to be available. Mr. Shanley added that the mission of teen programming at the Library is much different than the mission of programming at the Teen Center.

**Director Farina** asked Mr. McDonough to elaborate on the delivery service. Mr. McDonough explained that during the staff overlap in the mid-afternoon, deliveries are made to 59 individuals, nursing homes, and home day care providers.

**Secretary Pelletier** said that in this tough economic climate we have to look at services and prioritize. Services have to fit the goals and missions of the Department. She is opposed to teen programming at the Library that does not go along with literacy development, such as Guitar Hero and televisions. The function of the Youth Services Bureau is different than teen night at the Library. She would like to keep the groups and programming separate. Ms. Pelletier related a safety concern she has with the Whiton Library. She is intrigued with the idea of reducing the hours and renting out space for revenue at Whiton Library.

**Director O'Neill** asked about the copiers and printers at the Libraries and wondered if the charges cover the costs. Mr. McDonough explained that a vendor provides the copier equipment and supplies and the Library gets a portion of the proceeds, which is approximately \$5,000 or \$6,000 per year. Payment for printing is done on the honor system. He has looked into a print management system.

**Director Kissmann moved to adjourn and Director Tweedie seconded the motion. Nine members voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.**

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**APPROVED:**

**ATTEST:**

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**Secretary, Manchester Board of Directors**