

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, October 4, 2007**

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Richardson, Vice Chairperson, Richard Buckler, Robert Hicks, Coleman Hillman, Patrick Murphy, David Phalen and Andrew Roper.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Patrick Dugan, Lisa Wainger-Rush.

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Andrew Roper motioned, seconded by Coleman Hillman, to approve the minutes of September 6, 2007 as written. Motion carried 7-0.

RAISING COMMUNITY STANDARDS FALL REPORT

Director Phil Rollins introduced Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, and Todd French, Sports Coordinator, who provided a fall 2007 update on the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports Initiative. Mr. Shepherd provided a handout detailing league compliance status as of October 4, 2007.

	total # of teams	potential # of coaches	actual # of coaches	checks completed		disqualified background checks		completed coaches training		date information received
Amer. Little L.	9	18*	10	10	100%	0	0%	10	100%	9/5/2007
Pigskin Football	43	86*	42	0	0%	Ø	Ø	29	67%	10/4/2007
Northern Soccer	78	156*	91	63	69%	1	2%	35	38%	9/8/2007
Roller Hockey	8	16*	15	15	100%	0	0%	15	100%	9/4/2007
St. Marys Soccer	103	206*	139	99	71%	1	1%	88	63%	10/3/2007
Southern County Football	15	30*	59	59	100%	1	2%	45	100%	8/14/2007
Totals	256	512*	356	246	69%	3	1%	222	62%	

Mr. Shepherd noted that progress is being made in some areas. One significant challenge is receiving the forms in a timely manner. Mr. Shepherd stated that only three coaches who have submitted background checks have been disqualified. Mr. Rollins complimented all the leagues that have complied with the program; there is a lot of effort that

goes into ensuring compliance. Generally, staff feels that the leagues intend to comply; some haven't due to their busy schedules and other time constraints. Mr. French has volunteered to attend league meetings to collect the background check forms to make it convenient for leagues to submit background checks. Mr. French also provides the coaches training; some leagues do not need this as they are providing comparable training.

RP&CS will begin promoting the program and leagues that have complied with coaches training and background checks by listing these leagues in the program guide and on the County's website. Parents would then be aware of which coaches have had the required training and background checks.

Mr. Rollins reminded the Board and those watching that the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports Initiative is a mandate by the BOCC and was discussed at length and endorsed by the R&P Board. League compliance is needed in order to utilize public fields and practice areas.

Robert Richardson asked about the background checks completed to date for Pigskin Football. Mr. Shepherd stated that no checks have been completed since the forms were just received today, October 4th. Completed background check forms were due two weeks prior to the start of the season. Mr. Richardson pointed out that the Southern County Football is in full compliance and has completed background checks on twice the number of coaches required.

Robert Hicks asked if a brochure could be created describing the Initiative which would inform parents of the County's standards and requirements. Mr. Shepherd stated that is a good idea. Staff will develop the tri-fold brochure and get the information to participants in Department sponsored programs; the challenge will be getting the brochure to those in independent leagues.

It was asked some time ago if league background checks would suffice for the Initiative. The Department and R&P Board decided that the Department would conduct background checks to ensure continuity of the checks for sex offenses and other crimes. Some leagues require an abbreviated check which only includes checking the sex offender registry. Mr. Shepherd referred to a recent case where a coach in Aspen Hill, Maryland threatened a referee with a gun; it was determined that he passed the league sex offender background check, but had prior violent offenses that did not show up on that check.

Patrick Murphy asked if parents have inquired about the background checks; Mr. Shepherd stated that, to date, this is very rare, unless there is a problem.

The flaw in the current system is that there is only funding to check backgrounds on two coaches per team. Staff feels that once parents realize that for a small fee all or most team coaches can have the background checks they will ask for that from the leagues.

Mr. Murphy asked if leagues supported the program. He stated that he listened to a digital audio tape of the Department's last meeting with the leagues. He felt the meeting summary notes did not fully reflect the discussion held during the meeting. He stated that "if the leagues and people are not in support of it, then it's a failure, and the challenge is to figure out why they disagree with it." He stated that imposing the program on them because "you're in charge and you can" isn't the answer. He feels that coaches aren't submitting the background checks for two reasons: 1) they don't trust the Department's ability to keep the information secure or the release prevented under the Public Information Act; and 2) because the requirements are significantly more stringent than those recommended by the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS).

Mr. Shepherd stated that he heard the main concern from leagues was the issue of paperwork. That's the reason Mr. French is collecting the forms during the league meetings to make it easier to get the forms completed and collected.

Mr. Murphy stated that the program in place is significantly different than the program proposed by the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS). Mr. Rollins stated the County program was modeled using the NAYS program guidelines, but is not the same program. Mr. Murphy stated that it's harder to be a youth sports coach in St. Mary's County than it is to be a teacher in the County. He stated that people that qualify to be a teacher could not be a youth sports coach. Dr. Roper said he should clarify his statement about it being harder to coach youth sports than it is to be a teacher. Mr. Murphy stated, for example, a teacher's sentence for his third DWI was delayed until after the school year so that he

could continue to teach the remainder of the year. The same person would be ineligible to coach in a volunteer league for 10 years from the time of arrest.

Mr. Shepherd stated that the three main points that came from the Recommendations for Communities developed through the National Summit on Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports were to provide administrators' training, coaches' training and criminal background checks. These are the main points the County program is based on. Mr. Murphy stated there are many other things the NAYS Raising Community Standards Program includes such as time limits on practices, limits on organized teams, etc., so the program the County has isn't really the Raising Community Standards Program. Mr. Rollins stated that those are suggestions for communities; the County program is based on the Recommendations on Communities.

Mr. Murphy asked about the procedure when a coach is disqualified. Mr. Shepherd stated that the league president is notified by mail when a coach has been disqualified based on the established disqualifiers; no information on the reason is provided. If the coach wants to dispute the results, he or she is instructed to contact Southeastern Security Consultants, Inc. (SSI) directly and appeal the report. There was one appealed case where information was incorrectly reported.

Mr. Shepherd stated that he met with all the leagues and discussed the disqualifiers prior to the Initiative being adopted. Mr. Murphy stated that the guidelines are so stringent that they disqualify anyone that has had any type of infraction in the past twenty years. Mr. Shepherd stated that is incorrect; certain felonies and misdemeanors are seven years to ten years. Crimes regarding child violence or sex offenses are disqualifiers for life. Mr. Shepherd stated that he understands the trust issue with regard to the background checks, but there is one league that has gone above and beyond.

Mr. Rollins stated that the R&P Board adopted the guidelines after discussion with staff and input from the leagues, but he is open to revisiting the guidelines, criteria and disqualifiers in the future if the Board desires.

Mr. Hicks stated that he agrees with the path the County has taken and feels it's important to get the knowledge of the program in the hands of the parents. The goal is to protect the children; as his daughter gets older he wants to know she is safe playing sports.

Mr. Rollins stated that staff is proposing a policy whereby leagues that do not comply with the program be placed on probation and if they don't comply for next season they would not be allowed to use County fields. He would like Board feedback and support for this recommendation. Staff feels that this is the second year of the program and compliance shouldn't be an issue at this point.

Mr. Murphy stated this recommendation is unfair without a compliance timeline provided at the beginning of the season; he felt the compliance date and percentage should be included in the program document. Mr. Shepherd stated that leagues were made aware that the program paperwork was due before the season started; the information was provided at meetings and via e-mail. Mr. Hicks stated this must not be a communication issue since some leagues have complied. Dr. Roper stated that perhaps a compromise could be this would start for the spring season. The Board agreed to discuss this matter further during the next Board meeting. Mr. Rollins plans to submit staff's recommendations and the Board's input to the BOCC for decision in the near future.

Mr. Murphy volunteered to provide a presentation on the differences between the County Initiative and the NAYS program for the next meeting.

RECREATION ACTIVITY FUND OVERVIEW

Mr. Rollins and Mr. Shepherd provided an overview of the Recreation Activity Fund. The Recreation Division consists of four program areas: special facilities & programs; youth programs, sports, and leisure programs and inclusion services. The Division manages the St. Mary's Gymnastics Center, Great Mills Swimming Pool; before and after school programs; sports programs; and several special events. The Activity fund is a \$2.8 million operation and is expected to pay for itself while making programs affordable for all citizens. Fees cover direct costs of program operation plus 10%. Net losses in FY06 and FY07 are due to the operational costs of the Great Mills Pool.

	Actual <u>FY06</u>	Actual <u>FY07</u>	Budget <u>FY08</u>
Revenue	\$2,265,681	\$2,079,439	\$2,757,344
Expense	\$2,313,076	\$2,153,999	\$2,726,421
Net	(\$47,395)	(\$74,560)	\$30,923

Mr. Shepherd provided the following General Fund contribution comparison with Charles and Calvert Counties.

	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Utilities</u>	<u>School Use</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
Calvert	\$1,630,000	\$128,000	\$28,000	\$30,000*	\$1,816,000
Charles	\$1,500,000	\$200,000	\$500,000	\$67,000	\$2,267,000
St. Mary's	\$725,000	0	0	\$25,000	\$750,000

Activity Fund Revenue Comparison (FY08)

Calvert	\$2,742,000
Charles	\$4,700,000
	Capital Clubhouse \$2,300,000
St. Mary's	\$2,750,000

Staff is proposing that the County consider providing funding for the foundation or infrastructure for recreation programs. This would include funding for utilities, full time personnel, school use and safety and security; that amounts to approximately \$259,000. General fund funding for utilities and school use would eliminate Activity Fund deficit; enable the fund to provide pension and hospitalization for program directors; and enable the fund to provide needed staffing for supervising indoor recreation centers and Chancellor's Run Park.

Coleman Hillman asked if the drop-in basketball program at Carver Recreation Center is planned again for this fall. Mr. Shepherd stated that it is planned and is \$4 per night. He also asked if a map of the County could be done and printed in the program guide showing the location of parks and recreation sites. RP&CS staff will work with Information Technology and Land Use and Growth Management staff to try and get that done.

Mr. Murphy asked about a basketball league that was forming and how RP&CS was supporting the league. Staff was not prepared to discuss this topic, but will at a future meeting.

Mr. Murphy stated that the lights on the soccer field near the parking lot at Fifth District Park have been left on since March. Mr. Rollins will have staff check into that. Also, one of the poles is leaning and should be checked out.

Mr. Hillman suggested that all Kindergarten students in St. Mary's County be given a free pass for water safety. This would promote water safety and could increase pool use over time as children would be accompanied by paying adults. Mr. Rollins stated that he will discuss this idea with staff.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Andrew Roper motioned, seconded by Richard Buckler, to meet in Executive Session to discuss matters of property acquisition as provided for in Article 24, Section 4-210(a) 11. Motion carried 6-0.

Present: Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairman, Richard Buckler, Robert Hicks, Coleman Hillman, Patrick Murphy, Phillip Rollins, and Kathy Bailey.

David Phalen had another commitment and could not attend the Executive Session.

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

Time held: 7:10 p.m. – 7:26 p.m.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, November 1, 2007, at 5:30 p.m., in Room 14, of the Governmental Center, in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on _____.