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TOWN OF BURLINGTON

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DEPT./BOARD: Ways and Means, DPW/REC Subcommittee
DATE: 3/14/2022
TIME: 2:00 PM
PLACE: Council on Aging Conference Room, 61 Center Street

Agenda:

Discussion of Recreation and Recreation Maintenance operating budgets for FY 23

Attendees: Doug Davison, Sonia Rollins, Kelly Lehman, Emma Jones, Brendan Egan by video link due to family emergency

This budget includes a new position, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation. This is a position they have mentioned at previous budget meetings and was discussed as an upcoming request prior to COVID.

The department's overtime budget has grown significantly over the years. Much of the additional workload is administrative. An Assistant Director could help manage some of the administrative burdens currently being handled by the Program Coordinator. With the addition of this position they were able to cut back on overtime and they limited some seasonal part time positions.

There was considerable discussion about how much the offerings have grown and participation has increased in the past 10 years. They are quickly approaching pre-pandemic numbers. In the last 10 years they have seen 129% increase in programs, 75% increase in events, and an 80% increase in attendance. In October they had a Halloween event for which they expected 1500 people and got 4000.

In addition to increased activity, there has been a significant increase in administrative requirements including keeping up with background checks, training and certifications, etc.

The subcommittee agreed that there is a need for the position. The concerns discussed were focused around the uncertainty in terms of budget uncertainty due to current levels of inflation as well as concern over how quickly the town will recover its full revenue from the commercial sector. This also started a discussion about the budget guidelines, which are for level services. Parks and Recreation has done a really good job with

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programming and its success leads to more programming. There was a discussion of the important role played by the rec department's reputation with respect to making Burlington such a desirable place to live.

Overview of the budget:

The budget comes in within guidelines with an overall increase of 2.27%.

There is a 29% decrease in contracted services because they have stopped printing and delivering the program brochures. The brochure is made available online and will be printed in black and white in the office on request. They are printing around 75 brochures in the office for those who ask.

There is a 67% decrease in Transportation. Last year Town Meeting approved the purchase of a van, The purchase was delayed due to the possibility of grant funding to pay for it. That funding was not awarded so the van will be purchased. With 2 vans there is much less need for hiring buses.

In the Rec Maintenance budget there is a 3% decrease in FT salaries due to retirements and new employees coming in at lower pay. There is a decrease in PT because they cut back the number of part time summer staff to help offset the cost of the requested Assistant Director position as a way to address concerns about this year's budget.

There is a 33% increase in Capital Outlay to purchase a seed spreader for the tractor as a continuation of the plan to take over seeding and field care.

While both subcommittee members agree with the need for the new position, they do not support it in this year's budget. For that reason the vote was 0-2 against the proposed budget. The subcommittee supports the rest of the budget and expects if the new position is not approved there will need to be adjustments with respect to several line items. The Subcommittee encouraged the department to continue with their request because they believe it is critical to their mission.

