

Recreation Department (630)

Brief Discussion with DPW Manager Tom Daley - 2/15/23

Finance Committee: Nick Athanassiou and Lynn Bruneau

The Recreation Department offers year-round programming for Town residents and the seasonal population, young and old. Programs are offered year-round using the town’s fields, parks, beaches and school facilities. The Department had been structured to include a year-round Rec Department Director working 35 hours/week, a part-time program coordinator and seasonal summer recreation staff that support summer youth activities.

In collaboration w/ other regional recreation departments, Orleans Recreation coordinates youth soccer, basketball, baseball and softball programs that include instructional skill development with a focus on team pay and sportsmanship. The Department has also developed a list of activities to promote and provide for a healthy lifestyle for active adults and seniors.

The Budget information noted here is from the FY23 and FY24 Rec Department Budget material.

	<u>FY19 Expnd</u>	<u>FY20 Expnd</u>	<u>FY21 Expnd</u>	<u>FY22 Adpt</u>	<u>FY23 Adpt</u>	<u>FY24 Reqst</u>
Salaries	\$111k	\$129k	\$105k	\$172k	\$162k	\$169k
Oper Exp	14.4k	12.4k	22k	471k	19.4k	19.4k
Totals	\$126k	\$141k	\$ 127k	\$185.8k	\$181k	\$188k

Background

As noted previously, in FY21, the Select Board:

- Established a Recreation Advisory Committee to recommend recreation program offerings and monitor participation fees;
- Approved participation fees for many recreation programs; and
- Established a revolving fund (currently set at \$40k) into which participation fees are deposited to be used to pay department expenses (eg, instructor fees and sports equipment).

Over the past 12 months or so, the Rec Advisory Committee met periodically with the Rec Department Director to exchange ideas re Rec program offerings.

The Department has an on-line program synopsis and registration capability; however, it isn't clear whether any features of the system are used other than basic program registration. The Department also asks participants and/or parents/guardians of participants to complete program surveys (though not always, for all programs).

The FY23 Fin Comm Budget Review write-up included program statistics for FY20 through FY22. With the recent departure of the Rec Dept Director, similar information was less readily available for FY23 year-to-date.

### Challenges and Changes in Calendar 2022

Calendar 2022 was a time of challenge and change for the Recreation Department. The Rec Advisory Committee met a number of times with the Select Board, citing the need for change in the Town's approach to providing consistent quality programming to address the needs and wants of the Town's residents and visitors of all ages and interests. It was felt that the Town would need to provide additional support for Recreation, with more/better resources as well as funding.

In response to continued concerns, the Town retained the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management (Collins Center) to study the organizational structure of the Rec Dept., with the study in process last October-December and their report delivered to the Select Board on January 18. They interviewed two dozen+ Orleans volunteers, officials and stakeholders, including members of the Rec Advisory Committee and the Finance Committee.

### Key findings included the following:

- The Town must coalesce around its vision for the purpose and value of the Rec Dept. in order to move forward/make decisions re staffing, programming, facilities, budgeting
- Rec Director s/be a full-time positions w/ duties emphasizing admin, planning, communication and technical skills
- Rec s/ budget sufficiently for additional staff to support Rec Director
- Rec s/be separated from DPW/NR
- Town s/ consider implementing the concept of a new "Department of Community Life" w/ might include Rec, COA and possibly other departments under a single director or through other structured collaboration requirements (this echoes a recommendation from the Community Center Feasibility Study)

-Team recommends forming a permanent working group for Community Life to collaborate on service delivery, share ideas and resources.

-10 additional “findings” include expanding definition of recreation beyond “sports”; ID where other groups deliver “recreation” programming/facilities and ID ways to collaborate; inventory recreation facilities and assets; consider a regional community center; understand cost of each program and fee structures; consider a volunteer fund-raising organization to support Rec programming.

During and since the completion of the Collins report:

-The Rec Director Alan Harrison, resigned from his position.

-Program Coordinator Brian Guttman stepped up to work with RAC and other volunteers over the Christmas holidays to schedule and staff Christmas break Rec programming; Guttman has continued to work with RAC and volunteers to begin planning for summer Rec programs.

-The Select Board voted to adjust the Rec Director hours from 35 to 40 hours/week - effective for the remainder of FY23 and as a basis for FY24 planning (+\$10.7k for FY24).

-At a recent Select Board meeting during the review of the Rec Dept. budget, Interim Town Manager Charlie Sumner said that he would work with COA Director Judi Wilson and w/ Rec Advisory Committee Chair Tracy Murphy to determine how best to proceed w/ Rec Dept. programming in the near term, before a new Rec Dept. Director can be hired (to keep things moving).

-The Town has begun to advertise for a new full-time Rec Dept. Director.

Interim Town Manager Charlie Sumner included a Rec Dept. update in his Town Administrator’s Report for the 3/1/23 Select Board meeting. His report included a copy of the Rec Advisory Committee’s memo dated 2/21/23, summarizing the results of a recent RAC meeting. Key RAC priorities:

- Additional 2 weeks of morning summer programming
- School vacation week programs and activities
- Beach/swim Safety Day (previously held)
- Creation/implementation of a plan to manage tennis and pickleball courts during the summer

For broader results, the Rec Advisory Committee would like to see a focus on:

- Safety for all program participants, volunteers and staff
- Creation and implementation of a communication strategy
- Review of finances (program costs, revolving fund, fees)

Also - RAC is recommending hiring an additional part-time assistant for the Rec Department.

At the time, Mr. Sumner noted that he expected to have a plan available for discussion w/ the Select Board shortly.

During the 3/1/23 Select Board meeting. Mr. Sumner added that in his recent discussion w/ Brian Guttman, Mr. Guttman has mentioned a number of good ideas for Rec programming. Sumner has also discussed beach/other safety programs w/ Natural Resources Manager Nate Sears. Sumner said that he meets w/ RAC Chairman Tracy Murphy usually twice/month. They have received applications from a number of very good candidates for the role of Rec Director. Sumner, Murphy, Guttman and Liana Surdut will interview the candidates.

Meanwhile, with all of that in motion, there have been no further changes yet to the FY24 Rec Dept. budget, other than changing the role from 35 hours/week to 40 hours/week. There has also been no further discussion yet re when the Rec Dept w/be pulled out from under DPW - or where it would “go”. Meanwhile, it effectively reports to the Interim Town Manager. (All confirmed during the 2/15/23 Fin Comm discussion w/ DPW Director Tom Daley).

Note that the Town Charter allows for the “reorganization” of Town departments by the Town Manager, with the approval of the Select Board, within the confines of MA General Law, if/as appropriate.

Update (3/28/23): Mr. Sumner presented his plan for moving forward with the Recreation Department at the 3/15/23 Select Board meeting. All of his recommendations were approved and have tentatively been funded through proposed changes to the FY24 Budget (to be approved at the Annual Town Meeting).

- Separate the Rec Dept. from DPW, creating a stand-alone department
- Increase Rec Dept. Director role to 40 hrs/week (+\$10.7k/yr)
- Create a full-time role at the COA by combining 2 part-time roles w/ shared responsibility for COA and Rec Dept. admin tasks (+\$12/5k/yr) - “Community Services Principal Clerk”
- Position and comp adjustment for Rec Dept. Program Coordinator (+\$1034/yr)

- Add \$10k/yr stipend to comp of COA Director Judi Wilson for her role in coordinating the formation (and activities) of a working group for “Community Life Services”
- Consider location for and out-fitting of working space for the Rec Dept. (eg, 44 Main Street or the Town Hall Annex). Fund approx. \$10k for expenses (eg, office furniture)
- Increase Rec Dept. “revolving fund” from \$40k/yr to \$50k/yr

Mr. Sumner also noted that the Town has received a number of outstanding applications for the role of Rec. Dept. Director. That process is currently underway.