

# RECREATION COMMISSION

## Town of Sandown, NH

### **Recreation Commission**

**Meeting Date:** September 20, 2023

**Meeting Location:** Rec Building

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**Members Present:** Chairman George Blaisdell; Heidi Dyer; Chris Longchamps; Ben Sharpe; Darren Hudgins, ex officio

**Also Present:** Becky Thompson, Rec Director

Meeting was called to order by Blaisdell at 6:30pm.

Hudgins made a motion to accept minutes as written from September 6, 2023.

**Motion By:** Hudgins

**Seconded By:** Longchamps

**In Favor:** All

**Motion passes unanimously.**

### ***Discussion of new business begins.***

### **Petition for Full-Time Rec Director**

Melissa Smithurst and Julie Drouin explained that they are very happy with the programs Thompson has provided to the town, and started the petition to see if there was interest from the public in supporting a full-time Recreation Director position, which currently has 78 signatures. Blaisdell stated that everyone agrees that Thompson is doing a fantastic job, and explained that they have enough signatures for a citizens' petition warrant article, but having the warrant article pass may be more difficult than they think. Hudgins explained how members came to the decision of 34 hours, which saved the town \$48,000. Hudgins felt strongly that online comments stating they withheld health care benefits were incorrect, and that was part of the agreement upon hire. Longchamps added that the community wanted to reduce Rec Director hours previously, and suggested doing a warrant article to see how much interest there is. Members agreed that a warrant article was their best chance of the issue passing, and reminded that this isn't a negative reflection of Thompson's performance, but largely more a budget issue.

### **Town Wide Yard Sale update**

Thompson shared the map and directory for the yard sales. Thompson charged \$25 for signs this year and didn't charge for maps, and explained that it is simpler this way, and that they raised over \$700 for this year. Dyer asked if they should donate a check to the Vic Geary Center earlier in the season this year. Thompson said she contacts them in November and gets a list of Sandown residents' needs, but can see if they would prefer to have money instead.

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53  
54 **Oktoberfest update**

55 Thompson said she will be available to work the event, and will bring her husband to help, but is  
56 looking for more help to run activities. Thompson explained how they will participate in a pumpkin  
57 carving contest, where residents bring a pumpkin that they carved at home. Longchamps felt they  
58 should have an activity that is done at the event, and members agreed to also host a sugar pumpkin  
59 decorating activity, and discussed specifics regarding event set-up. Thompson asked about  
60 promotional materials, and suggested buying a photo backdrop frame, and purchasing specific  
61 backdrops for themed events. Members spoke about options for themes, and Blaisdell said to get  
62 pricing.

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64 **Monster Mash update**

65 Thompson shared that they have over 200 people interested on the Facebook event, and Dyer  
66 suggested having people sign up for specific activities on RecDesk, so they know how many  
67 participants they have for buying supplies. Thompson said she is currently doing that via a Google  
68 form on the event page because it is more user-friendly. Thompson said she spoke with Sandown  
69 Lions, Conservation Commission, and the Historical Society, and currently the Historical Society has  
70 responded, and they plan to attend and assist with carnival games. Dyer asked about staffing, and  
71 explained the importance of paid staff, who are more likely to attend, versus volunteers, who may  
72 not. Dyer and Thompson discussed the possible use of Counselors and CITs, and Thompson said  
73 she will contact those over the age of 16, as she cannot pay anyone 15 and under. Thompson  
74 shared she is also looking to rent some self-run carnival-style games.

75  
76 **Miller Playground Equipment Quote**

77 Thompson shared that she is looking to find playground equipment to replace a current piece of  
78 equipment at Miller playground, and recently received a quote, which was unfortunately largely  
79 overbudget, totaling over \$5,000. Thompson explained that she found another piece of equipment,  
80 for over \$2,000, which is still overbudget, and shared that it is very difficult to find equipment  
81 within their budget. Members discussed the possibility of saving their money for better equipment  
82 in the future, whether there is enough equipment at Miller playground currently to remove the old  
83 equipment without replacing it, and shared their concerns with the \$2,000 piece of equipment  
84 possibly being the wrong fit for that location. Thompson said she plans to attend upcoming  
85 recreation conferences, and hopes to speak with the playground companies who also attend.  
86 Sharpe suggested that she get business cards and photos of equipment from the conference, and  
87 Longchamps suggested looking into a playground grant.

88  
89  
90 ***Discussion of old business begins.***

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93 ***Bingo***

94 Dyer asked about bingo, and she and Longchamps shared that they were unsure about the idea of  
95 pies as prizes. Longchamps suggested doing a 50/50 prize split with a charity. Thompson said they  
96 can't do an exchange of money, and Longchamps felt the charity could sponsor the event.

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***Miller Field Repairs & Maintenance***

Members discussed issues as Miller Field, such as the supply shed, the door to the snack shack, and the spigots for the water supply. Thompson said she will look into it, and discussed maintenance on the fields, such as mowing and sprinklers. Blaisdell asked if Thompson could visit fields after storms with strong winds and rain to make sure trees haven't fallen.

***Ferguson Lane Development***

Members discussed the development being built on Ferguson Ln, and how their recreation area may affect the Recreation Department's budget.

***October Meeting***

Thompson reminded that she is off the first week of October, and the next meeting is October 18, 2023.

**Non-public discussion under RSA 91-A:3 (a) employee matters**

Hudgins made a motion to go into non-public discussion under RSA 91-A:3 (a) employee matters.

***Motion By:*** Hudgins

***Seconded By:*** Dyer

***Roll Call:*** Blaisdell – yes; Longchamps – yes; Dyer – yes; Sharpe – yes; Hudgins - yes

Hudgins made a motion to seal the minutes.

***Motion By:*** Hudgins

***Seconded By:*** Dyer

***In Favor:*** All

***Motion passes unanimously.***

Hudgins made a motion to adjourn.

***Motion By:*** Hudgins

***Seconded By:*** Dyer

***In Favor:*** All

***Motion passes unanimously.***

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for October 18, 2023.

**Submitted By:**

*Jessica Manning*

Jessica Manning

Recording Secretary