

**Town of Barre
Recreation Board
October 4, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

The Town of Barre Recreation Board held a hybrid (in person with a virtual option) public meeting. Attending Board members were Doug Farnham, David Rouleau, Carol Hebert, and Tyler Morse. Absent were Stacey Lynds, Amanda Gray, and Moriah Fraga. Also in attendance were Ben Moulton, Dan Kiniry, Sarah Williams, Chad Burke, David Finck, Craig Locarno, David Redmond, Shawn Sicard, Rec Supervisor Dwight Coffrin and Assistant Town Manager Elaine Wang.

1. Chair Farnham called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

2. **Agenda** – Rouleau moved approve the agenda as presented. Morse seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

3. **Minutes** - Rouleau motioned to approve the August 2 minutes as presented. Hebert seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

5. **Facility request** – a) Ben Moulton presented the Barre Youth Sports Association’s request for spring lacrosse, three days a week, on the upper soccer field. They have been practicing in Washington, but lower socio-economic families are having trouble making it there. The field needs to be 110 feet by 60 feet. Coffrin said the upper field is too wet and no uses are allowed there in the spring, but the lower field could be used once it dries. Moulton said they play indoors at the Barre Auditorium until they are cleared to go onto a field. Farnham directed staff to check on historical uses of the lower field and they would take up the request again.

6. **Baseball/softball field proposal** – Farnham presented the proposal. He said he had been approached by the Vermont state softball league, interested in moving the state tournament to Barre City and Barre Town, requiring three fields. The Barres currently have two softball fields between them. Farnham said he measured the Little League, lower soccer, and East Barre fields and none were big enough. He proposed to have a portable wood and fiberglass mound with indoor/outdoor carpeting on top and spray bedliner underneath; two portable fences; to skin the infield of grass and replace with infield mix; and set posts for easy base placement. Farnham said he asked some Barre Community Baseball and Softball representatives for input. Concerns that came up were speed of the ball, and wear and tear on the baseball on dirt versus grass. He noted the project would not take place this fall. He then asked the Rec Board for their questions. Rouleau said input from the community is appreciated.

Farnham then asked the guests for their input. Spaulding High School coach Dan Kiniry said he was not concerned about the multi-use aspect of the proposal, but how that would limit field availability. Farnham said his vision was baseball would be the primary use. Sarah Williams said skinning the field would make the field look like it was primarily a softball field. She said Newport plays all softball games on a grassed infield. Chad Burke said his concern was safety for infield hits because reaction time is slower than on grass. He and David Finck said a portable mound would have to be the right size or pitchers could slide off it. Finck also said game play would change; what used to be routine ground balls would become a base hit, and it would be much harder to bunt. His biggest concern was safety. He suggested the Hannaford field for the third softball field. Farnham said it wasn’t big enough. Hebert asked about the Bond field. It was noted that field is in use every day of the week. Craig Locarno said access to the baseball field was already a problem this year. He also complained that the beer drinking at the softball games sets a bad example for the baseball youth. Shawn Sicard, president of the Barre CoEd Softball League, said if someone had spoken to him during the game in question he could have spoken to his players. He also noted that they could not schedule tournaments at the same time as baseball games if they know about them. It was noted that having the lights at the baseball field again would increase field availability. Farnham summarized the input and thanked everyone for their participation.

7. **Port-o-let** – Wang said she recommended the Board not ask for a port-o-let at the Rec Area through the winter because she did not observe much use in the winter of 2020, and even some of that use was from schoolchildren who had to wait in the drop off line. Rouleau disagreed, saying he saw people using it whenever he was at the Rec Area. Morse asked about access issues. Wang said she had to chip the door free twice.

Rouleau asked what Wang meant in the agenda notes to the Rec Board that the town manager would have to be involved in the decision. Wang clarified that the purchasing policy states that decision for unbudgeted items over \$500 have to be made by the town manager, and that this expense would exceed that. Rouleau asked whether a non-ADA unit could be rented. Wang said she thought ADA would be the legal requirement. Rouleau made a motion to procure an ADA unit. Morse seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

8. Rec Supervisor report –Coffrin asked Farnham to include him next time there is a meeting about the baseball field proposal. He then reviewed the crew’s work over the past month, including extra service during the softball tournament, having the upper soccer field scoreboard electrical repaired, tree and vegetation management and planning on the Millstone West bike path and at the Little League field, field and court maintenance, recovering from graffiti and vandalism, bathroom cleaning, and trash pickup.

Farnham asked Wang to ensure the fence contractor knew when they could work on the softball field fence.

9. Other business – Wang asked Rouleau and Farnham whether they could meet with her and MTA about placement of the budgeted water spigot at 44 Brook St. They both said yes.

10. Round table – Morse said he was still considering whether someone could staff the rec facility use survey, which is why it was not on the agenda. Rouleau asked Wang to post the storywalk he borrowed from Aldrich Library to Facebook and Front Porch Forum, as well as cross-post the Aldrich ones in the Town Forest coming up. Hebert asked for an update on the quarry safety concern in the Town Forest. Rouleau said Northeast Materials is willing to donate boulders, but they have not found someone willing to donate transporting them onsite. MTA received a quote for \$2,500. Neither Thunder Chickens nor MTA are willing to spend that much. Rouleau said he prefers the no-cost solution of moving the trail of moving it a bit away from the quarry. Hebert asked for an update on the stormwater facility project in the November agenda notes. Wang reminded members to let her know of any budget requests they would want researched. Farnham asked her to research what could be done with the hedges at the tennis and pickleball courts. He asked if a church reserved the picnic shelter that Sunday.

At 7:57pm on a motion by Rouleau, seconded by Morse, the board voted 4-0 to adjourn.

Recreation Board Members
