

Town of Rowe  
Park Commission Meeting Minutes  
December 7, 2020 at 6:30 PM  
This was a Zoom online meeting.

In attendance: Laurie Pike (Park Commissioner), Sue Williams (Park Commissioner), Chris Hyttinen (Park Commissioner), and Sean Loomis (Park Manager).

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

The Park Meeting Minutes for September 14, 2020 were approved by a role call vote. Laurie Pike -yes, Sue Williams-yes, Chris Hyttinen- yes

The Park Meeting Minutes for November 9, 2020 were approved by a role call vote. Laurie Pike-yes, Sue Williams-yes, Chris Hyttinen-yes

Old Business:

1. The two approved grants from the Rowe Cultural Council for 2020 were granted an extension and new presenters were obtained and the events have been rescheduled for late spring 2021. The programs will be announced in the Rowe Goal Post and through town-wide calls several months before. Sign-up in advance will be requested in case of Covid-19 guidelines restricting numbers.
2. A new grant will be submitted to the Rowe Cultural Council for an Art in Nature Program for Children to coincide with the summer recreation and nature program at the Park.
3. A request for bids for the kiosks project will go out in December so that they can be built and installed as soon as possible this spring. This is a grant funded project through the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership program.

New Business:

1. The bulk of the meeting was spent going over the budget for the next fiscal year '22 line by line.
2. Minimum wage for Massachusetts will increase by \$.75 beginning January 1, 2021 from \$12.75 to \$13.50 an hour. It was decided that for part-time summer employees' wages would increase by \$.25 per position over last season's starting rate of \$12.75. Hopefully, this more gradual increase in wages will make the increase in overall wages more palatable for Rowe taxpayers over the next few years as the minimum wage continues to grow to \$15 an hour.
3. There was some discussion to increase the amount of workers at the Park specifically for trail maintenance projects (of which there are many). The Park Commission will approach the Select Board and DPW Superintendent to see if there is money from another account that could be used to hire more summer youth for trail maintenance at the Park.
4. There was some discussion about community programs for the next fiscal year and suggestions to include perhaps a wild edible foods workshop or mushroom identification workshop for the next fall. We will continue to look for suggestions from the community on possible topics of interest.

5. The Operations Budget will increase in the next fiscal year due to the fact that it was decreased at the ATM this fiscal year '21 to reflect the inability to administer certain programs because of the Covid-19 restrictions. It should be brought to the attention of the Finance Committee and Select Board that although it looks like a substantial increase in the overall Operations Budget it is actually a level funding from the original Operations Budget request from the fiscal '21 budget.
6. Several pines need to be removed from the Percy Brown picnic area and a couple from the dam. The manager will look for an estimate from a tree removal company.
7. The Park's ranger vehicle will need replacing soon and will be brought to the attention of the Finance Committee for guidance as this is a CIIRP project. An estimate of the cost is a minimum of \$10,000 to \$15,000. The question was raised as to whether other departments could use it as well.
8. A grant will be written for a trail assessment at the park to come up with a plan for improving and preserving our trail system into the future. The grant is a 50-50 grant that will require the town approve half of the cost. The manager will request an estimate for the cost of this project. The trail assessment was recommended as part of the plan from the forest assessment completed in September of 2020.

Next meeting will be January 4, 2021 at 6:30 PM. This will be an online Zoom meeting.  
Meeting Adjourned at 7:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Laurie Pike, Park Commissioner

These meeting minutes will be approved by a role call vote at the January 4, 2021 meeting of the Rowe Park Commissioners.