

TOWN BOARD MEETING
SHIPMAN YOUTH CENTER SKATEBOARD PARK

TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2010

Minutes of a special meeting held on the above date beginning at 10:00 am in the meeting room of the North Elba Town Hall, 2693 Main Street, Lake Placid, New York.

Members Present: Supervisor Politi, Councilman Favro, Councilman Miller, Councilman Doty, Councilman Rand, and Jessica L. Jocko

Others Present: Dmitry Feld, John Fremante, John Cranley, Shirley Seney, Eric Voorhis

Supervisor Politi opened the Special Town Board meeting at 10:00 am by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Politi called the Special meeting to order stating the notice was properly published and posted. The purpose of such meeting is for discussing the Shipman Youth Center Skateboard Park.

Supervisor Politi asked Councilman Miller to update the Board on his discussions with Dmitry Feld and John Fremante.

Councilman Miller stated it is unfortunate it is July before talking about this. My questions; how was the tax payer's money used last year at the skateboard park, how many kids used the park, what hours was it open, what does it cost the Youth Center to keep it supervised, and can we get a request for this year? He stated John sent me a letter the day we talked on the phone, which the Board has a copy of. I have concern with John's letter because it said "approximately" \$4,763. Do you know the number or not? When Dmitry returned from Russia, we talked and covered what happen last winter. We are all in the same community business. We admire the work you are doing at the Shipman Youth Center, but we have to have accountability for the tax payers. I need to know how that money was spent last year and how much you need for this year. You need to put it in writing in a timely fashion so we can properly budget for that fiscal year.

Mr. Feld stated next year we will make sure it comes at the right time. It was not our intention to use taxpayer money for the Skateboard Park. The Skateboard Committee needs to have fundraising events too to keep the place going.

Councilman Miller stated it would be remiss of us not to note what happened last week on Lake Clear when that young man died in the skateboarding accident. If they had a skateboard park in Saranac Lake, would that have prevented that horrible accident, probably not. Here in Lake Placid I see so many kids going up and down Main Street on skateboards. Over at the church there are so many kids on skateboards. I spoke to the Pastor before about a kid coming from the church right out in front of my car. I'm sure we all have stories along the same lines. And yet when I went to the skateboard park last summer very often the place was closed. Very often there was someone in their car supervising but there were no kids inside the park. I don't understand why they don't use it as much as we would like them to. Maybe we need to come up with ways to encourage kids to use that skateboard park. Maybe the Town and Village need to find ways to discourage the kids from going up and down Main Street. The tragedy that happened in Lake Clear hopefully won't be repeated here.

Mr. Feld stated it needs to come from the skateboard Committee too. We can all talk about it, but they need to have a meeting. It is important for safety to have the park open.

Supervisor Politi stated it is too bad they don't have functions there. If the I Love BBQ project or something similar like a fair were down at the Youth Center, then not only would people see what is going on at the Skateboard Park but also what is going on at the Shipman Youth Center.

Mr. Feld stated we would be happy to be a part of it, but I would like to see somebody as a leader come out. The skateboard park is also used by 25 year old men. They could be in the leadership role. We can all work together, but that also need to come out of this meeting. Supervisor Seney wrote the grant and now we have the park and the Town fronts the money. One day you may not have the money. What will then happen to the park?

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Supervisor Politi stated you are right. There are certainly a lot of skateboarders in town. The kids are where they are because the guys want to be where the girls are. They are on Main Street because they are visible. That is a problem.

Mr. Cranley stated unfortunately, the Skateboard Park is out of the public eye. We had no other place to put it. The kids want to be seen and they want to go down Main Street. I like the idea about putting on a skateboard event, even an avid skateboard competition. We do need some of those skateboarders influence, be it the retailers, skateboarders, parents, older skateboarders. They should help us to orchestrate something. We want to be involved. We get more phone calls when it is closed than when it is open.

Supervisor Politi stated lets go do that. They want it open but are the parents participating. If you are having an event are there parents who would step up to the plate and work with you.

Jon Fremante stated I'm sure there are parents that would step up. It is required that children under the age of 11 have parental supervision along with the supervisor of the park. I have several parents say they would be involved in activities.

Supervisor Politi stated the reason the Pee Wee association has been successful for so many years is because there are dedicated parents that want to be involved. The same thing has to happen here. You can throw all the money in the world at it, but it won't work if you can't get more participation.

Mr. Fremante stated two years ago the kids got together with Maui North or the other skate shop and got few vendors to donate some of their stuff and had a skate park competition. They did it all on their own and enjoyed it.

Supervisor Politi stated is there a Skateboard Association.

Mr. Fremante stated not that I am aware of. There are national ones.

Supervisor Politi stated if Plattsburgh had an event for skateboarders and they have a Skateboard Club then maybe they could use the facility here.

Mr. Cranley stated that is where we need more parent participation. We do a lot as it is, and we are willing to do more but we do need volunteers and more help to get it done. One of the functions of the Shipman Youth Center is a place for kids to go when their parents are working. It doesn't surprise me that there isn't more parental or guardian influence or participation. The kids are there because they need a place to be.

Councilman Miller asked what hours the park is open and how many days a week.

Mr. Fremante stated we have changed it from many different hours to 2:00 – 4:00 and even until 6:00. They weren't showing up any earlier than 2:00 and past 6:00. We ran into noise problems with our neighbors. It is loud when it is in full operation. We narrowed it down to those four hours. He stated last year we were open five to six days a week. When it rains, we have to stay closed until it is fully dry.

Mr. Feld stated people don't realize how much safety is involved.

Mr. Cranley stated there are a lot of restrictions involved with the insurance aspect of it.

Supervisor Politi stated I find that interesting because I read your insurance binder and yet I talked to the school and Peter Lynch who handles the school's insurance. I said we are having trouble getting staffing or someone to proctor what is going on over there. The insurance company said any parent can do it. You don't have to have an EMT on staff. The school's policy states it is not necessary and yet the policy that you have specifically stated that it is necessary.

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Mr. Fremante stated when Peter Lynch first tried to get the insurance for it, nobody would cover it. He ended up calling the manufacturer of the equipment. They gave him a company that would cover the skate park that is different than the school policy.

Councilman Miller stated I am an instructor and am more than happy to help.

Mr. Fremante stated the first aid certification is more difficult.

Councilman Miller stated it takes four hours.

Mr. Fremante stated well that is what we are trying to figure out how to certify people. Right now I have one of the coaches from school who now has to be First Aide CPR certified. He has offered to work the entire summer. I remember when we first had meetings about opening the skate park trying to figure out who was going to run it. The insurance policy was the biggest issue. The hockey box falls under different requirements and does not require CPR and first aid that the skate park does. We have requirements that they have to wear helmets and at the hockey box there are no requirements at all. It's still school property. It confuses me why we have to have a separate policy. It would open a lot of doors a lot easier if it fell under the same thing as the hockey box.

Mr. Cranley stated we also want to make sure that we all have proper coverage. They seem very stringent because these kids will skate on anything.

Mr. Fremante stated if we could look at it like the hockey box, there are adults in their mid-twenties who might want to stay and supervise the park for us but they don't have any of the certifications. If we didn't need the certifications like the hockey box then it would be great.

Mr. Feld stated in Colonie or Albany they have skateboard parks open all day and everyone goes there.

Councilman Miller stated the difference is that it is school property.

Mr. Fremante stated the difference is that it is on their Town property and is covered by their town insurance. The same thing as Wilmington; their Youth Center is on Town property, a town organization with a town employee working there.

Supervisor Politi stated this is school property and the school's insurance policy does not require it.

Mr. Cranley stated if they leased that section of property to the Town, would it then fall under the Town umbrella. It would then eliminate some of the restrictions.

Supervisor Politi stated you don't have restrictions now. Only Shipman Youth Center has restrictions. You are on school property. The school insurance policy does not require you to have this type of coverage. I got that confirmed last fall by Peter Lynch. He said they do not have to have an approved CPR person.

Mr. Cranley stated is this policy redundant.

Supervisor Politi stated I don't know. I would ask Peter that question because he is the one who gave me the response. The issue is more about the funding today.

Councilman Miller requested to move onto funding referring to the discrepancy of letter from John Fremante stating last year \$4,763 was spent and the accounting report says \$7,830.

Mr. Cranley stated as a newly elected treasurer of the Shipman Youth Center, I made numerous phone calls to figure out what happened in this scenario. The number that John provided was direct hourly wage which did not include our portions of workman's Comp, insurances and any other overhead. That cost is noted as Skateboard Staff. The SYC Staff on the report is John and Jason.

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Councilman Miller stated is that additional hours that he is working.

Mr. Cranley stated we asked him to estimate how many hours per week he spends related to the park. It is hours he spends visiting the park, checking in the morning, making sure it is running fine and fielding phone calls. He stops by to make sure they are doing their job. It is an added workload to him. There are two Shipman Youth Center Staff; Jason Hooker at \$11.50/ hr and John Fremante at \$25.38/hr. Each is five hours a week.

Mr. Feld stated many times kids will crawl through the fence and John and Jason have to go down to the park and tell the kids to leave. Neighbors come into the Youth Center to complain about the park. John and Jason spend a lot of their time just being there.

Mr. Fremante stated they are there in the winter with snowboards.

Mr. Cranley stated the figure is an estimate for the approximate amount of time each week they need to check the park. When it stops raining they are overwhelmed with calls asking if it has reopened yet. It does take up their time.

Councilman Miller stated what is the 10% overhead.

Mr. Cranley stated I put that in there specifically for our accounting fees, additional phone calls, wear and tear on the facility...etc. It's a management fee that is not excessive and is based directly on the time and hours the facility is open.

Mr. Feld stated as long as the park is running it is going to be expensive. It will be your budget and our budget. We are going to run it first class or it won't be run. That is why John spends so much supervised time to make sure nobody gets hurt. I have yelled at kids who try to break in. We did not do this project to make money. We did this project because the Committee asked us to do it.

Supervisor Politi stated I understand that. We too run by the books. Unfortunately, it has gotten to a stage where you haven't received any money yet. I want you to understand that we have a service agreement with everyone. In that service agreement it says that the Shipman Youth Center will provide the Town of North Elba schedule events and a report of the progress of the Youth Center Skateboard Park. These reports must be submitted by September 30, 2009. I don't think we ever received one.

Mr. Cranley stated yes and it is in your packet.

Supervisor Politi stated the Youth Center is but not the Skateboard Park.

Mr. Cranley stated the Skateboard Park does not have an agreement. If we have on then I would like to see it. We have checked everywhere.

Councilman Miller stated I have a teenager who goes to the Youth Center. I was down there enough not seeing the skate park open. It made me wonder what the taxpayers are paying for. I asked John to document how many hours the park was open.

Mr. Feld stated we apologize for the break in communication. It is not going to happen again. Last year there was a lot of rain so the park could not be open.

Councilman Miller stated I snuck in there a couple times asking the staff why the park was not open and got two answers; nobody showed up to use it or we couldn't find staff. It's not just rain. There are other issues.

Supervisor Politi stated a concern that hasn't come out is that Bob was told that all the money that was given last year wasn't used specifically for the purpose for which it was given.

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Mr. Cranley stated that is why I specifically asked them how much time is spent at the skate park. They spend 5 to 10 hours a week there.

Councilman Miller stated I appreciate that. But this is a question we have been asking for the last eight months. When we finally did get the letter, it said we sent the Shipman Youth Center \$7,000 but the Youth Center only spent \$4,700.

Mr. Feld stated John Cranley is not an accountant. He told you what was spent on the staff. The accountant included all the extra costs.

Mr. Cranley stated there was an error in the report. I asked for a realistic schedule for the balance of the season. Those numbers are what we expect the park to cost us this coming year. If we can circumvent this insurance issue and are able to get parents and find an easier staff, we will then be able to keep the park open on a regular basis.

Mr. Fremante stated if it were similar to the hockey box then it could be open the same hours as the Youth Center.

Supervisor Politi stated I sent Cathy over to see if Peter Lynch is able to come over. He has the Town, School and your insurance.

Councilman Rand stated it relates to the terrain parks on Whiteface. You have to have events with announcer and music. Having several throughout the summer will encourage kids to keep using it. The terrain parks at Whiteface are packed. The kids sit there all day. You could do a similar format which is not that hard. You need to get Bio's on the kids and build them up with a good announcer and music.

The Shipman Youth Center representatives chimed in regarding the music and announcements joking they should be giving out his phone number to the complaining neighbors.

Councilman Rand stated I'm not saying you have it all the time, but occasionally. The Ski Jumps have events and I can hear that from my house too. If you have those events it encourages kids to come back.

Mr. Feld stated this is good but it has to come from the Skateboard Committee. We will work with them.

Mr. Cranley stated we hold a lot of events in the summer and are volunteered to the hilt. To add the skate park we would need more volunteers. The same people help and they can't do it all.

Councilman Rand asked how many people would it take to run a skateboard tournament. In the free ride they have the staff judge. I don't know much about skateboarding. The principal is the same. You can be really creative because it is not an official federation.

Mr. Feld stated it would be good if we didn't have all the overhead. Then we can use some of the money for prizes and music.

Councilman Doty asked if it would be unreasonable to ask the person who monitors the skateboard park to monitor how many kids use the park.

Mr. Fremante stated we do that.

Councilman Miller stated I was told there is no log.

Mr. Fremante stated they have to sign waivers. We know how many kids come every day.

Councilman Miller stated you know how many kids come every day.

Mr. Fremante state well, daily no. Because of the insurance policy, we know how many every season.

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Councilman Miller stated Derek is asking the monitor to count how many kids use the park each day. The kids should log in and log out.

Mr. Fremante stated we did that the first season and then it became inconsistent. We do have to keep track of the wavers.

Councilman Doty stated if the Shipman Youth Center attracts 200 kids during the course of your season and the Skate Park attracts 100 kids then we know that 50% of your kids are skateboarders. We don't want you to take our \$7,000 and put it into general fund. If we knew that ½ of the kids that go to the Youth center were using the skate park then it begins to make sense to us for some general funding.

Mr. Fremante stated we need to do a study of who are local kids and who are out of town kids. Good shares of them are visitors. I will try to figure those numbers. So you're saying if it is being used by the local kids who go to the Center already then the money is justifiable.

Councilman Doty stated keeping the two entities separate will be more difficult over the years. If the insurance issue can be nullified then it will be much easier.

Peter Lynch came into the room.

Supervisor Politi stated one issue that came up regarding the funding for the Skateboard Park is that they have a requirement on their insurance which you provide that says there is a requirement for a helmet, supervision which includes safety and emergency training. Yet you and I spoke last fall about the school insurance and you said a parent could supervise and oversee the park. There seems to be a contradiction.

Peter Lynch stated a parent must be certified. The school's policy excludes a skateboard park. As soon as they knew it was going to be built they excluded it right away.

Supervisor Politi stated when you and I were talking last year, there was no mention about CPR. I did not see the policy. It may have come in later. He stated you are telling me that a parent can not without CPR monitor the park.

Councilman Miller stated if the Park were owned by the Town and not the school, would it change what we need to do.

Mr. Lynch stated it depends on who is insuring it. I spent two months looking for a company. I found it by calling Dan Left asking for the manufacturer's name.

Mr. Cranley stated could it be covered under the parks and recreation policy.

Mr. Lynch stated here would have to be a lease agreement between the two parties. They would then have to go back to their carrier to see if they would accept the coverage.

Supervisor Politi confirmed with Mr. Lynch that the current policy is that they need to have CPR. He stated we've heard here today that other skateboard parks that don't have supervision; Wilmington does that. Mr. Lynch did not know how their insurance policies are.

The Board thanked Mr. Lynch for his time.

Discussion continued regarding the CPR requirement. Councilman Miller can train any parent. A group of parents could be trained in four hours which would be a wonderful program for all kids and parents. John Fremante does CPR for his staff but not first aid.

Supervisor Politi stated last week Cheers and Gears went out to Plattsburgh State University for encouraging kids to take CPR class for credit. We could do it at the Shipman Youth Center for parents. Bob is an instructor and can do it.

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Mr. Feld stated would it make sense that you as a board meet with Wilmington to see how their insurance policy works. Because you are a government institution it may be easier for you.

Supervisor Politi stated Cathy can contact their office to ask about their insurance policy. They not only have a skateboard park but a dirt bike track.

Councilman Miller stated I will make a motion that we provide the Shipman Youth Center \$7,000.

Supervisor Politi stated the money is in the budget. We need to generate a contract for the Skateboard Park.

Councilman Miller moved and Councilman Doty seconded the motion to provide \$7,000 to the Shipman Youth Center Skateboard Park. There being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously carried.

Roll Call Vote: Councilman Doty; Aye, Councilman Favro; Aye, Councilman Miller; Aye, Councilman Rand; Aye, Supervisor Politi; Aye

Mr. Feld invited the Board to the BBQ Festival and reported a record number of teams. Unfortunately I have a conflict. Councilman Miller as Deputy Supervisor can hand out prizes.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Miller moved and Councilman Rand seconded the motion to adjourn the Special Town Board meeting at 10:50 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Jocko, Deputy Town Clerk