

Mad River Valley Recreation District Board Meeting

November 15th, 2022, General Wait House, Waitsfield

Attending in person: Alice Rodgers, Mary Simmons, Doug Bergstein, Shevonne Travers, Laura Arnesen, John Stokes, Molly Bagnato. Attending via Zoom: Peter Oliver

Not in attendance: Derek Bennett

Doug made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 18 Board Meeting. John seconds. All in favor

Grantee Question and Answer Section

Bill Koch League

Doug asks what the longevity of the tents are. Chris- 10 years.

Josh asks where the events are going to be held.

Chris- hopefully one at Ole's. Could hold smaller events at Blueberry as well.

There are also opportunities to participate in other events and now they will have an event kit (2-3 in valley and 2-3 outside of the valley).

Valley Cup which has historically gone back and forth between Ole's and Blueberry. Awesome opportunity to bring people to the valley. Ole's turn this year.

Justin joins in that the whole idea is to promote Nordic skiing in the valley. Expresses gratitude to everyone who has made this happen. Excited about holding the Valley Cup.

Josh voices concern about Justin and BKL using the snowmobile to groom at Sugarbush. Also concerns about how grooming Sugarbush golf course will affect business at Blueberry Lake and Ole's Nordic Centers. The snowmobile was purchased with help from the 2021 Rec Grant. Concern is that Sugarbush is going to start charging a fee for folks to use the Nordic course that is being groomed by BKL's groomer. Follow-up with Sugarbush is in order.

Chris- program has been expanded so much that holding the program at one center wasn't working with 90 kids enrolled. We are turning away kids at this point. Having an alternative place to hold practice gives us more options.

Youth Basketball:

Question regarding where the new hoops will live. Charlie Goodman- they will be housed at the Waitsfield School. Have they approached the school PTO about funding? Charlie spoke to Kaia (principal of Waitsfield) and she will follow up with the school and PTO once they know how much money there is left to raise.

Most likely this will be a process that is not completed until fall of 2023.

No questions for the Mad River Path, or Mad River Riders. We ran out of time to discuss Skate Park, Skatium, Mad Marathon (to be continued at the next meeting).

Funds Allocation Discussion

More money has been requested than we have to grant. \$45k in budget.

Conversation begins with Josh's concern regarding the impacts of BKL grooming at Sugarbush. That it may lead them to start their own Nordic Center.

Peter- is the groomer being used for BKL purposes? If it isn't then maybe, we need to look into it.

Justin- the main intent was to groom the trails at the Waitsfield school. This wasn't done because of the lack of snow fall and bandwidth. The grooming at Sugarbush is being used for BKL practices.

Alice- the more we can grow the sport, the better. Whether this is at Sugarbush or the Waitsfield School. Free access creates an interest in the sport and then more people will hopefully buy Ole passes.

BKL

Request is for \$2,500 for event kit.

Doug- sounds like a good long term investment. Holding Nordic events will generate further interest in the valley. People will come for the event and then spend money in town.

Peter- asks what the total cost is? \$3,500. The rest of the funds (\$1k) will come from BKL.

Bear- thinks it is important. Spectators who come to the valley are likely to come back and ski in the valley.

Doug- do people need to pay for the event or using the facility?

Chris- we do charge a minimal fee. Try to have everyone get a day pass. Sometimes people sneak through the cracks. Josh mentions that this was an issue. Josh says no day passes were sold.

Justin- we want to support the venue and we will figure out how to do that. That is the goal.

Proposed funding amount \$2,500.

Softball

Request is for \$4k for repair of the softball field at Brooks Recreation Park in Warren

Peter- thinks they need to investigate other funding sources

Doug responds that there is an in-kind donation area- they have and continue to seek support from others. Doug continues that Mad River Disk uses the outfield in the fall- the field isn't just used by the Softball teams.

Luke- softball provides a resource to an underserved part of the valley. This group has worked hard to make this a success and it is! They have grown it to 6-8 teams. This is a testament to the current organization and their efforts.

Proposed funding range \$3,500-\$4k

Couples Club

Request is for \$7,125 for annual maintenance (\$3k) and moving the Bocce court (\$4,125). Total project cost to move court is ~\$8k.

\$3,000 has been the typical amount for maintenance historically.

The court needs to be moved because of the hazards of being hit by a softball or baseball. People have been hit and injured.

Pat, can you speak to the original choice of the court's location?

Pat- it appeared at the time to be the best decision

New location- turning the court 90 degrees from the mid-point. Move it 60 feet away from the backstop.

If the backstop was up to standard, it wouldn't be a problem but that is a \$40k problem.

Luke- is this field always going to be used with little kids? If not, this relocation is not enough. Older kids will send balls to the proposed location.

Charlie- in the next few years it will be used by 11-12-year-olds.

Alice- is there another location?

Luke- what about the volleyball courts? Away from water and sun and no one uses the court.

We need to do more research on where to move it, needs a sustainable, long-term location.

Luke- does moving it further impact the cost?

Pat- no

John- could it be moved behind the town hall or the Mad River Park?

Bear- Flemer Field is a great location except that you can't put permeant structures.

Luke- plus it would take people away from the community establishments

Bocce is a Couples Club entity so it's best if it stays there.

Charlie- perhaps Pat and I can walk the area and find a safe place.

Proposed funding range \$6,000-fully funded

Youth Basketball

Request is for \$4,656 for adjustable hoops for Waitsfield Elementary. The request is for a part of the project as total project cost is ~\$20k.

Current hoops are much too high for the younger kids. Will also be used for PE classes. K-6th grade.

Youth basketball has seen lots of good growth. They have doubled participation in one year.

Alice- can the district help with this? If it is a shared use with the school, then the district should support it.

Charlie- Kaia is taking care of all that.

Luke- can the roof at the school sustain it?

Charlie- Yes.

Doug- this sounds like it is more like a 2-year project? Perhaps the money won't be spent until summer/fall of 2023.

Proposed funding amount \$4k

Little League

Request is for \$7,573.25 for metal bleachers at the softball field (only field that doesn't have bleachers). Request is just for equipment. Labor would be donated.

Peter- would they be half the price if they were the half the size? Get a small set and add on later?

Charlie- no, they don't attach. The ask is for bleachers for both sides. We could get one set this year and add the second one in the future or if we can raise enough money.

Softball program is doubling every year. Been a great success.

Proposed funding amount \$5k

Mad River Path

Have limited their request because of VOREC.

\$2k requested and \$2k proposed

Riders

Have limited their request because of VOREC.

\$2k requested and \$2k proposed

Ridge Runners

Request is for \$8,913 for groomer maintenance and repairs (\$6k) and parts (\$2,913). Total project cost is over \$10k

Alice- the Ridge Runners own the groomer. This is a request for the annual maintenance.

What we have funded in the past for maintenance - \$3k, \$4,600 and \$4,100.

The snowmobile trails being people into the valley, and they spend money in town. Some trails are mixed use, and some aren't. 105 local members.

Luke- how do other VAST trails fund their grooming operations?

Question to ask RR next meeting.

We can fund specific fixes but not annual maintenance. But we do with Couples.

Without annual maintenance \$3,600. Fund specific tools with some money left over for maintenance
Proposed funding range: \$4k-\$5k.

Dog Park

Request is for \$3k for Dog Park fundraising and awareness building

Better Places is a matching grant- Dog Park raises \$12k and they get \$24k from Better Places.

Plan is to mail information and solicitations to all the dog license owners. Funds for flyers, postage, and materials for events

Hope of the Dog Park is to take pressure off the trails and dogs pooping on them.
Some economic development opportunities. People like visiting places with Dog Parks.

Peter- I'm all for a dog park but I am not sure that it will alleviate the usage on the trails

John-any money from SPCA?

Lots of discussion if this is truly supporting recreation and our mission. Also concerns about ongoing costs of running the park and it being run by volunteers. Rec Board doesn't want to be in the position of needing to fund maintenance.

Laura- this is a one-time ask

Maintenance- model is Waterbury Unleashed. We would have a manager on a rotating basis who reports to the town of Warren as well as manages a group of volunteers. Once or twice a year a big clean-up day. Will need to maintain compost for dog poop.

Dog Park committee is responsible for ongoing costs.

Luke- not sure this is falling into the rec board prevue. If there were a lot of asks out there, he wouldn't consider it.

Laura- we do less for this demographic. It is public usage and recreation and supporting people getting outside with their pets. Plus, it will hopefully take some pressure off trails.

Luke- wishes the town ran it. Worried slightly about the rotating volunteer model.

Alice- how does this look as a precedent?

Proposed funding amount \$3k

Pickleball

Request is for \$1,400 for portable nets and court cleaning equipment

237 members, not all are actively playing. They run clinics for new players.

Currently the nets get locked away in a locked box. They aren't on wheels.

Laura voices concern about vandalism.

Gary- other towns leave nets out and they are fine. People could also ruin tennis courts, etc.

Proposed funding amount \$1,400k

Other News

Laura- will send out Dog Park materials for the board to distribute.

VOREC- haven't heard back about modifications. Have not signed grant agreement.

Fiddlers Walk- Ross asking landowners for permission since the Town of Waitsfield no longer supports the development of the Downtown Trail (they want to wait until after a VTrans study of the Rt. 100/Rt. 17 intersection).

28th and 29th Town Meeting presentations.

Some discussion about moving board meetings to Wednesday nights because of Derek's new work schedule. To be finalized at the next meeting.

John moves to adjourn the meeting. All in favor 8:30