

Mad River Valley Recreation District
Monthly Meeting, September 20, 2022
General Wait House, Waitsfield

Minutes

Attending in person: Alice Rodgers, Mary Simmons, Doug Bergstein, Peter Oliver

Attending via Zoom: Laura Arnesen, Molly Bagnato, Luke Foley, John Stokes

Not in attendance: Derek Bennett, Shevonne Travers

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm.

- After a review of the agenda and an approval of the previous month's minutes, discussion focused on the status of fundraising for the Mad River Park irrigation project and on how installation work is progressing. Doug reported that after commitments of \$1,000 from the Fayston PTO and \$500 from the Warren PTO, the amount still needed to reach the fundraising target was \$7,500. Doug also reported that the Waitsfield PTO planned to make a donation but had yet to settle on a specific amount.

Looking toward future potential donation sources, Doug reported that there was no word yet from Lawson's on a decision to commit two weeks' worth of tips toward the irrigation project. Doug estimated that such a donation could amount to as much as \$10,000. A decision was anticipated in the near future. Another possibility was to allow Mad River Distillers, a Mad River Park neighbor, to share water from the well in exchange for a donation.

In anticipation of the previous Sunday's Funathon - canceled due to weather - Doug had set up a Gofundme account to allow fundraising on a grassroots level. Bear (Mary) suggested that perhaps grassroots efforts be put on hold for the time being until larger potential donors, primarily Lawson's, had decided on any donation amount. If donations from the larger donors could cover the fundraising goal, perhaps it made more sense to reserve grassroots fundraising efforts for a future needy project. Nevertheless, Luke suggested that a potential fundraising source might be families attending fall soccer games at the park.

In a progress report on the irrigation work, John said that electricians had planned to start their work that day (September 20), unless it rained (which it did.) But he expected a power panel and meter to be installed soon. A power pole is still needed, to be installed by Washington Electric. Kingsbury was in line to dig trenches for pipes when the time comes.

Finally, the Funathon was postponed due to potential lightning, and there was agreement to revive the concept in the spring. At that time, there might be a chance to incorporate some of the other planned components - food, drink, and music - that did not come together in the first attempt. Luke suggested surveying families of park users (e.g., soccer and lacrosse teams) to determine a date in the spring that would be most convenient.

- Discussion moved on to the grant program. Doug reported that in “a very preliminary budget,” as much as \$70,000 could be available for grants.
Talk diverged into another topic - the need for a VOREC project manager. Laura reported that she had initially hoped that overall management could be achieved with the project partners each talking care of the portion of the project that they were responsible for. However, due to various conflicts and/or overlaps, a manager to oversee and coordinate the complete project appeared to be in order. At what Laura suggested was the going rate of \$35-40/hour, the cost of a project manager could be as much as \$35,000 a year for the two years till completion. That cost would/should be shared between the MRVRD and project partners.

Returning to the grant program, Alice structured a timeline: A vote by the board on the budget at its October 18 monthly meeting; grant-application submissions due November 1; applicants invited for Q&A at the November monthly meeting; grant decisions made by December 1. It was agreed that an extra board meeting in the second half of November would be a good idea for extra time in reviewing and voting on all grants. To streamline the Q&A process, it was agreed that board members should review all grant applications immediately after they had been received and prepare any questions for grant applicants before the November meeting. That way, applicants would have questions in hand before the meeting. It was also agreed that questions for regular applicants, whose annual requests are similar from year to year, be limited.

Discussion turned to the possibility of considering for-profit businesses in applying for grants. The specific example raised was Ole’s Cross Country Center, which provides facilities and services at no cost for the Bill Koch League. Luke suggested that rather than make direct grants to for-profit businesses, money to cover facilities and services be included in the non-profit organization’s grant (e.g., BKL). To facilitate that process, the board voted to include language in its letter to applicants that would allow grants to cover facilities use, services, and improvements.

Finally, the board also voted to allow grants to consider covering training and certification for coaches or other personnel.

- Returning to the status of the VOREC grant, Laura reported that it would be “a heavy lift in the next two weeks” to get signed contracts from all VOREC partners to assure that they fulfill their requirements within the overall project and adhere to the project timeline. The purpose of the contracts, said Alice would be “to insure accountability and that they (the partners) meet their obligations.” Laura noted that it would be necessary to pay an attorney to review the legality of the contracts.
- After moving into executive session for a staff review, the board voted unanimously to raise the hourly rate of MRVRD Executive Director Laura Arnesen from \$27/hour to \$30/hour.

The meeting adjourned at 8:16pm.

