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Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

There was a meeting of the above-mentioned committee held on **Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 5:00 pm.**

Committee members present: Louis Blumenfeld, Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair, Paula Jones
Absent: Shenda James
Others: David Melesko, Director of Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services, Matthew Mace, Assistant Director of Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services, Peter Russell

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Chair Louis Blumenfeld.

II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting (May) were reviewed. A motion was made by Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair, seconded Paula Jones, and carried to approve the minutes.

III. Old Business / Updates

A. Rockwell Project Update David Melesko provided an update on the Rockwell Park project. The application has successfully received its official Inland Wetlands permit. The next step is submission to Planning and Zoning, anticipated for the third or fourth Thursday of the month (around June 27). Staff will meet with Land Use personnel next week to finalize the submission. Once zoning approval is secured, the department will finalize the scope and release a bid package by the end of August. Construction is targeted to potentially begin in fall 2026/spring 2027, pending bid results.

B. Invasives Management & Park Updates

- The Town received $12,960 in funding from the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee for invasive species management. Work will be performed by Swamp Yankee using handwork only (no chemicals). Agreements are being executed, and volunteer coordination will begin. Tracking of volunteer hours for reporting purposes was discussed.
- An uptick in ATV/motorized vehicle activity was noted at La Salette, Farmington River Park, and Seabury Wildwood Trails. Discussions with the Deputy Chief of Police are ongoing; potential use of deer stand cameras was mentioned.
- Successful volunteer invasive treatment day at LaSalette Park with the Cummins Group.
- Playground overgrowth issues (including wood fiber intrusion) were reported; coordination with DPW for additional fill is underway.
- The dislodged bridge at Farmington River Park is under review by the installer (Hunter Brawley), who will assess whether it was due to water or human intervention and reinstall with larger fasteners.

IV. New Business

A. Department Structure, Budget, and Fees David Melesko provided a detailed overview of the FY27 budget impacts and upcoming departmental reorganization. Key points included:

- David Melesko, along with other directors and Town personnel, will be departing September 30, 2026, under an early retirement incentive. Positions will not be backfilled individually; instead, one person will oversee Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services, Senior Services, and Social & Youth Services.
- Matthew Mace and existing long-term staff are well-positioned to maintain day-to-day recreation operations. Concerns remain regarding parks maintenance capacity.
- Fee increases were implemented or planned for camps ($215/week this summer, rising to $250 next year), pool admissions, instructional programs, and facility rentals to generate additional revenue (roughly 2.5x increase), amid budget constraints.
- Emphasis was placed on self-sustaining models used in other towns (e.g., Newington, South Windsor, Simsbury) while maintaining subsidies where possible, especially for Learn to Swim and certain youth programs.
- David noted this would likely be his final committee meeting and expressed confidence in the department's ability to continue strong operations.

B. Upcoming Programs Matthew Mace and David Melesko reviewed the summer schedule:

- Fishing Derby: This Saturday morning, June 6, 2026.
- Staff orientation for summer and aquatic staff.
- Juneteenth 5K and summer concerts.
- Summer camps beginning June 29.
- Swim lesson registrations opened; many lower-level sessions already filling.
- New initiative: Jessica Caro (Rise, Inspire, Support, Provide) is launching efforts to revive youth softball/baseball with a kickoff hit/pitch/run event on June 27. Committee support was expressed.
- Pool bathroom renovations delayed to fall due to timing and curing requirements.

V. Public Comments Peter Russell and other attendees thanked David Melesko for his leadership and service. Comments focused on the value of parks programming, partnerships (e.g., with Land Conservancy), and the importance of maintaining strong oversight during the transition. Concerns about budget impacts and future parks attention were raised.

VI. Adjournment A motion was made by Paula Jones, seconded Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 pm.

Minutes prepared by: David Melesko, Director of Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services