



**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
**Held Wednesday, May 12, 1999, For the purpose of reviewing the Recreation Department budget.**

The meeting began at 8:25 p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull Thomas X. White and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; David E. Moran, City Clerk; Hank Irving, Director of Recreation; Harry James, Assistant Director of Recreation; Joe McNeal, Community Center Supervisor; George Rogala, Aquatic & Fitness Center Supervisor; Karen Haseley, Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor; Julie McHale, Recreation Supervisor; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer and Anne Marie Belton, Finance Department

Mr. Irving began by complementing his staff. He also noted that the Department's programs would not be possible without the efforts of volunteers. Mr. Irving provided an overview of the budget. Mr. Irving provided a summary of the programs offered by the Department. He reviewed the focus page in the budget.

Mayor Davis asked about the mountain biking trips. Mr. Irving responded that 12 people had attended the most recent trip and noted that interest had been expressed in future trips. Mayor Davis asked about the flagpole renovation. Mr. Irving responded that the pole would be renovated in conjunction with the window replacement.

Mr. White asked about the Youth Master Plan proposal. Mr. James responded that the Youth Advisory Committee had developed a plan. He noted that the Committee is plagued by constant turnover when members graduate from High School.

Mr. Putens believed it was necessary to fill vacancies on the committee as quickly as possible.

Mr. Roberts believed the City needed to meet with the Committee on a regular basis and provide more encouragement.

Mr. Irving described the park ranger program and stressed that this position would be an educator and another set of eyes and ears. Council asked that the rangers be brought to an upcoming Regular Council Meeting.

Council asked about the status of the easement situation for the window replacement project. Mr. McLaughlin responded that the City was stuck in a bureaucratic process. Council expressed

significant frustration with this process and asked that the City Manager relay the frustration to Congressman Hoyer.

#### Administration

Mr. Irving reviewed the MBO's. Mr. McLaughlin noted that \$20,000 was included to upgrade computers and the network.

#### Youth Center

Ms. McHale spoke about some of the new programs. Mr. White expressed concern that youth programs were not available at the Community Center. Recreation staff identified some of the youth programs available. Mr. Irving noted that the Department was placing a greater focus on drop-in activities at the Center and less focus on raising revenues.

Mr. Roberts asked about the Youth Advisory Committee recommendation for open gym time. Mr. McNeal responded that the gym is often programmed and it is difficult to advertise open time and also expressed concern about security in the gym.

Mr. Putens expressed support for funding an extra part-time staff to supervise the open gym.

#### Springhill Lake Recreation Center

Mr. Irving noted that some renovation work had been completed at the facility. Ms. McHale reported on the Spring celebration at Springhill Lake.

#### Schrom Hills Park

Mr. Irving summarized the activities at the park and noted there was an increased use. Mr. White suggested that the City follow-up on the MML suggestion that municipalities plant a white oak, by planting one at Schrom Hills Park.

#### Aquatic & Fitness Center

Mr. Rogala noted that the Center had been open for 8 years. He provided an overview of the facility and outlined maintenance and equipment purchase plans. Mr. Rogala emphasized the difficulty in attracting and retaining lifeguards.

Mr. Rogala reviewed a revenue summary and noted decreases in revenue. Mr. Rogala indicated that pass rates would be increased by 2%. Mr. Putens stressed that he would only support a non-resident fee increase. Mayor Davis was not in favor of any fee increase. Mr. Turnbull believed a 2% increase to keep pace with inflation was reasonable.

Mr. Rogala commented on a proposal from the swim team to hold additional meets on Sundays.

Mr. Turnbull asked about funding for replacing the fitness equipment. Mr. McLaughlin noted that funds were included in the Replacement Fund. Mr. White requested a specific plan for how the equipment would be replaced and what costs were involved.

There was extensive discussion of non-resident usage at pass caps at the facility.

### Community Center

Mr. McNeal summarized the accomplishments during the past year. He again stressed the value of volunteers in the Center and its programs. Mr. McNeal outlined some of the maintenance objectives.

Next, Council discussed the relationship between the Greenbelt Association for the Visual Arts (GAVA) and the proposed Arts Coordinator position. Mr. McLaughlin outlined 3 options: no money to GAVA, \$11,000 to GAVA for a ceramics program and \$21,000 to GAVA (their request).

Mr. Turnbull suggested consideration for upgrading the Arts Coordinator position and expressed support for the position. He believed that the person needed solid business and marketing skills.

Ms. Deplatchett stated that there are opportunities for grants. She believed the city needed to find someone who was versed in many types of media.

Mr. White identified some facility management responsibilities in the position description that did not seem consistent with the type of position. He asked the GAVA representatives for input on the three proposed options.

Barbara Simon stated that the Arts Coordinator would be a tremendous help. She did not believe that the Ceramics program could be separated from the visual arts program.

Mr. White noted potential conflict between GAVA and an Arts Coordinator.

Mr. Turnbull believed the city needed to separate the two issues.

Mr. Putens asked GAVA for clarification about what the \$21,000 buys. Ms. Simon and Ms. Gitlis responded that the money covered some of their administrative costs.

Mr. McLaughlin noted that there probably would be some conflicts between GAVA and the Arts Coordinator.

Mr. Roberts asked if GAVA participants are required to pay a fee. Ms. Simon responded that GAVA provides free programs to disabled children. Ms. Gitlis noted that the fee based programs helped to subsidize outreach programs. Mr. Roberts asked GAVA what they were making per hour.

Mr. White compared GAVA to the New Deal Café. He asked if GAVA might be able to generate enough revenue to provide the salaries to Ms. Simon and Ms. Gitlis.

Ms. Simon stressed that non-profit arts groups are never self-supporting. She noted that these groups always need an organization like a municipality to provide support.

Mr. Williams speaking as a citizen noted that this established a precedent by paying for administrative costs.

Mr. Turnbull stressed that GAVA was not a contribution group. Mr. White agreed and suggested that GAVA was more like the Museum.

Mr. Bates stated that the studio artists were interested in gathering information and perhaps were on a different time frame.

Mr. McNeal noted problems with the darkroom and indicated that he was still trying to develop a solution.

Mr. Turnbull asked about a wood shop proposal. Mr. McLaughlin responded that staff was still entertaining the Arts Center proposal.

#### Therapeutic Recreation

Ms. Haseley noted that programs were filling up. She stated that this year she was going to try a lottery system to try and ensure more availability. Ms. Haseley summarized the programs for disabled individuals.

#### Self-Supporting Programs

Ms. McHale reported on these programs and noted that camps had been expanded.

#### Other Recreation

Ms. McHale stated that these programs had been very successful. Mr. James noted that almost all of these activities are free and benefit a great number of Greenbelters.

The meeting ended at 12:45 a.m. on Thursday, May 13.

Respectfully Submitted,

David E. Moran, CMC  
City Clerk