

## SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DATE

Present: Noah Bond, Jeanne Gervais, Heather McElroy, Greg Manning, Mike Testut, Pierre Gervais, Brandi Goulet, Tiffany Niles, Maggie Machinist, Emma Machinist, Joceylyn Gervais, Jacob Boisvert, Jessica Sykes, Craig Barnes, Janice Barnes, Dana Jacobs, Doris Boisvert, Doug Niles, Bruce Rumball-Petre, Emma Gunn, Kathy Kinney, Katie Sykes

Attending Virtually: Jay Bonneau

The chairperson, Jeanne Gervais, called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: All attendees stood for the Pledge.

Updates to the Agenda: None

Gym Use Policy: Jeanne Gervais opened the discussion to attendees, who indicated their intention to speak via the sign-in sheet.

Public Comment: Tiffany Niles addressed the Board with her concerns about the recently voted-on \$75 per use/per day fee for gym use. She expressed that this facility is important, especially in a rural town with limited resources, for both physical and mental health reasons, and that at open gyms she supervised, 15-20 children regularly attended. Additionally, events like the Elks' free throw competition were hosted here. Tiffany said that the fee would put an end to such events.

Maggie Machinist said that asking the school to pay the fee is not "feasible" as they hadn't budgeted for it. She said their own multipurpose room is too small for games and, she felt, that this would mean no more middle school basketball teams. Maggie also expressed that this would make it challenging to provide free/low cost activities/events for the community.

Bruce Rumball-Petre said that cleaning is "not a big deal" as the Town has a floor cleaner, donated by Brighton Elementary School, which makes maintenance easier/faster. He said that the \$75 fee seems "arbitrary" given the time he spends cleaning the gym floor.

Joceyln Gervais told the Board that some organizations (e.g. tai chi) should charge participants or pay a fee but that the school should be able to use it without fee. She mentioned an agreement for mutual use that would be more acceptable. Bruce Rumball-Petre also mentioned that the school may be amenable to sharing some costs (e.g. resurfacing the floor) with prior planning.

Jacob Boisvert said using the Town gym played a big role in his ability to play varsity sports in high school and it should be accessible to others.

Doug Niles said to fund practices for his AAU team for the season (one practice a week) it would cost \$2100. He said he is a volunteer coach with no budget, and the fee would force players to travel to Newport or Derby for practices. Kathy Kinney noted that taxpayers pay both school and municipal taxes and wanted an explanation as to why a fee is necessary.

Craig Barnes told the Board that many volunteers spend their time and money, coaching and offering activities. A fee is “not a good look” and travel can be a barrier for families. Coaches may also have to charge higher fees to players as well. Emma Machinist said that it’s difficult to travel to a gym out of town.

Heather McElroy, speaking as a member of Brighton Recreation, said that she thinks a nominal fee should be established and communicated in advance. Funds could be reserved for refinishing the gym floor and other related maintenance projects.

Katie Sykes asked the Board to consider financial accessibility for the community, particularly children.

Greg Manning said that it was his motion to assess a \$75 per use/per day fee, and he said it was wrong. He said he did not have the right information and apologized. Greg Manning made a motion to postpone any fees, effective immediately, until the Board can develop a free plan/structure.

Pierre Gervais noted that the Board needed a motion to rescind the \$75 per use/per day fee decision. Pierre made that motion. Seconded by Mike Testut. All in favor; motion carried.

Greg Manning discussed the idea of creating a committee of community members, coaches, parents, etc., to come up with a plan that is acceptable to all parties. Noah suggested waiting to clarify who would be on the committee, who would take minutes and post agenda, etc. The Board took no action.

Other Business: N/A

Adjourn: Heather McElroy made a motion to adjourn at 5:53. Seconded by Pierre Gervais. All in favor; motion carried.