

CITY OF TALLMADGE
RECREATION GOVERNING BOARD
Minutes For TEAMS Meeting of May 6, 2021 @ 10:00 a.m.

Rec Board Members In Attendance: Mayor Kline, Law Director Raber, Finance Dir. Gilbride, School Reps Mosher and Manion, (5 voting) Absent: Rorar and Salerno

Rec Center Staff In Attendance: Park/Rec Superintendent Simons, Adm. Assistant Enos

Meeting Chaired By: _____ Mayor Kline _____ **Minutes:** Karen Morgan

Call To Order and Approval of Minutes: Gilbride moved to approve the RGB minutes from the April 8, 2021 meeting; seconded by Raber. Vote to approve: 5/0.

Old Business:

Past Event Updates: Simons: Not too many past events since we just met last month. We did offer that youth open basketball league that did not end up getting any registrations. We will try that again probably next year to see if we can get some people in that. It was approved at one of our previous board meetings. Aside from that, summer camp registration has started. We are basically full in our 7-9 group, almost full in our 10-13 group and are filling up quickly in the 5-6. We've also put forth a registration date for before and after school care for the 2021-2022 school year. That registration is going on now for the people who are currently enrolled in the program and we will open that up to everyone else in Tallmadge starting Tuesday. So these are the kinds of past things that have been going on.

Staff Updates: Simons: We are in dire need of custodians and roamers and fitness attendants here. We're pretty well staffed at the front desk and the child care summer camp and we've got enough life guards which is great. I know some other pools are struggling with that. We also promoted one of our front desk employees, Chris Maxim, to the Facilities Rental Clerk since Kristen Lalley will be moving over to splitting her time between here and City Hall. She'll start training later this month. You guys might know her from the Post Office.

New Business:

New eSports Tournament: Simons: This eSports Tournament is something we've been trying to get together and to work on since before Covid. We had it almost ready to go before everything kind of shut down and we're actually really happy that we've been able to start things back up working with S3 Technologies and Bounce Innovations studio in downtown Akron. So we are proposing hosting an eSports Tournament there for the summer and I think our first one will start out with a program called "Fort Night" at Bounce for ages 11-14. It's a great facility, I know Dave that you were there when we first saw it, it's really cool and I think this will draw a lot of support. Their flat rate for us to use that facility and their computers and then for them to set up all of the brackets and do the onsite support and that kind of thing would be about \$400. We do plan to have one of our program supervisors there as well just to make sure everything is going ok. So I did not incorporate that in that expense but that would probably be an additional \$60 to account for their time there. We're proposing to charge \$35 a participant. We've done some discussion with people who work here who have kids in that age group and

they said they would definitely pay that rate to get their kids there but anything kind of above that \$35

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threshold they weren't sure they would pay. So, that's what our proposal is, and we're hoping for 16-18 kids for the first tournament. We'd like to do it mid-June before all the vacations and everything starts. We plan to advertise it at the middle school to try and get them involved in it. Mayor: So this is a one-time, one-tournament event. Simons: Correct. If it goes well, we'll offer more. This is just a one-day thing right now. Raber: So it would actually be hosted at the downtown facility? Simons: Correct. Parents could drop their kids off at that facility. Raber: And do we . . . are the parents allowed to stay, are there audiences and/or a spectator room? How does that work? Because it is downtown vs. the Rec Center I could see people being more comfortable dropping their kids off at the Rec Center and leaving but not being familiar with this location . . . Simons: Right. There is some space that the parents could stay in – they could not actively watch the tournament because of the way the area is set up but there is some open space right where you drop the kids off, in a lobby area and the parents would be permitted to stay there. Mayor: It's located in the old Firestone or BFGoodrich building by the Spaghetti Warehouse. It's really a cool and safe-looking atmosphere that would be there for everybody. Raber: Do we think one staff person is enough to be monitoring. Simons: Yes, because most of the kids will be actively playing in the tournament so I think one staff person will be fine to monitor everything. This studio is on the first floor so you get buzzed in and then the eSports area is like right there and there's not a lot of places for these kids to go besides this kind of sitting area or the computer lab area so I think one staff person will be enough. S3 Technologies will also have people there because they will be the ones that like know more about the games and the technology aspect of it so they'll have people there working on those things so our staff person would just be monitoring the kids that maybe aren't playing at that time. Gilbride: I have a couple of questions and I don't know much about eSports. How long does this last? Simons: About 3 to 3 ½ hours. Gilbride: Do they all play against each other at the same time or do you have head-to-head competition?

Simons: I'm going to be honest, because I know 0 about eSports also. I even spelled Fort Night wrong so that's how much I know about these things . . . My understanding is that they will kind of all play and if we have 16 then the top 8 will move on and they'll score everybody individually and the top 8 would move on and from there they kind of narrow the field down based on overall scores of some sort. Gilbride: Gotcha. My 3rd question is, just because we are dealing with kids in that age range and dropping them off, are the S3 Technology employees like background checked or is that just a contract issue we have to work out? Simons: I think that would be a contract issue that we'd have to work out and I'm sure we can do that. Raber: So, I love the idea and I applaud the creativity but I am just wondering too about the timing of it with it being right after school and even being mid-summer, people do start taking vacations early. So the flat rate of \$400 we pay up front regardless of how many kids we have signed up? And, I'm just a little worried that we might get more buzz and excitement if we waited until the fall? If you think that you can attract the numbers, then that's fine. I'm assuming that \$400 gets paid regardless of whether we go forward or not? Simons: If we don't have the tournament I don't believe we would owe the entire \$400 so we set our minimum at 12 players so we would be able

to recoup at least what we were spending on it. We feel like if we can get the word out like next week to the middle school, we'd likely be able to get enough participants to at least hold the tournament and then when word gets out from that, we'd probably have more in the fall. That's

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our aim, to at least get the minimum in order to break even on this now so we can help build that base as we move forward. Mayor: We'd like to create a facility somewhere in Tallmadge to host these tournaments like at the Rec Center or the Community Center but they suggested that we use their site a few times to see if our members are interested enough to want us to create something here. So I think this is a great opportunity for us to decide that. It was a lot of fun and I don't know anything about it either! Manion: I'd also like to add that there's certainly interest there, I think timing is everything when it comes to middle school kids and their availability. We have somewhat actively looked into incorporating this into our stem programming in some way so if the scheduling works out, I wouldn't mind even being there, being the adult that knows all of those kids and be able to see what it all looks like. If that helps, in terms of parents' comfort or the planning purposes, I don't think I have anything around that time so if it works out, that can be something added that might bring comfort to some of our families. Simons: Thank you Jeff! Mayor: Any other discussion? For the record, Community Rep Mark Salerno has just joined us (10:13). Mark we're talking about an eSports tournament that would be located down at the Bounce Innovations studio in downtown Akron. Mosure: Just so you guys know as well, next year Colin Epstein is starting an eSports Club so this is obviously something that's growing. So I think it's a good idea to get this thing up and running. Mayor: Great! We need a motion. Raber: I move to approve the eSports tournament program; seconded by Mosure: Vote to approve: 6/0.

Adult Flag Football Price Change: Simons: This is just a price change for this program. Currently the way almost all of our programs are set up is that we charge a registration fee for the team and then they pay referees directly on the court or on the field prior to the game. They do that in cash so we are still charged an "assigner" fee but the referees themselves get the money like right there. Our referee assigner for our flag football is telling us he cannot get anyone because it's not financially worth it for them to come out when they're making more money at other venues. So he has suggested that if we raised the referee fee by \$5 per team, per game, we would be better able to get quality referees for that program. We didn't want to pass that whole financial burden on to the teams, we are proposing lowering the registration fees and increasing the per team, per game referee fee instead. With flag football we do not incur a lot of costs on our end, with the exception being the referee assigner fees which Dan, I believe that is \$2 or \$3 per game and then we get t-shirts for our tournament winner and occasionally we have to replace the flag belt or pile-on sort of things. So our internal costs are not very high for this program so I am comfortable doing this especially if it will attract better referees because in turn that will make all the other leagues better and that will attract more teams. That is our aim with this. The only sports program we have where the teams do not pay the referees on the field or court are our basketball leagues and that is just because it is the industry standard. We're generally invoiced separately and then the "assigner" pays the referees. Everything else has an industry standard that they make the cash on the field. Mayor: How many teams do we typically get in a season? Simons: It really swings back and forth. This season I think we have 4 but we get as high as 12-16 depending on many we feel comfortable hosting or how late in the day we

want it to go. I would say in the fall we fairly regularly get 12 but the first time back since Covid, we only have 4. Mayor: How many weeks do they get to play? Simons: 8. Mayor: So it's still a pretty good deal for them - \$400 times 8 and the use of the indoor soccer field.

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Gilbride: I'm just curious, so if you take the 8 games they play times the extra \$5, that's only \$40 but we reduced the price by \$60. They are not trying to make a net gain on this . . . it's like a break-even I guess. Simons: They've already paid more than other similarly sized leagues like the soccer league for example is \$460/per game but their referees are only \$15 on the field so flag football is paying significantly more for referees and we just never lowered the price at that time. We can go \$425, we are just trying to find a way to not pass that additional referee fee completely onto the teams. The league is struggling right now – in the fall it usually does better. Gilbride: Ok. Mayor: I wouldn't have any problem going to \$425 and \$25. Gilbride: It would be \$420 then the team isn't paying anything different. When they ask to pay the referees \$5 more a game, we reduce our price by \$5. Mayor: We struggle getting people into the Rec Center during the summer months so do we make the summer session \$400 and the fall session \$425? Simons: I think that creates a little too much confusion for our teams and our staff to try and explain it. For \$20 a team I think if we just leave it at \$420 it will be fine. Mayor: Ok. Gilbride: I mean I don't care about the \$400 I was just curious about the justification for reducing it for \$60 versus just the \$40 that it costs them. I mean if you think it needs to be \$400 because it will attract additional teams, then . . . Simons: I really don't think it's going to affect anything too much. I think if we go ahead to \$420 that would be ok. Mayor: I move to approve the adult flag football rate of \$420 per team plus \$25 a team for referees; seconded by Salerno. Vote to approve: 6/0.

Monthly Reports:

TRC Membership Report: Simons: Our membership is down from last year but I will say that our numbers are still skewed because even though we were shut down last year, people's memberships were still active from before so everything is still a little bit skewed. It's kind of hard to get a good idea of what that is. I've been trying to track more of our visits than our membership and I think that will be a better signal of how we are recovering from our Covid shutdown and just running the numbers from March into April, our visits were down about 16% from the previous month. That sounds bad but when you think of it in terms of our general every other year visits, they're usually down closer to 19 or 20% from March to April when the weather starts breaking and people start to go outside. We expect to see membership numbers go down and visit numbers go down but the good news is that they're not trending down as much as they have in previous years. We've been unsuspending more memberships than we have in previous months so everything is kind of trending in the right direction for us even though the membership report may not accurately show that because of the differences in those numbers. Mayor: The locker rooms are now opened right? Simons: Correct, locker rooms and showers. And as soon as Terry gets the filters installed our bottle filler stations will be opened as well. Salerno: And lots of the feedback that I've heard back from the community is that you guys have just done a fantastic job with the sterilization and sanitizing of the facility. Lots of the people that have been coming did so because they felt safe and comfortable. And I see new people coming in and I'm sure that trend will continue. One person in particular was at Planet

Fitness and decided to come back to the Rec Center simply because of the sanitization you guys provided and the cleanliness and overall workmanship of the facility. So nice job! Simons: Thank you Mark, that is great to hear. Our staff is really banding together and we're trying to get it all done even though we're short-staffed right now. Enos: I do have one thing to add as well. We anticipate adding more kid

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memberships picking back up in June because we are opening up our facility back to what our pre-Covid policy age-wise was, of 13 and older coming in without an adult. We changed it during Covid to 16 and older without an adult. So this change will take effect June 1st. Manion: Nice!

Mayor: Thanks!

TRC Financial Report: Mayor: The Profits and Loss statement is up on the screen, can you all see it? Gilbride: Yes. As you can see and as anticipated, our revenue is still down since we were in normal operation 2020 for the first couple months of the year. I did add just for a frame of reference for everybody that our last full regular year of operation because I thought that would be helpful for everyone to see where we were. We've been programming revenue come-back for summer camp and basketball court rentals are rebounding so that's great. Our profit and loss while it still is a loss, looks better than where we were at this time last year. So everything is starting to come back, it's just going to take time. Mayor: Great!

TRC Donation Request Reports: Enos: No request for donations since our last meeting.

Mayor: I did want to mention that the Beacon featured an article about our pickleball leagues in today's paper – haven't had a chance to read through it but it was great for publicity. Simons: Again, we have to thank Diane Bratt for being our liaison to the Beacon for pickleball. She is great at bringing their needs and wants to the table and kind of negotiates for them. This sport is just exploding and we cannot continue to accommodate them inside our facility at the capacity they have. Mayor: Maybe we ought to make one of those 4 courts outside the Rec Center into one for pickleball – just kidding! Simons: I think you'd have a tennis revolt on your hands if you did!

Motion To Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.