

**Borough of Washington, Warren County, New Jersey
Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes
July 30th - 7:00 PM**

This Special Meeting of the Recreation Commission of the Borough of Washington, Warren County, New Jersey was held in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall at 7:00p.m.

Opening 7:02 p.m.

Flag Salute

Statement of Adequate Notice

- Victor Cioni read the following Statement into the Record: “The requirements of the ‘Open Public Meetings Law, 1975, Chapter 231’ have been satisfied in that adequate notice of this meeting has been published in the Star Gazette and posted on the Bulletin Board of Borough Hall stating the time, place and purpose of the meeting as required by law.”

Roll Call

- Present: Jeff Haines, Michael Nachbaur, Adam Zimmer, Victor Cioni, Tim Shanahan, Jesica Olmos, Melissa Hommes
- Also Present: Christina Howley, Des Fitzgerald, Kristine Blanchard

Personnel

- Special meeting has been called to solely discuss personnel issues between Rec Director Des Fitzgerald and the Recreation Commission, please understand as this is a special meeting there will be no public portion or participation in accordance with state personally policies the Rec Director has received a Rice notice and has elected to have this discussion take place in open session. At the conclusion of the Recreation Commission discussion and any subsequent actions Mr. Fitzgerald will be permitted to respond should he choose. With this in mind Victor brought the following issues to the Commissions attention.

Reasons cited for termination:

1. Overall lack of acceptable communication with commission and liaisons for their respective sports.
Recreation By-Laws Section 4, bullet point 10 (Director reports)
2. Failure to address possible safety/aesthetics issues in regards to large sections of missing pool tiles and rough surfaces on the pool floor to which you were directed by the entire commission to correct prior to the opening of pool season. *Recreation By-Laws Section 4, bullet point 1, Section 3-55.8, item (H – Respond to Direction of Board of Commissioners) of ordinance 3-2011, Section 3-55.8, item (A) of ordinance 3-2011, Section 3-55.7 of ordinance 3-2011*
3. Failure to comply with painting the pool life guard stands which are rusted even though you were instructed to do so 10 days prior to pool opening. *Recreation By-Laws Section 4, bullet point 1, Section 3-55.7 of ordinance 3-2011*
4. Poor costing of work to be done on capital projects – cited in the Counseling review which was held in the spring with myself, co chairman Jeff Haines and Acting Borough Manager Kristine Blanchard. Cite: *Recreation By-Laws Section 4, bullet point 4, Section 3-55.7 of ordinance 3-2011*

- a. Specifically
 - i. original estimate of electrical work for renovation was budgeted at \$1000 but **actually** cost \$2,600, **a \$1,600 overage**
 - ii. Pump house roof replacement – Des’ estimate without soliciting any contractor bids was \$10,000 – **actual** cost when a bid was solicited by Rec Chairman (Volunteer) - \$2,500
 - iii. Concrete Pump/pipeline asked to be installed to help facilitate topping off the pool with water from the well pump. Des estimate, again without any submitted bid \$1000, **actual** estimate after the fact \$3,200 which due to the lack of research precluded the Recreation Commission to move forward with this item.
5. Inability to resolve a water leak issue on the Friday before the County Softball tournaments. The water to the park as turned off as a result meaning the Grandstand bathrooms would be closed for the weekend when an anticipated crowd of 300 were to attend. You were content to have them do without for the weekend. I personally had to call Kristine Blanchard, John Burd and Bill Whittney to get a short term fix in place so that the water could be turned on and the facilities to be operational. **Recreation By-Laws Section 4, bullet point 1, Section 3-55.7 of ordinance 3-2011**
6. Inability to get the Grandstand Snack bar open in time for Softball season even though you were instructed by the Girls Softball Liaison in early spring to do so by the beginning of the season. As a result of this inaction the Girls’ Softball liaison, a volunteer, had to put in the time with some of his coaches to complete the work to the health department standard allowing them to sell product for the remaining season. As a result Girls softball was unable to sell prepackaged food items at some of their initial games. The Rec Director was only able to install one small shelf in the room in all this time. **Recreation By-Laws Section 4, bullet point 1, Section 3-55.7 of ordinance 3-2011**
7. During our annual volunteer days at Borough Park the Rec Director did not take an active role in coordination or soliciting any local donations or volunteers. He did not even attend the 3 days. **Section 3-55.8, item (G) of ordinance 3-2011**
8. Failure to support a new program – Tennis Clinic for children starting July 23rd. This topic was discussed in Commission meetings and the Rec Director was instructed approximately 1 month prior to the event that he was to purchase and transport the water and Chips for the children to the Warren Hills Tennis Courts. He did not respond to either email and when reminded again on Wednesday July 18th in coordination with the Warren Hills Tennis Coach, he responded on Thursday evening that he was not going to do it, nor had he made arrangements with any staff to have it done even though he was notified a month in advance (email sent to Rec Director, Rec Secretary and Co-Chair Jeff Haines on July 1st as well as on June 28th including the Warren Hills Tennis Coach). Copies of these emails were also sent to the Recreation Commission in an email on Friday July 20th. Your response was received also on Friday July 20th stating **“you have no authority to make me your errand boy. It is your program and you have dumped it on me. The file of your previous emails on your own participation changes as you attempt to extend your dictatorship to the position of Recreation Director..”** A previous email dated July 19th you stated: **“The program is yours not mine anyway.”** This required me, a volunteer, to alter my entire work week schedule so that this new program could succeed. **Recreation By-Laws Section 4, bullet point 1, Section 3-55.7 of ordinance 3-2011, Section 3-55.8, section A of ordinance 3-2011**
9. Failure to adequately respond to bill list questions cited in email dated July 11th. Discussion of some of those items happened at the meeting dated July 11th which you were unable to answer. You were given a deadline to respond to the commission with those answers of Friday July 20th, along with a request for a

Directors report, neither of which was produced to the Commission. *Recreation By-Laws Section 4, bullet point 10 (Director reports), Section 3-55.7 of ordinance 3-2011*

Victor opened the discussion or comments from the board of commissioners. Hearing none, Victor entertained a motion to terminate the employment of Des Fitzgerald, Rec Director.

Jeff Haines motioned to terminate Desmond Fitzgerald as the Recreation Director. Seconded by Adam Zimmer. Ayes: 5 Nays: 1 Abstain: 1 Motion carried.

Victor asked Kristine Blanchard if she was willing to volunteer to fill in as interim Rec Director, she responded 'Yes' until such time as a Rec Director was hired. With that I entertained a motion to appoint KB as interim Rec Director..

Jeff Haines motioned to have Kristine Blanchard act as the interim Recreation Director. Seconded by Melissa Hommes. Ayes: 6 Nays: 1 Motion carried.

In accordance with the By Laws of the Rec Commission we will post the previous job description and begin soliciting applications for the position of Rec Director.

Victor asked Des if he had any questions or comments, he had none, so Victor asked for a motion to adjourn.

Adjournment

Adam Zimmer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm, seconded by Michael Nachbaur. Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion Carried

Adjourn **7:10PM**