

Falls youth sports are currently underway, and planning for the winter programs have already begun. This year's basketball program will be seeing some changes at the 5th-8th grade travel levels due to the Littleton Youth Basketball organization opting to create their own in-town program and no longer partner with Ayer and Shirley in the Nashoba Valley youth Basketball League. The Ayer-Shirley Youth Basketball Board will be reviewing potential options for that level of play, and expect to be able to create a similar venue to what had been done in the past. The NVYBL had been a solid partnership between the three towns for almost two decades and according to many local officials, had yielded some of the best competitive basketball at the recreational level in this area over that time. While it is disappointing that the Littleton organization made the decision to go independent with such limited notice, the ASYB Board is confident that due to the previous success and stability of the NVYBL, there will be an opportunity to build a new program with other partnering towns that offer greater growth potential.

The Parks Department hosted several events over the last month, including a Volunteer Appreciation Cookout at Pirone Park, and a family day for 7th Battalion/9th Regiment from Devens at Sandy Pond Beach. This is the second year the Parks Department has hosted the family day at Sandy Pond, and is in accord with the Park Commission's commitment to showing support to those in the Armed Services and their families. This year's 10th annual Volunteer Appreciation Cookout, while sparsely attended, was a fun event for to show the Park Department's appreciation for the 100's of volunteers who give their time to help run our programs and maintain our facilities. This year's Gibson Award, which is presented to the volunteer recognized by the Parks Commission as making an outstanding contribution to our community and its youth, went to Randy Clemence. Randy has been an essential part of the organization and coaching of many youth organizations, including soccer, basketball, volleyball, and softball. He has also been a core volunteer for many school activities and is currently a lead mentor of the nationally ranked robotics team. We greatly appreciate all that Randy has done and look forward to many more years of his service.

Sandy Pond Beach is officially closed for swimming, and it was another successful year. There were in excess of 10,000 patrons that visited the pond between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Swim lessons were once again coordinated through Waterfront Director Heidi Januskiewicz and Lead Instructor Jillian Folger, and serviced nearly 100 students through the course of the summer. Concessions were offered at the beach for the first time in many seasons, and over \$1,000 of revenue was generated, which is in addition to non-resident fees collected in excess of \$5,000.

Projects continue to be the focus of the maintenance crew at this time of year. All the ballfields at Pirone have been renovated after their long season of use, and similar work is currently underway at the High School fields as part of the APD's shared facilities use agreement. We will also be clearing vegetation along the rocky outcrop behind the school to allow this year's annual senior picture to be taken. Volunteer crews continue to clear invasive vegetation along grove pond, which will be a tremendous enhancement to the waterfront sections of the perimeter path that will be constructed this spring.