

Parks Department Updates

February 2019

Winter is almost over, and it is the time of year that the Parks Department begins its planning for the upcoming spring and summer season, the busiest time of year for the department. This includes hiring seasonal personnel for maintenance and waterfront safety, setting up summer camps, preparing a field schedule for events at Pirone and setting up recreational programs for the spring. One of these will be the revival of our youth volleyball program, which will be starting in April. Andrea Tavares has volunteered to coordinate this program and we look forward to seeing the “Little Diggers” back in action. Commissioner Sarah Gibbons will once again be coordinating the Ayer Youth Soccer program and be the lead representative for Ayer on the Ayer Shirley Youth Soccer Committee.

The Parks Department met with the Finance Committee to review the upcoming FY20 budget, which will need to be approved at Town Meeting with the entire omnibus. The discussion included the reasons for requesting several increases in various line items resulting in an overall increase of about 4.3% over the FY19 budget. This is mostly due to the \$1.00 raise in the state minimum wage, which the Parks Department has used as a base figure for starting wages for seasonal employees. It was estimated that it would require raising seasonal employee line items by approximately \$3,000 to cover the added expense. There was also a request for an increase in another line item to cover anticipated costs for training and equipment upgrades in order to be compliant with new safety regulations the state put in place starting in 2019.

The basketball season has come to a close, and it was considered a successful one with around 400 total participants. Commissioner Kevin Williams will be meeting with AYB and ASYB representatives over the next month to review the season while it is still fresh in everyone’s minds and start looking ahead to the 2019-20 season.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director