

Town Workshop with Recreation Committee  
Town Office  
July 10, 2023

Attendees, Aaron M.; Karen Hatch; Ryan R.; John F.; Michael P.; Melissa O.; Karen Howard; Kris S.; Anna Fortin; Michelle Stewart; April Snow; Anna Karlsson; Sharon

Aaron M called meeting to order at 6pm.

All committee members introduced themselves.

Aaron talks about the reason for the meeting, bi law issue was brought to him in May and the fact that they conflict with the job description and that we needed to address the issue. Explained that this is a workshop, and no voting would be done tonight.

Kris introduced himself as the baseball commissioner, he was asked to join by Karen and John since there was a vacancy that needed to be filled. He joined the committee in February and had a successful first season.

Karen Howard introduced herself as the one who took over Mary's position for softball. She also has done our sponsorships for several years. Going into her third season on the committee.

Melissa Olson introduced herself as soccer commissioner. She is going into her third season.

John Fortin introduced himself as a coach and assistant to the baseball commissioner.

Ryan Reed introduced himself as basketball commissioner, he attended a meeting and we put him to work back in Fall of last year.

All members have also coached their kids up through and joined committee after experiencing that for a few years and wanted to step up.

Michael asked who was on the committee, it was verified from Karen that all have been appointed except for Kris at this time.

Sharon introduced herself as a member of the community there to support adult activities.

Aaron asked for the history of the department, attendees didn't know for certain, but some grew up in rec so can date back at least 25 to 30 years. Bi laws are 2012. It believed it existed on its own for some time and possibly for fiscal reasons the town took it over. We have been apart of Dirigo league for at least 25 years. Fields are over 35 years old. Question was asked about stipend, we assumed it was only a few directors ago, maybe 2012. April, the Palermo Rec President, voiced that we are the only town in the league that is run by the municipal, all other towns in Dirigo are non-profit. They own their fields and run themselves.

Aaron is moving us towards the core of the meeting, he states that since the new position the bi laws conflict and he is asking for our opinion on how to move forward. He will be bringing out suggestions to the select board meeting on July 13<sup>th</sup> for them to decide how we should proceed.

Melissa asked Aaron to explain the areas of conflict from the bi laws and job description.

Aaron stated we could change the bi laws, do an advisory group or just a volunteer group instead. Aaron mentioned we could ask the select board to change her job description but that didn't seem like an option.

Karen asked which bi laws were the correct ones. It was mentioned that due to not having an amended version its hard to compare to the old version.

Kris S. states that he is new and realizes that covid hurt programs. He is excited to come in and get things back to where they were before covid. He expressed wanting to work together under Karen and have her appoint volunteers. What we do would be up to Karen. Kris suggests the advisory committee, he wants to be responsible for what his passion is which is Baseball and not all the other aspects of rec. He wants volunteers to be able to focus on what they sign up to do.

Melissa asks again for the conflict to be laid out so we can adjust bi laws. She expressed the frustration that the town didn't seem to look at how the committee was run prior to making this job title. It completely conflicts with how things run. The committee was running for sports well, the only reason the town wanted to have a hired position was to add other aspects like adult activities and events. Sports aspect shouldn't change. She noted that since the new position has been filled, the bi laws have been completely overridden. In her opinion, if this change was happening the bi laws should have been the first thing to change so we know where we stand.

John speaks on his position; he wants to give back where he can in the community. His passion is baseball and would like to focus on just that. He says everyone has their passion and their reason for joining. We support the adult activities but that's not where we wish to put our energy. He agrees with the job description where it states municipal hired positions should do orders for equipment and supplies. Some things just should fall under the municipal person hired. Karen agreed and Aaron that ordering should be done by Karen. Melissa mentioned how she followed the guidelines and did what was needed in February and here we are in July and still not approved. Three quotes were sent to Karen that never got forwarded to the town. Nets were supposed to be here before July and still not approved. If this is on the job title, it's not being done.00:05:36 Ryan Reed

Karen asked about sponsorship money, and wanted to know if we need approval for expenses that are raised for our season from non-tax money donated. Aaron confirmed all expenses over \$2,500 need approval from selectmen. Aaron said he would like to create a separate account for rec so its not just a line item in the general fund. We also need things easier to read and understand what exactly is being purchased.

Aaron spoke on how Karen needed to direct the committee and help him meet that goal of us working together. Melissa said that a director works for the committee, makes sure they have what they need for their seasons, fills in empty spots etc. The town put the committee in a bad spot by hiring someone with a job description that contradicts how things have been run, without explaining the change to the committee. Aaron explained the structure of the municipal government. Explained how each level helps the other going up and down in roles.

Aaron asked the group how they see going forward they would like to support Rec.

Ryan Reed spoke, he said he doesn't want to handle money, wants an online signup and no payments come through commissioners. Possible be allowed to still fundraise and purchase items but have something in writing that lets us know how to handle money. Signups would work better online so no

money is transferred and requests for waived fees can be made there. Yearly signups would stay saved for easy access.

Aaron spoke that he is trying to get an online signup running but needs to figure out the bank account and the fees. Hatch said the fee is 3%. Anna said Winslow has something setup that works well. Some parents can make payment plans and we should contact them for more information. Aaron requested three proposals for online payment programs to be reviewed.

Kris chimed in and said we have Hatch's job description and then the committee and its one or the other, we can't go by the bi laws if we have higher authority. We need one person to run it and that's Karen, have an advisory board and no bi laws.

April Snow spoke and viewed her opinion that the committee is not working with Karen's position. Dirigo has never met her or seen her at a game or meeting. Kris said there is no Dirigo, committee explained that its our league and we do still have a Dirigo league. Karen mentioned it's been our league for 40 years. Ryan explained how we need the league for games as our town is not large enough to play ourselves. Sharon said that the job description didn't say she needed to coach. April clarified that they would like to see Karen at a meeting or game to come together to coordinate with the other towns.

Karen mentioned that she would invite her husband to the meeting but was told it was a private workshop. She mentioned our posts were deleted from our page to announce the meeting. Melissa mentioned they have been told not to invite the public since Hatch started. When asked why this is happening Hatch spoke about her progress through the first year and how she is learning the ropes and what needs to be done. Aaron agrees that our meetings need to be open to the public and announced prior to each one. She spoke on getting volunteers and coaches means we need to build relationships. She explained that she was hired to do a job and she's doing it but needs our support. The Rec committee doesn't exist in power anymore, she is the authority. She reports to the town manager not the committee. Karen explained how she feels like her position isn't wanted and she has put a lot of energy into it, filling a spot that didn't exist. She doesn't like the negative talk to people in the town and feels like Hatch has discarded her. The softball field was never worked on and the boy's fields were great. Hatch spoke on the communication between commissioners was broken and that left a hole for work to not be done. Hatch was away on vacation during clean up day and unable to mediate but sees that's an important day to attend as director going forward. Howard has been told to not speak to outsiders and feels it's a double standard. Kris spoke about how he came into his role as there wasn't going to be a season as we didn't have a commissioner and he stepped in and made a great season. Moved the kids to Fairfield and built a bigger baseball season. He was able to work with the school and improve the relationship, get the school field back to playable. Realizing the field is ours to maintain, always been confusion there. He mentioned that he couldn't have done all this without the support of Karen.

Aaron asked us to go around the room and talk about what we believe in again. How do we see our roles on the Rec Committee.

Kris said he would like to support and grow baseball. He'd also like to help softball come back to Vassalboro since it's hard for parents to travel to Augusta. He then asked John to give his input. John mentioned he would like to have tournaments with states and districts. He would like to have a major's team next season. Kris mentioned he had a lot of parents come up to him volunteering to coach next season. They are excited to see their kids compete again. He found it hard coming into the league and is looking forward to more interest from parents to help in the next season. He is excited to stay on and help.

Karen spoke and said she would like to continue with sponsorships, she has made good relationships with area businesses. She explained the softball season and how we had enough girls for a team. She would like to see us still play with Dirigo under Caysa. She had great feedback from parents after her first season. We can't have our teams just play Dirigo because we don't have the numbers. Hatch asked how many girls are going to other towns to play. Howard believes there is one that we know of that has always played in Winslow. Not sure of any others. Hatch mentioned how softball fell apart last season and we lost players. Ryan mentioned we lost one due to coaching. Hatch mentioned how when she came on there was no documentation of how to run things from previous directors. Melissa mentioned how there still isn't any other position but soccer and basketball. She mentioned commissioner need to be held responsible for uploading to the drive. Anna asked if softball is advertising as much as baseball. Howard verified that she sends out flyers and posts online. Aaron asked who is responsible, melissa answered that Karen sends out flyers and we all post online. Howard mentioned she would love a led sign at the town office. Melissa said she can't read them fast enough and commissioners should use the post signs when signups are happening. Ryan mentioned we do have use of the school's led sign.

Melissa said she loves the bi laws; she wishes to keep working on them. She has been talking about them for a year and had them marked up waiting for a vote from the committee to move forward. She asked to go through them with everyone and have a vote so we could move on. Miller said the select board has not reappointed her. Because no one has been reappointed yet for 2023 a vote cannot be taken. She asked if we could go through and mark them up. Kris said he doesn't think we need bi laws. Hatch spoke and said no one is on the committee right now, there is no committee. Melissa said that committees are appointed July 1<sup>st</sup> and the town is holding it up, this doesn't seem right. Ryan mentioned that he believes we are on a biannual reappointment so most of us are active. No one knew for sure, we moved on.

Aaron asked Melissa what her role going forward can look like. She replied, as soccer commissioner, its her third season so she will continue doing what she has been doing.

John was next, he said he doesn't think he belongs on the committee; he's never had a position besides coaching and isn't looking to be a commissioner.

Ryan was next, he mentioned we need to have elections for new members. He was just added and so was Kris. For the future he mentioned Hatch needs to be jack of all trades and provide us with some overall leadership and some specific procedures we can follow. Like signup deadlines that are across the board for all sports. He mentioned that an advisory committee without any roles might lose involvement from volunteers. He expressed that working with adult activities is not what he signed up for and doesn't have the time to spend there on top of youth. Melissa added that there should be another commissioner for adult activities. Ryan explained how the softball fields not being maintained this year was unacceptable. The girls' playing fields should be at the same standard as the boys. Hatch mentioned maintenance was scheduled for today but was postponed due to rain. Howard mentioned the season ended a month ago. Aaron suggested we bring maintenance to the town's budget meetings and request funds that are needed for each year's upkeep. Ryan wants to make sure next year all maintenance on fields is scheduled equally for all the fields. He mentioned that Melissa lines the fields once a week for soccer, the bi laws state is her responsibility, but job description says Hatch. This is a contradiction that needs fixing.

Karen brought up field day, how in the past we always had all the people working all the grounds and this year it was separate. Going forward, having our director there will help with keeping everyone working on the entire property. Hatch mentioned the progress she has made in getting work done on the fields. Melissa and Howard said that they didn't know any of this. Going forward the committee would appreciate more communication, it will help us stay positive and motivated, Melissa mentioned. Hatch

said that she doesn't have to answer to committee so some information will be left out from us. It's too much to convey to everyone.

Aaron asked when we meet, once per month when commissioners are able, during seasons it may be hard. He asked who the secretary is, that is Melissa. He then asked what we wish to change on the bi laws. He asked the committee to have a new document to present to the town on Thursday June 13<sup>th</sup>.

Ryan asked for automated spreadsheets and evaluations. He would like to have someone else handle the clerical stuff. He doesn't wish to handle money. Melissa mentioned she's fine handling all the things for her sport. Kris agreed with Ryan in having electronic signups and spreadsheets. Hatch agrees with the men but thinks it needs to be the same across the board for each commissioner. We need definite roles for all volunteers. Aaron mentioned if a commissioner likes doing certain things it should be fine for them to do it.

Aaron asked all if we thought if the committee could work with adjusted bi laws. Ryan said he needs things to be very clear on what we are and aren't allowed to do. We need job descriptions not bi laws. Howard said we need to have names at businesses so only certain people can order. Hatch said she will call and give lists of persons who can purchase items at our vendors.

Aaron asked if we should put job descriptions in, Melissa mentioned that the bi laws already have them. Hatch chimed in by saying a confusion on an advisory board is taking away but its putting in key factors like representation for youth sports, senior programs. Currently committee members are busy during seasons coaching so there is no help when needed for other things. Advisory board has representation. You are adding volunteers so we are not overstretched, volunteers would have specific roles and appointed for many terms. Board members could come before the budget committee and wouldn't have to check with other members. Melissa and Ryan mentioned they don't have time to add to their volunteer hours for events and adult activities. Aaron asked if we should have two advisory boards, one for rec and one for seniors. Howard mentioned that we should find a new member to help work with events and seniors.

Melissa spoke on bi laws, currently our bi laws give us the opportunity to vote in elections, removals, changing how things are run etc. She asked if we lose our vote if we change to advisory. Hatch said yes, its her job. Melissa mentioned that it changes everything we currently have. Aaron agreed and said it was inevitable. Melissa mentioned her reason for joining the committee was to have an impact on decisions that kept kids from playing. Since the director's position communication has been very low and the committee has no longer been run how it was created. She feels the town did not do the do diligence prior to hiring to research how things currently are run. Without an opinion and a team effort Melissa mentioned she had no interest in being on an advisory board with one person making decisions. Aaron replied that this is the direction the town has decided to go. Howard mentioned that the position was intended for more town activities and to replace what our directors were with a little higher level. She mentioned that the job description isn't exactly what everyone may have intended for the position.

Aaron asked where we would go from here.

Ryan wants clarity, are we appointed to a specific position on the committee or elected for whatever is needed. Kris and Ryan both would like a channel for complaints, so they are not getting them directly, but issues were resolved this season when brought to Hatch. Kris thinks we should have one head of the group, Hatch, and issues need to be brought to her. Field maintenance should be Hatches responsibility and is delegated for who does what. Kris asked if there was anyone in the town that could do five hours a week for field maintenance. Aaron suggested requesting that at the budget meeting.

Aaron, starting to close said we need him a copy of any mark ups we wish to make to bi laws. He mentioned since we don't know the beginning of the committee there isn't much that says the town can't change things. We can't go back and ask the legislative body to change it so we are able to do what we want. Melissa asked if they have asked the town attorney, Aaron said different lawyers have different responses. Hatch mentioned that she was hired to do what her job entails, and she is excited to do so and she needs members with her not against her. She's not trying to make changes for things to be hard but to move forward doing her job. Kris said he likes the advisory board, doesn't want to be on a committee. Ryan mentioned he likes having a clear description of what is expected. He wants funds to have a bookkeeping system. Miller mentioned he will look back at the 2012 warrant to see if he can get more information on when our bi laws were first created. John mentioned we need a better way to get volunteers. Melissa replied that the request needs to be on the signup sheets.

Meeting adjourned.