

**City of Ellsworth**  
1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME 04605

**RECREATION COMMISSION**

Special Meeting

Thursday, March 16 at 8:30 a.m.

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Marichal called the meeting to order at 8:30AM.

**Members Present:** Chair Eric Marichal, Vice-Chair Kathy Young, Members Jon Stein, Melinda Workman, Kim Fitch, and Josh Frost.

**Staff Present:** City Planner Matthew Williams, Assistant City Planner Elizabeth Littlefield.

**2. Adoption of February 28, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Member Fitch moved to adopt the February 28, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Vice-Chair Young seconded the motion. **The motion to adopt the February 28, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes was UNANIMOUS.**

**3. Review proposals submitted for budget requests.**

City Planner Williams began by going through the funding requests that he had received. Out of the three requests received, the Ellsworth Concert Band requested the same amount as last year, the Ellsworth Community Music Institute requested \$1,000 more, and the Grand requested \$10,000 more than last year. Williams then went through each line item in the budget. The Demeyer Field expenses were bumped up to \$15,500 because the Facilities Director obtained bids on the maintenance costs and it is clear that more funds will be needed to properly maintain the field. The group was okay with approving these additional funds.

The YMCA neglected to submit a proposal in time. City Planner Williams explained that Staff tried several times to obtain a proposal from the Y, to no avail. Williams said that it was the recommendation of the City Manager that the funding amount for last year be approved for this year, as to not deprive the City of one of the major sources of Recreation. Vice-Chair Young asked why there was less money given to them last year than in previous years, City Planner Williams said it was because the ice skating rink went into a separate line item.

The Ellsworth Concert Band is requesting the same amount that they did last year. There is mention in their request that they are in need of storage space at Harbor Park. Member Fitch asked if there was any way the City can store the equipment at City Hall. City Planner Williams said it would depend on the amount of equipment they need for storage. Vice-Chair Young asked if the City could purchase a shed for them and put it at Harbor Park. City Planner Williams said that after their budget is approved, they can bring them in to discuss their needs for the following year.

Chair Marichal then moved on to the Grand's funding requests. Marichal explained that last year, the Grand requested more money than was approved because there were some line items that did not fit under 'recreation'. Vice-Chair Young said that she believes they should approve the entire funding request this year even though the again request funds solely for "Operations and Programming." She said that if

we do not give funds for the operational side of the programs, they will not be able to operate. Marichal asked Member Fitch why the request for Shakespeare at the Harbor was less this year. Fitch explained that since most of the content is in public domain, there are less expenses. Marichal then moved onto the request for the summer concerts, which was \$1,000 less than last year. Member Fitch explained that this was a program that the City requested, however the Grand is the one who pays for it. She went on to say that in previous years, they had been able to accommodate more concerts, and they hope to return to that number if the funding is approved. Member Frost asked Fitch if there is a rain plan for the concerts. Fitch said there was not and if it rains, they have to cancel the concert.

City Planner Williams said that the Grand's request for "Operations" is currently lumped into one big figure. He thought it would present better if the operational expenses were put under each program offered, so the Council would be able to see which program the expenses were going towards. Williams said that he will reach out to the Executive Director of the Grand and ask for a revised proposal. Chair Marichal asked about the educational programs which the Grand offers. Member Fitch explained the PAC program and how it is built to promote the arts to school-aged children from all across the region. She stated that they are trying to expand the program since it has had a lot of success. Member Workman circled back to the discussion about the "operations" line item, stating that it would set a bad precedent to approve funds for an item that does not fit under Recreation. Vice-Chair Young said that she believed it was the City's obligation to fund at least a part of these operations since there is so much involvement with the City. City Planner Williams said that he agreed with the funding amount requested, he would just like to see it broken out among the different programs to give a better accounting of where the funds will be put.

Chair Marichal asked if the Grand was going to pick up the Outdoor Movie Program since it has fallen defunct this past year. Member Fitch said they would be willing to do it, however they would need extra funding. City Planner Williams said that there is \$2,500 from this year's budget that the Grand would have access to if they were to pick up this program, and they would be approved for the \$2,500 for next year's budget in addition to their other request. Williams said he would reach out to the Grand to discuss this and the reorganization of the original proposal. Marichal proposed approving half of the "operations" budget to be spread out among the different programs. He proposed approving \$25,000 for the year with the additional \$2,500 should the Grand take up the outdoor movie program. Member Workman thought that that amount would not be enough, citing the rising costs of wages. She proposed putting a volunteer group together to help out at these events. Member Workman said she was open to organizing that group. Member Frost recommended putting \$28,000 for the year with the additional \$2,500 if they put on the outdoor movies. This would be \$4,000 more than was approved last year. The group was okay with this amount.

Chair Marichal then went on to talk about the Challenger Program, which did not put in a request this year. City Planner Williams said that he attempted to contact them, but was unable to. Marichal said that he would like them to be included in the Commission's recommendation to Council, however Member Frost expressed some concerns. Frost said that he did not think that the expenses for this program warranted the entire \$3,000 amount that was approved in previous years. He said that the program has a lot of sponsorship and fundraising support, so he questions if they even need any money this year. Chair Marichal recommended keeping \$1,000 in the budget for the City to sponsor the program if they choose to. The group was okay with this addition.

Chair Marichal asked for a run-down of all the different budget items they will be recommending to Council. The line for power went to \$2,200 since the costs went up. There is \$500 for miscellaneous

supplies. Demeyer Field was approved for \$15,500 based on the new quotes obtained by the Facilities Manager. YMCA was approved for \$62,000 since they did not submit a proposal for this year. Member Workman expressed concern about approving funds for an organization that did not submit a proposal. City Planner Williams said that the City Council would still have the authority to deny them any funds if they saw fit. The Ellsworth Concert Band was approved for \$1,400. The Grand is approved for a total of \$28,000 to be broken up as follows: \$2,000 for Shakespeare in the Harbor, \$3,500 for the Vacation Movie program, \$6,000 for the Summer Concert program, \$14,000 for educational programs, and \$2,500 for the Outdoor Movie Program should they agree to take it on. The Ellsworth Music Institute requested \$3,500, which is \$1,000 more than they did last year. Chair Marichal said there was no explanation for this jump, however Member Workman noted that it may be because the Y is raising rents. The group determined that they should approve \$3,000, which would be \$500 more than last year. The winter events were approved for \$10,000 to include more events and enhance the existing ones. The Ice Rink was approved for \$3,000, the group noting that there still may be new developments regarding a new ice rink in the future. Member Workman brought up that no matter which ice rink is set up, there would need to be clear provisions regarding maintenance of the rink. The Challenger Program was approved for \$1,000. City Planner Williams noted that the Heart of Ellsworth Beautification line item is not applicable to Recreation so it will be removed.

The Commission then discussed possibilities for awarding more funds to other organizations even though they did not submit a request. Member Frost said that would set a bad precedent. Member Workman noted that they just approved the budget for the Y even though they did not submit a request. Member Stein suggested creating a “Miscellaneous Projects” line item that could be awarded to organizations throughout the year. The group decided that \$2,500 would be a fair amount to put in that line item. City Planner Williams also suggested that they could add some extra funds to the winter events to further enhance those. The group agreed that the winter events line should be brought up to \$12,500.

#### **4. Review and Recommendation of Fiscal Year 2024 Budget.**

In total, the budget for FY24 totaled up to \$131,600, which is a 5% increase from last year’s request. City Planner Williams reiterated that this is just a recommendation to Council and it is the Council that has final approval. There were no members of the public present at this meeting, therefore no public hearing was held.

Chair Marichal moved to recommend the proposed budget as drafted to the City Council for final approval. Member Frost seconded the motion. **The motion to approve the draft FY24 budget and recommend its adoption to City Council was UNANIMOUS.**

#### **5. Staff Comments**

None

#### **6. Member Comments**

None

#### **7. Adjournment**

Member Stein moved to adjourn. Member Fitch seconded the motion. **The vote to adjourn was UNANIMOUS at 9:49AM.**