



TOWN OF MENDON
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

20 Main Street
Mendon, Massachusetts 01756
Phone: (508) 473-0600 Fax: (508) 478-8241
Email: parkcomm@mendonma.gov
mendonma.gov/parks

Meeting Date: 3/13/2023
Meeting Location: Hybrid
Minutes Approved: _10/3/23_

Members Present: Tom Belland, Dan Byer, AJ Byrne

Members Absent:

Parks Director: Dan Byer

Others: Aiden Morcone, Brian St. John

The meeting was called to order at 7:19pm with Tom and Dan in attendance in person and AJ remotely. Aiden Morcone was also in attendance.

The commissioners interviewed Aiden for the position of Maintenance Crew Lead. Tom asked about his biggest challenge. Aiden said keeping up with the weather, things slow down and finding enough work to do, working around the weather.

Tom asked about his best accomplishment last summer. Aiden said can't take credit, Brian and Chris, and he all worked really well together, managed to cut all of Memorial Park in a ½ day, was able to work efficiently. He also worked with Highway to clear brush at Inman Hill Rd.

AJ asked can he elaborate on the relationship with the crew, Aiden said he replied on Brian's past experience in Town, the crew followed his [Aiden's] lead, most tasks were repetitive and he didn't need to provide a lot of direction, Was a well oiled machined

Tom said he has been here for a year, what changes would he make, Aiden said keep up with maintenance with equipment, had issues with breakdowns last year, check belts, when mower is down it causes delays, pushes schedule behind.

Tom asked about changes to routes, equipment, planning, Aiden said there were issues with the trimmers, could invest in more or better units. Need more power clearing brush.

Tom asked him to rate his performance for us 1-10, Aiden said managing 8-9, overall he did the grunt work and let the guys drive the mowers, they were a good team, Dan made a project list and they went from there.

AJ asked about improvements, Aiden said work more on scheduling and dealing with the weather.

Tom asked what are his goals, Aiden said wants to work for Highway if a position opens up, got hired to run the recycle center on Saturdays. Is considering taking on some side work on hi own in addition to parks. Likes that this job is flexible with being done in the afternoon and he has time to do other things in afternoon. Would like to work for the town or another in parks or highway.

Tom, what if we don't select him for this position?, Aiden said he would still come back, liked the crew and would still want the job even if he wasn't in charge.

Aiden left and Brian St. John joined at 7:42.

The commission interviewed Brian St. John for the maintenance crew lead position.

Tom asked about his biggest challenge. Brian said 3 man crew worked well but there were issues with Aiden arriving late, sometimes they were late to get the day started and that impacted productivity. He felt like they didn't use their time efficiently and left properties before they were finished.

AJ asked about challenges with the position and what would Brian do differently. Brian said be dependable and show up on time. Important to focus on the day of work instead of each job, better to space things out, otherwise there's nothing left to do in the afternoons.

Tom what did he excel at, Brian over last 4 years good at trimming and running equipment, gained experience with truck and trailer repairs and knowing the layouts of the properties.

Tom what changes would he make, Brian worked under 2 leaders, felt like John had things figured out and he's not sure how to optimize from there, they could work more to space things out, should be 5 full days of work.

AJ asked about coworkers and the crew relationships, Brian said all meshed well but there were communication issues letting everyone know what the plan was and things would be uncertain.

Tom asked him to rate on 1-10, Brian said 7-8, there was room for improvements, thought they did well with the bathrooms and mowing, felt they kept up with everything but it was also super dry, Time management could be better.

AJ said part of the role would be scheduling, how would he handle it? Brian has been there for 4 years, knows how long properties take, can schedule the day more evenly, find items to fill time between cleaning bathrooms and mowing.

Tom asked about his goals and plans, Brian said this may be his last summer, will be looking at internships, he likes the work but will need to move into his chosen career path of engineering.

Tom asked how he'd handle a situation with a crew member being late, Brian said stuff happens 1-2 times, but there's an expectation for the whole crew because there are only 3 of them so 1 missing will cause issues. Talk to them but yelling won't help, if its evident there's a problem would escalate to a supervisor, His own expectations to show up should be for everyone.

Tom if not chosen would he still return, Brian said yes, he is willing to do the work, and likes the job, doesn't think it would be a big deal, he has been around for 4 years, knows how things work and figured he'd throw his hat in the ring.

Tom greatest accomplishment with maint crew, Brian, always been driven and hardworking, even when it was hot they got th work done and encouraged the crew to complete the day safely. Wants to do things the right way and not going back to properties multiple times,

Tom asked about equipment and staffing, Brian 3 is ok, 4 works but 1 finishes early, 2 mow and 1 trims and then the others join in. It's a straightforward job, he knows what needs to be done to do it.

Brian left at 8:06pm

The commissioners discussed the candidates. Dan said both could be comparable but there were concerns last summer. AJ said he felt Brian talked from experience and focused on stuff AJ appreciated like efficiency and communication. He had heard concerns 2nd hand was surprised Aiden didn't mention them. He appreciated that Brian's answers were more about quality. He isn't sure if Aiden takes the same pride in the product as Brian. Brian mentioned the bathroom. His answers fit better for AJ and he'd like to give him a chance. Based on what he's seen he knows what does and doesn't work, has grown into the position. Tom agrees, Aiden was more focused on the equipment and not scheduling or efficiencies. Tom appreciates that too. Is there a way to give them both an opportunity to step up, maybe have Aiden focus on the equipment? Appreciates what Aiden brings to the table too. Sounds like Brian would be a better fit for the lead job and work with the other candidate on the other. Dan agrees. Dan is concerned about creating too many distractions, felt like there were times last year where essential work was missed due to other less important items and prioritizing the work. He did know the in and outs of a truck and trailer and was able to fix issues with trailer wiring that Brian may have not been able to do. Dan's biggest issue was work getting done in phases with multiple trips to properties to the point parks may need to handle the scheduling of the work. Seems like Brian has some ideas here but if there's a way to empower Aiden to

take on some of the repair work. Tom could we give him a stipend to focus on the equipment and let Brian handle the scheduling. Dan we would need to figure out how to equitably pay them all. Dan said we could come up with specific tasks, sharpening blades, cleaning mowers, Aiden seems to have those skills. Felt that Parks may need to provide more direction.

Tom said he would recommend Brian. Dan agrees, should give Brian a shot, was impressed with Aiden's interview last summer but there were issues last summer. AJ very impressed by Brian's interview, hasn't seen him in years and he was much improved from his first interview. They discussed the crew position, we've had no other applicants. Tom would like to see if we can get one more applicant for Maintenance. Maybe hire a 4th 2-3 days so we get someone trained as we may be in need of a whole new crew depending on who returns. Chris and Brian are both likely gone. AJ concerned Aiden may be looking elsewhere to another job/side work and we should be prepared if he were to leave for private landscape work. This position will ultimately need to be managed by a full time position but we need to do something to buy us more time.

The board discussed the rate. Brian was \$16, Aiden was \$18, Chris was \$14.25. They discussed the rates; Dan only makes \$23.32 so even though this is a \$20/hr job in the market we need to be mindful of the town wide rates too. They reviewed the budget and total hours for maintenance. The 4th could do 32 hours, and the other 3 at 40. Tom duties for Aiden, sharpening blades, cleaning mowers, checking oil.

Tom made a motion to hire the maintenance crew to the positions and rates as follows, pending a background check, AJ seconded, and all approved.

Maintenance Crew Lead	Brian	\$18.50
Maintenance Crew	Aiden	\$18.00
Maintenance Crew	Chris	\$16.00
Maintenance Crew	New	\$15.00

Dan updated the commission on the Grover shed. The old unit was demolished by Soccer and the lines were all capped off. They are thinking early April for the new shed to be delivered. There was discussion on the "cage" for the portable toilet. Tom reached out to Don Morin who was involved with MUYSA when they build Grover and he said they did have issues with vandalism. All agree it should be reinstalled.

The commission discussed the classroom siding eagle scout project. Dan met with Gianni and has more info. Tom said we should minimize expenses, just stabilize the building. Dan said the potential budget was \$2,500, there were concerns around funding. They were looking to do fundraisers and a go fund me. Dan is suggesting Parks consider contributing since this is capital work we'd need to otherwise complete on our own anyways.

Tom made a motion for Parks to fund up to \$2,500 towards this project pending review of a final budget, AJ seconded and all approved.

The board discussed a proposal for a shared septic system at Lowell field for the beach and Lowell concession stand. The proposal is \$8,000 for a complete design including BOH hearings. All agree this is a worthy project but probably too expensive to take on now. It sounds like NYS has some resources to get the actual installation labor for cheap but we need to address the design first. With the beach project we may not have the time to focus on this right now. Dan suggested maybe we just have a perc test done? We know this area is very wet, that might give us a starting point to know if this is even viable for future design work.

Tom made a motion to approve up to \$1,500 towards soil testing, AJ seconded and all approved.

Dan updated the board on the Lake Nipmuc issues. Lawney is asking the selectboard to set up a lake task force to focus on the lake issues. They are going to appoint 5 people, Parks, BOH, ConCom, BOS, Lake Nipmuc Assoc. They would be public meetings so others can attend. Dan will be the parks rep.

The commission discussed the beach playground. We now have 3 rough quotes,
UtiliPlay – \$21,079.97
Kompan - \$48,110.46
O'Brien & Sons - \$38,818.00

All agree UtiliPlay is the cheapest.

Tom made a motion to approve the contract with UtiliPlay, AJ seconded, and all approved.

Tom made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body, AJ seconded and all approved.

Dan discussed a proposal before the town to purchase 75 Providence St. This is a large lot of land that abuts the Morrison Dr property. CPA is considering the purchase of this property for open space, housing, and maybe recreation. The total cost would be around \$1 million. Dan brought it to Parks because there is some potential for future recreation here. It also is close to the shell at Morrison Dr. It may restart the conversation related to the parks garage location (memorial park vs Morrison dr). Tom said Memorial Park is a better location for this garage. All agree this land is worth purchasing for future recreation potential. But it should not stop the proposal for the garage building. All are in favor of this proposed purchase.

The commission returned to regular session.

Executive Session minutes also approved to be released on 10/3/23

The commission discussed the parks building. Dan thinks our next step is a more formal RFP process to get more pricing. Tom said we should keep the price low and just focus on the big stuff to start. Not sure we will get much more than \$300k. All agree.

Dan updated the commission on the poles at Memorial Park. He is working on getting a price from a contractor to replace some or all of the light poles. The Building Inspector said he would take a look and the Electrical Inspector said we would be ok to use new wood poles. Once we have numbers we can discuss replacing all 8 or just the 2 failed ones.

Dan asked about an opportunity to purchase a tractor from someone local on facebook for \$6,800. Tom thinks its too big for our needs. We will pass.

The board reviewed the hiring process. Hoping to make decisions in the first week in April.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm