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TOWN OF NORTH BRANFORD

TOWN HALL, 909 FOXON ROAD, NORTH BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT 06471
TOWN MANAGER (203) 484-6000 TOWN HALL FAX (203) 484-6025

Minutes

Parks and Recreation Commission
Stanley T. Williams Community Center
1332 Middletown Ave, Northford, CT 06472
Tuesday, August 26, 2025- 6:00 pm

Vice-Chairman Onofrio called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Salute to the Flag

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Vice Chairman John Onofrio, Jennifer Ash, and Gene Stabile.

Absent: Chairman Steve Torino and Nick DeMatteo.

Also Present: Recreation Director Kerry Haynes, Assistant Director Sarah Brown, Town Council Liaison Rose Angeloni, Knights of Columbus Treasurer Damian Dengre, Knights of Columbus Financial Secretary Frank Carrano and Resident Bill Savastano.

2. Approval minutes of previous meetings

a. Tuesday, June 24, 2025, discussion and action

MOTION: Commission Ash made a motion to approve the June 24, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Stabile seconded. **Discussion:** Commissioner Ash stated that she would like the meeting minutes to be prepared in the style of the summary report provided by the recording clerk. Vice-Chairman Onofrio agreed.

MOTION: Commission Ash amended the motion to accept the summary (attached) as the June 24, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Stabile seconded.

Discussion: It was agreed that, moving forward, the meeting minutes will be prepared in the style of a summary report, similar to the format provided by the recording clerk..

Vote:

Vice Chairman Onofrio – yes

Commissioner Ash – yes

Commissioner Stabile – yes

With all in favor, the motion passed.

MOTION: Commissioner Ash made a motion to move line item 9 “Potato Festival discussion and action” to line item 3. Commissioner Stabile seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**

3. Potato Festival discussion and action

- The weather this year was excellent, and the Police Department estimated that the Saturday crowd reached between 25,000–30,000 people.
- There were no complaints about the shuttle fee. Additional features included wheelchair accessibility at STW, and an internal shuttle service was run on POCO grounds due to handicapped parking being further away because of Public Works construction. Park and Rec employees drove their own vans for this service, and this system will be used again next year.
- Food vendors were very pleased, and the rides reached the top level of sales. Incentives were offered for advance wristband purchases.
- North Branford Day will be brought back on Sunday next year.
- Sports teams did a phenomenal job assisting. Football and field hockey were the biggest contributors, but boys’ basketball and volleyball also stepped up. Teams are paid \$100/hour, and the money goes directly to the program.
- The Boy Scouts once again did an excellent job cleaning the grounds and received a donation for their efforts.
- Wrap-up meetings are currently being conducted.
- A new attraction this year was Victoria’s Circus, which was very well received and considered a great addition.
- The woodcarver created an eagle with the American flag. Raffle tickets will be sold, and the piece will be raffled off.
- The Beer and Wine Garden, operated by a local business (Central Café) was extremely successful. They sold triple the amount made in prior years and requested more fenced-in space for next year.

4. Public Comment - Bill Savastano raised a concern regarding recycling at POCO, specifically asking why there was no dumpster available for cardboard. He stated that he would like a dumpster to be arranged for next year to ensure proper recycling.

5. Director’s Report

- Four special events and seventeen recreation programs were offered this season.
- Five specialty camps were held in addition to the regular camp, which maxed out at 100 children.
- The senior program served over 400 meals, scheduled 31 medical appointments, and conducted 72 shopping trips along with 10 individual senior programs.
- Specialty activities for seniors were held under the pavilion, along with a family night.
- The after-school program was taken back from the YMCA and is now offered five days a week with 22 students enrolled (compared to only nine under YMCA).
- Adaptive programming is being reintroduced, including sensory family events through the Embrace Adaptive Program.
- Upcoming events include Beyond the Horizon with Ascend Bank presenting their Green Light program.

- Kathy is organizing a Christmas card project where seniors will create vintage-style cards.
- A Big E trip is planned.
- Autumn Nights at Augur Farm begin on September 18th. Juice Box will be paired with Homecoming Week, with classes earning points for participation

6. **Unfinished business discussion and action**

a. **STW Improvements discussion and action**

- Budget concessions are still a work in progress. Fitness room memberships have increased with very little pushback. Complimentary memberships are offered to all town employees, including BOE staff and veterans.
- No change in hours has been required due to staffing cost savings.
- A fee schedule for park and pavilion rentals needs to be developed.

b. **Parks and Fields discussion and action**

- The Knights of Columbus held their annual tag sale at the POCO grounds (previously at Doody's) and are seeking a second date. They would like to hold tag sales every October and June. Concerns were raised due to an injury that occurred at the last event. Safety remains the biggest issue due to cars driving on the field while people were walking. The current insurance does not cover pedestrian injuries caused by cars; it only covers the event itself. Kerry suggested developing guidelines and rules requiring vendors to arrive by a certain time and limiting vehicle access once the sale begins. Vendors should sign agreements ahead of time. Kerry also requested that the plan go through the Commission and Risk Management before moving forward. Damian Denegre (Treasurer) and Frank Carrano (Financial Secretary) represented the Knights of Columbus at the meeting.
- The North Branford Soccer Club has offered to donate new soccer goals for Northford Park.
MOTION: Commissioner Ash made a motion to accept the donation of new goals for Northford Park from the North Branford Soccer Club. Commissioner Stabile seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**
- The use of A-frame signs for sports organizations to advertise registration will need to be reviewed with Planning and Zoning.

7. **New Business**

The Police Department is reinstating the Juvenile Review Board. Brian Hannon will head the program, and Kerry will take the role of family outreach and intake. A total of seven members are expected to serve. Kerry has training scheduled for next month. This initiative is seen as a very positive development for the town.

8. **Blueprint Committee updates discussion and action**

- The Blueprint Committee has not met recently.
- Two parcels were sold on Old Post Road and Totoket Road. The Town Council voted that all revenue from the sale of town property will go toward economic development.

- Starbucks required an easement for a sewer hookup, which the Town Council approved on Tuesday.
- At 1599 Totoket Road, the DOT has an easement for drainage that runs through the middle of the property.
- The Sea Hill property will not be sold, as it is not a buildable lot and neighbors withdrew their interest.
- Nida Drive is also not buildable due to wetlands and a sewer pipe running through the property.

9. Permanent Project Building Committee updates discussion and action

- The remainder of the STW roof project is back on the table. Approximately \$110,000 remains from the \$1.6 million state allocation.
- Remaining improvements include ceiling tiles, backlighting, skylights, and the canopy. Ceiling tile replacement will be the first step.
- Contractor bids and approved vendors will be required.
- The next priority project will be HVAC systems. A meeting is scheduled tomorrow with the Town Manager, Purchasing Agent, and Public Works to discuss next steps.
- New boilers and furnace work will be needed. Mike F. suggested issuing an RFP with specific equipment requirements as part of a design-build approach.
- \$1.2 million was bonded last year to support these capital projects.

10. Public Comment

11. Adjourn – the meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Dellacamera', written in a cursive style.

Jessica Dellacamera
Clerk

Attachment

MAYOR
ROSE MARIE ANGELONI

DEPUTY MAYOR
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SUMMARY

Parks and Recreation Commission
Stanley T. Williams Community Center
1332 Middletown Ave, Northford, CT 06472
Tuesday, June 24, 2025- 6:00 pm

Chairman Torino called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Salute to the Flag

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Chairman Steve Torino, Vice Chairman John Onofrio, Jennifer Ash, Gene Stabile, and Nick DeMatteo.

Also Present: Recreation Director Kerry Haynes, Assistant Director Sarah Brown, Poco Coordinator Elisa Pannone and Resident Donna Abbatiello.

2. Approval minutes of previous meetings

a. Tuesday, December 10, 2024, discussion and action

MOTION: Vice Chairman Onofrio made a motion to approve the December 10, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Stabile seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed. 2 abstentions – Commissioner Ash and DeMatteo.**

b. March 31, 2025, discussion and action

MOTION: Commissioner Ash made a motion to approve the March 31, 2025 meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Onofrio seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed. 1 abstention – Commissioner DeMatteo.**

c. April 28, 2025, discussion and action

MOTION: Commissioner DeMatteo made a motion to approve the April 28, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Stabile seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**

3. Public Comment

4. **Director's Report**

Activities and programs are ongoing. They recently held the senior picnic, which welcomed 150 seniors under the new pavilion and featured live entertainment. In addition, summer camp kicked off yesterday.

5. **Unfinished business discussion and action**

a. **STW Improvements discussion and action**

Vice Chairman Onofrio has attended the meetings where there has been discussion about the stairs leading to the courts. It was noted that they were not poured evenly. There is talk about possibly adding additional steps to correct the slope, and railings will also be installed.

b. **Fiscal Year End review, transfers, discussion and action**

MOTION: Commissioner Ash made a motion to authorize line item transfers stipulated by the Recreation Director. Commissioner Stabile seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**

Director Haynes outlined three key areas where concessions were made in response to budget cuts:

1. **Reduction in Operating Hours**

The most significant concession was a reduction in facility hours to align with budget requirements. Weekday hours were trimmed by an hour at the start of the day, and weekend hours were adjusted to 8:00 AM–12:00 PM instead of the previous 7:30 AM opening.

2. **Portlet Reduction**

The number of portable restrooms was reduced at select locations. In areas that previously had two units, only one remains.

3. **Fitness Room Membership Fee Increase**

The annual fee for a single fitness room membership increased from \$150 to \$180. This adjustment is projected to generate an additional \$10,000 in revenue.

MOTION: Commissioner Ash made a motion to increase gym memberships effective July 1, 2025. Commissioner DeMatteo seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**

c. **Parks and Fields discussion and action**

The pavilion will be added to the rental fee schedule and made available for reservation online. The current rate is \$20/hour for residents and \$25/hour for non-residents, with most rentals lasting around 3 hours. The Commission discussed a new fee structure of the following:

- Residents: \$100 for a 4-hour block
- Non-residents: \$200 for a 4-hour block
- Limit: One rental per day

They asked Director Haynes to come up with a worksheet of fees to be discussed at the next meeting.

In addition, North Farms Park recently acquired a new 6x4 gray gardening shed, enhancing storage capabilities.

The gym rental fee remains \$40/hour for residents and \$60/hour for non-residents.

MOTION: Commissioner Ash proposed a motion to add the pavilion at STW to the reservation list and to accept the shed at North Farms Park. Vice Chairman Onofrio seconded. **Discussion:** none. **With all in favor, the motion passed.**

Also, the scoreboard at Mill Road Field was funded through ARPA grant money; however, despite the funding being awarded over a year ago, the vendor has yet to make any progress on the project.

In addition, the Knights of Columbus have expressed interest in holding another tag sale this fall on the POCO grounds, and Lorenzo's Christmas Wish plans to host a soccer tournament at Northford Park in August. The Commission has requested that representatives from both organizations attend the next meeting to seek formal approval

6. New Business

a. Commission meeting discussion and action

Commissioner Ash stated that she would like the meeting minutes to contain more than just the motions.

7. Blueprint Committee updates discussion and action

The last meeting was canceled.

8. Permanent Project Building Committee updates discussion and action

See line item 5(a) for discussion.

9. Potato Festival discussion and action

Last year we asked the Purchasing Department to explore the possibility of entering into a multi-year agreement with our current fireworks vendor. Only one vendor submitted a proposal. However, we received an email from Purchasing recommending against moving forward with a contract at this time and instead suggesting that the project go out to RFP again. It's important to note that an RFP was already issued in September 2024, and the contract was awarded at that time.

Three bands were unable to perform last year due to rain but were unfortunately paid in error. All had agreed to return this year to honor their commitments. However, one of the bands, *Anchors Away*, has declined to return, despite already receiving payment. Because the Purchasing Department did not include an 'Act of God' clause in the agreement, we are unable to hold the band accountable for the missed performance.

Other changes this year include a \$5 increase in parking fees and the introduction of a shuttle fee, which will not exceed \$10 per family. There is also a possibility that line dancing will be added to the Sunday schedule with Tracey Fair as one of the instructors.

10. Public Comment

Donna Abbatiello, a North Branford resident, expressed interest in serving as the line dancing instructor at this year's POCO event. She will coordinate the details directly with Mary.

11. Adjourn – the meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Dellacamera', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jessica Dellacamera

Clerk