

# Shelburne Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes for 12-11-24

**Attending:** members Diana Hardina, Mary Lou Gallup, Stefan Topolski (by phone), and Norman Beebe, and Cowell Director John Walsh (by phone) Guest: Rick LaPierre

1--- Approve/review meeting minutes for November

2--- Cowell Facilities Director report – see attached report. John is working on insulating around the unused door at the back of the TAB room. There's a considerable breeze coming in! John has two quotes so far for the deep clean of the Cowell: one for \$1100 and the other for 2 people at \$130 an hour for a full day. Neither included cleaning under the bleachers. We ask him to make that part of the job. John also wants us to have a conversation about storage.

3--- PTO Playground Improvement Subcommittee members Flannery Geier and Kate Conlin – see attachment. Flannery and Kate are looking to raise money for the job and are hopeful that an earmark submitted by Senator Paul Mark will be funded. They also have submitted a proposal seeking CPA funds. They want our support and at some point may ask us for a formal letter.

4--- Senior walk and user fee rates. Attached is a letter from Senior Center Director, Juli Moreno regarding the senior walk. After a long discussion Norman proposes keeping the current fee structure in place with the addition of a monthly pickleball rate of \$15 for Shelburne residents. The motion passes with Diana abstaining.

5--- Cowell Code of Conduct Protocol – Diana proposes dropping the last line of the **Protocol for Dealing with Code of Conduct Violations**: "Individuals may bring forward their concerns anonymously if they wish." She feels that this could not practically be carried out. We approve this change with Stefan abstaining. See the attached amended **Protocol for Dealing with Code of Conduct Violations**.

5--- Updates

\* Arms Field maintenance – Snow and Sons Landscaping says we should wait to treat the infield with Roundup in the spring. We could also treat the entire field with an emergent at that time. They will send quotes to Terry at Town Hall.

\* Outdoor court repair – Mary Lou says they were unable to arrange a second day to do further repairs. We are grateful for what they did accomplish.

\* Community Preservation Act grant request – Norman expresses a desire to write a letter to the Community Preservation Committee to support Shelburne Falls Pickleball APA application with the expansion recoating of the courts as our top priority. Norman will bring a letter to our January meeting for discussion.

\* Cowell Youth Winter Program – Diana reports that there are coaches for every group! Grades 3-4 has yet to meet due to school closing and may need to switch nights because of a conflict with skiing. The first Friday Family Pizza and Play was a success with four families participating.

\* Pickleball – equipment still needs to be moved indoors from its outdoor storage bin. Holiday party scheduled for this Sunday.

\* Adult basketball – Diana says the Tuesday night group has 10 to 15 players each week and is functioning well. John says the Thursday group is also doing well.

\* Volleyball - Stefan is still hoping to resurrect volleyball and is working on the equipment.

\* Ping pong – Diana has identified four proctors, and is looking to paint the walls and floor once her work schedule slows down. We give okay to purchase paint.

6--- Programs: management, standardizations of monthly reports, interruptions – we table program management and standardizations of monthly reports to our January meeting. As for interruptions, Mary Lou finds any interruptions problematic during pickleball while Diana does not see them as a problematic during basketball and the Cowell Youth Winter Program.

7--- Any other business or updates

Committee membership – we still have a vacant position. We agree we should advertise this on the **Two Town Newsletter**, on our Facebook page, and on the BSE Facebook page. Diana will look to see what we've used in the past. It's pointed out that editing a letter as a group via email is a violation of the *Open Meeting Law* so we will avoid doing that.

Committee processes – Mary Lou would like us to talk about this and suggests we look at the guidance posted on the town website for committees.

8--- Next meeting Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.

## Director Report

Date: December 11, 2024, 2024

Submitted By John Walsh, Cowell Gym Director

Subject: December Report to the Cowell Gymnasium Recreation Committee

1. I have been updating the on-line calendar.
2. The fence around compressors to reduce sound appears to be effective. So far one neighbor who had made complaints sent a thank you note.
3. Quotes for basement window replacement, as well as other single pane windows in office, south entrance and attic is progressing. The quotes will be done through the State purchasing ComBuys system and John has been learning how to use the system.
4. John has contacted an EVERSOURCE preferred contractor to investigate replacing existing lighting throughout the building as well as the mechanized insulated shades in the gym to see if additional incentives are available. He has spoken with the Municipal Program administrator for EVERSOURCE who is reviewing the proposed custom incentive for the insulated shades. If approved, we would not be required to go through the ComBuys system. John met with a company today to confirm measurements for the 10 gymnasium windows
5. There have continued to be no security issues with missing funds since the camera and signs were installed.
6. John has sought quotes from three commercial companies for cleaning the walls and bathrooms of the building. He is waiting for a quote from the third contractor. Preliminary quotes are above \$1,000 for one day of cleaning. As there is no line item in the current budget, a request to the Select Board and their approval will be required.
7. The Academy in Charlemont is renting the gym through the end of February four days a week with a break for the last 2 weeks in December. Four Rivers will be renting the gym on Friday afternoons through February.
8. Palmeri Electric has been contacted to replace the ceiling fixture ballast in gym. It is tentatively scheduled to be replaced Thursday or Friday morning. As scheduling contractors has become difficult, any programs using the gym will need to be flexible as staging will be required to reach the fixture and may take longer than anticipated to complete.

Respectful submitted,

John Walsh

Director

Cowell Gymnasium

# Safe & Accessible Playgrounds for BSE

## Buckland-Shelburne Elementary PTO 501(c)(3)

The Parent-Teacher Organization at Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School (BSE) is working on an initiative to replace the aging, non-ADA compliant playground equipment. The playgrounds are estimated to be over 30 years old and are deteriorating, with visible cracks and breaks posing significant ongoing risk. In the last six months, there have been six incidents of children breaking bones on this playground equipment. The playground at BSE is the only playground in Shelburne and many community members make use of the equipment during off hours.

### Our Vision

- Replace all three playgrounds with ADA-compliant equipment
- Improved surfacing underneath playgrounds to increase safety and accessibility
- Add more swing sets, spinning and ground-level play elements that would greatly benefit children with diverse needs, including those who are neurodiverse.

### Opportunities & Challenges:

- Truly accessible playground equipment is expensive
- All of the playground equipment at BSE requires updating
- School community is supportive of updating equipment
- We are hopeful that community members will lend a hand with necessary site work to lower costs
- Our initiative should not affect the tax rate or take from other school needs

### Potential Funding Sources:

- Shelburne Community Preservation Act (application submitted)
- Various grants, such as T-Mobile Hometown Grants
- Local business, community fundraising, private foundations
- Paul Mark has indicated he will seek a legislative earmark on our behalf (goal \$100,000)

### Next Steps & Support Needed

- **Advocacy and Endorsement:** Seeking letters of support from town administrators and committees and hope that relevant committees will formally endorse the playground initiative to strengthen our case for additional funding and grants.
- **Community Engagement:** Help engage the community and local businesses in supporting the project through donations and partnerships.
- **Legislative Outreach:** Ongoing discussions with Sen. Mark, Rep. Blais, and Director of Rural Affairs, Anne Gobi, to secure state support.
- **Fundraising and In-Kind Donations:** Outreach to local businesses and individuals needed in the coming months for fundraising, in-kind donations, and support.

Flannery Murphy Geier  
flannerygeier@gmail.com

Kate Lindroos Conlin  
Kate.Lindroos@gmail.com



Above: Significant structural deterioration is evident across structures posing ongoing risk.

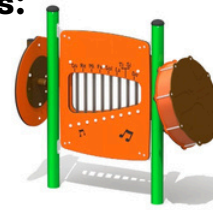


Above: non-compliant structures: playground safety codes from Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) require the height of the slide exit region should be no more than 7" for preschoolers and no more than 11" for kids aged 5-12 to ensure safe transitions from the slide to the ground.

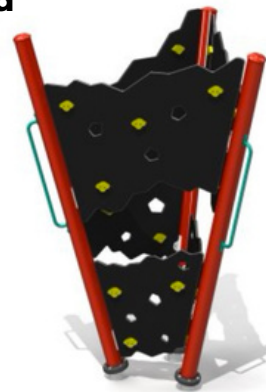


Above: missing rungs in monkey bars and rusting. Left: One of countless examples of missing, cracked, and/or rusted bolts.

**Preliminary Proposals:  
PK-1st playground**



**2nd-3rd playground**



**5th-6th playground**



All playgrounds will feature ground level equipment, swings and spinning elements that would greatly benefit children with diverse needs, including those who are neurodiverse.

# The Senior Center

*Ashfield • Buckland • Shelburne*

December 11, 2024

Dear Members of the Shelburne Recreation Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Heart and Sole Walkers, a walking club sponsored by The Senior Center and held at Cowell Gym during the winter months. This program has become a cornerstone of wellness and community for over twenty seniors from our participating towns, providing a safe and supportive environment for physical activity and social connection.

The Heart and Sole Walkers utilize the gym three mornings a week from December through February, with participants ranging in age from their early sixties to their late eighties with an average age of 78. Many of these seniors live in rural areas where winter walking conditions are hazardous. Participants bring a change of shoes to preserve the gym's floor and even assist with dry mopping to ensure the space is well cared for during their hour of use. The beneficial impact on their mobility, wellness, and quality of life has been profound, especially for those living alone who benefit greatly from the companionship and encouragement the group provides.

We deeply appreciate the Recreation Committee's dedication to supporting sports and activities at Cowell Gym. At the same time, I respectfully request that you waive the implementation of fees for the Heart and Sole Walkers for the remainder of this winter season. The seniors have consistently shown their gratitude by making voluntary donations at the end of each walking season—over a few hundred dollars last year alone—demonstrating their commitment to supporting the gym's operations.

If the Committee decides that fees are necessary moving forward, I kindly ask that this change be postponed until the next fiscal year. This delay would allow me, as Senior Center Director, to explore options for incorporating these costs into our budget without jeopardizing the accessibility of this vital program for lower-income and fixed income seniors.

The Heart and Sole Walkers program exemplifies the spirit of community that Cowell Gym fosters, and I am hopeful we can continue to collaborate to support the health and well-being of our local seniors. Thank you for your understanding and consideration. I am happy to discuss this further or answer any questions you may have.



Sincerely,  
Juli Moreno  
Senior Center Director

# Protocol for Dealing with Code of Conduct Violations

The committee recognizes that most code of conduct violations will be dealt with by the affected individuals themselves. In instances when the affected individual feels there was not a satisfactory resolution to their concern they may bring their concern to the recreation committee. Individuals can bring their concern forward by speaking to a member of the recreation committee or emailing the recreation committee at [cowellgymnasium@gmail.com](mailto:cowellgymnasium@gmail.com).

Once the committee receives a complaint, they will follow this procedure.

## Informal Resolution

- 1-- The committee will identify either a member of the committee or the Cowell Gym Director to spearhead this informal resolution.
- 2-- The committee's designee will gather information. They will speak to the individual(s) who has/have brought forward the complaint as well as the person/persons the complaint has been brought against.
- 3-- The committee's designee, if they feel this to be the appropriate course of action, may issue a warning to the offending person(s).
- 4—This process may be repeated as appropriate.

## Formal Resolution

- 1—If the ***Informal Resolution*** process does not work, the committee will invite the offender to a meeting of the recreation committee. This will be done in Executive Session with proper and appropriate notice given to the offender.
- 2-- At this meeting, the offender will be able to address the ongoing concerns the committee has about their behavior in the gym.
- 3-- The committee at this meeting may issue the offender a warning that their gym privileges may be revoked.

## Revocation of Gym Privileges

- 1—The Recreation Committee may vote to revoke an individual's gym privileges. If this action is taken, the Recreation Committee Chair will inform other departments/town officials as appropriate.