

### **Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting**

The Zebulon Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will meet Monday, December 21st at 6pm. This meeting will be held virtually. The public may access the meeting remotely as noted below.

To watch, please visit our Public Input Meeting Page: <https://publicinput.com/D7837>

To participate by phone: **855-925-2801** Meeting code: 9793

- This is a toll-free number.
- When calling, you will hear a prompt to enter your project code. **Enter 9793.**
- If you call in during the meeting, you can simply stay on the line to listen to the meeting.
- To leave a voice message, press \*2 (star, then the number 2).
- You can also request to speak by pressing \*3 (star, then the number 3). You will be placed in the speaker queue while continuing to hear the meeting audio until it is your turn to speak.

To participate by email: [O528@PublicInput.com](mailto:O528@PublicInput.com)

### **Meeting Agenda**

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Public Comment: Public comments are limited to 3 minutes by phone or 400 written words by email. Anyone wishing to speak must enter the speaker queue or leave a voicemail by 5:50 PM. Emailed comments must be received by 3 PM in order to be read into the minutes of the meeting.
4. Consent
  - a. Adoption of Minutes
    - i. November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020
5. Presentations/ Work Session
  - a. FY 2020 Budget Preparation
6. New Business
  - a. January Meeting Change
7. Open Discussion
8. Staff Updates
  - a. Department Update
  - b. Next Regular Meeting: proposed Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM
  - c. Annual Retreat: January TBD
9. Adjournment

**Zebulon Parks & Recreation Department  
Advisory Board Meeting  
November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The Zebulon Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will meet Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at Zebulon Town Hall located at 1003 N. Arendell Avenue.

**Board Member Attendance:** Erica Parsons, Andi Wrenn, Dexter Privette, Brandon Wiggins, Garrett Underhill

**Late Arrival:** None

**Meeting Agenda**

1. Call to Order

**Start – 6:00 PM**

**Erica called the meeting to order.**

2. Approval of Agenda

**1<sup>st</sup> - Andi Wrenn**

**2<sup>nd</sup> - Dexter Privette**

**All voted in favor.**

3. Public Comment: *Due to Covid-19, all wishing to speak must submit comments, 400 words or less, to Hannah Blische ([hblische@townofzebulon.org](mailto:hblische@townofzebulon.org)) by 3 PM on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Comments will be read as written to the Parks and Recreation Board at the time of public comments.*

**No Comments**

4. Consent

**Erica called for a motion to adopt the minutes.**

- a. Adoption of Minutes
  - i. October 19, 2020

**1<sup>st</sup> - Brandon Wiggins**

**2<sup>nd</sup> - Andi Wrenn**

**All voted in favor**

5. Presentations

- a. Park and Recreation Master Plan- Community Engagement Findings and Visioning

**Sheila Long introduced, Withers and Ravenel representative, Gary Warner who provided a presentation to Share initial findings and community input online surveys.**

- Zebulon currently has 12.4 acres of park land per 1000 residents. NRPA recommends 12 acres for a population of our size. By 2030, without acquiring additional park land, we will be short.
- NRPA recommends 3 playgrounds for a town our size. Zebulon currently has 3 playgrounds.
- NRPA recommends 1 community center for a town our size. Zebulon currently has 1 community center.

- Zebulon currently does not have any soccer fields (that we own). NRPA recommends 2 for a town our size.
- We had 388 responses to our online survey.
- Level of Satisfaction: People overall were very happy with our services / parks. People did not feel like they had good access to greenways / trails.
  - Zebulon Community Park was visited very often, school parks and Gill Street park were least visited.
  - People were generally happy with the fees, availability of information, and ease of registration. Highest satisfaction was in the customer service by staff category
  - A lot of activities, the community did not feel as though we were meeting their needs (Examples: dog park, aquatics, adult sports, gym access, etc.)
- Future Community Needs: Number one was trails / greenways, teen programs, parkland, preschool programs, etc.
- Limits to Parks Visits: Not aware of facilities, lack of personal time, lack of amenities, conditions of parks
- 82% said they travel outside of Zebulon to use parks.
- Youth Sports: Large number of people who would like to participate in additional programs (Lacrosse, Off-road biking, etc)
- Adult Programs: A very large number would like to participate in additional programs
- Senior Activities: A large number of seniors would like to participate in additional activities
- Events: Most attended event was the farmers market, second was disc. golf
- People prefer to seek grants for additional funding. Second funding choice would be impact fees.
- Early Takeaways:
  - Management and Operations: Advertise what you have, better Maintenance of facilities
  - Facilities: Additional parks and park land, expand trails, splash pad, more courts, playgrounds, and fields
  - Programs and Events: Additional classes and programs
- Top 10:
  - Greenways / trails
  - Playgrounds
  - Splash pad / water play
  - Ampitheater
  - Community Gardens
  - Dog Parks
- Little River Park
  - Trails
  - Playground

- Education
- Community Park
  - Playgrounds
  - Splashpad
- Whitley Park
  - Dog Park
  - Tennis Courts

Discussion was had amongst the board with the following summary of comments:

- Where did pools rank?
  - Pools have been mentioned, but initial assessments indicate more interest in a splash pad
- How did we get such a high number of survey respondents?
  - Conducted a statistically valid survey with outside company
  - Also offered the online survey
  - Withers and Ravenel were able to work with the outside firm to digest the statistics
  - Advertised online very well
- What is Withers' overall number one recommendation?
  - Continue to buy park land. If you have the land you can then decide what to do with it whether it be build trails, build a playground, offer programs, etc.
  - Sheila Long mentioned that we need to continue to work with private developers to build trails / greenways and work with them to partner with our endeavors
- Did anyone mention accessibility to Mudcats?
  - No one specifically mentioned the stadium in the survey
  - Current greenway plans include the stadium. Developments in surrounding area have plans to include the stadium in trails

#### 6. Open Discussion

Erica Parsons asked what are the next steps with the Master Plan: Sheila Long responded that information presented tonight will also go to the commissioners. Withers will take this feedback, feedback from this board, feedback from focus groups and stakeholders, etc. to continue to build our Master Plan. The implementation plan will then be presented to this board.

Garrett Underhill mentioned revitalization of downtown and the board had discussion. A summary of those comments included: The Alley looks great. Would love to have recreational facilities in downtown area, such as senior center. Downtown buildings need a lot of work. But we can focus on having events and activities downtown to pull attention and foot traffic to downtown. What are the other small things we can do to help downtown (example: parking signs and making it aware of where people can park publicly for free).

Sheila Long mentioned that downtown conversations meetings are open if anyone wishes to attend. Please RSVP to Sheila if interested in attending.

7. Staff Updates

a. Department Update

- Veterans Day this year was rethought due to COVID-19 concerns with our seniors. Staff came up with the idea of a gift bag. Sent invitations to veterans to come pick up a gift bag. We have gotten great feedback from the community and our veterans regarding the celebration
- Our Toy Drive still going on like a “Toys for Tots” drive. Please encourage people to participate, share info with networks
- Santa Cruise will be December 5. Please continue to share that info with your networks.
- Winter Markets in The Alley on December 5 and 12.
- Working with ZDAC to continue storefront decorating contest.
- Working on photo opportunities downtown for people to pose with holiday characters around town.
- Landscaping contract continues to go well. Continuing to assess our parks maintenance. COVID has brought new challenges for our park's maintenance crew. For example, a new group of soccer players have been playing almost every day on the ZES field. Within a week you can see the wear and tear of the field, our staff continues to move goals around.
- Programs being offered are doing very well.
- Community Center has been running smoothly since its opening. A lot of communities around us have kept their centers remain closed, and our staff worked very hard to be able to open safely.

b. Next Regular Meeting: December 21, 2020

- i. Goal- Deliver Master Plan Draft for review and possible recommendation to elected board
- ii. It is possible a special meeting may be needed the week of December 28th

i. All board members indicated they would be available.

8. Adjournment

Erica called for a motion to adjourn the meeting

1<sup>st</sup> - Brandon Wiggins

2<sup>nd</sup> - Garrett Underhill

All voted in favor

End – 7:01 PM

**Topic: Budget Work Session**

From: Parks & Recreation Staff  
Prepared by: Sheila Long, Parks & Recreation Director

**Background**

The Town Manager has shared budget instructions with staff for the upcoming fiscal year. Staff has begun the process of developing our budget recommendation. Focus areas for our department to date include:

- Continued implementation of initial master plan findings
  - Staff reorganization
  - Marketing & communication
  - Expand routine maintenance and small park improvement projects
  - Downtown events
  - Expand programs beyond the Community Center
- Recognize impacts of COVID-19
  - shift in community interest in the arts
  - comfort level for programs/events with larger participation and less opportunity to social distance.

**Discussion Before the Board**

Are there any areas, programs, and park improvement projects you would like for us to further consider and research as we develop the budget.

**Attachment**

FY 2021 Requested Parks and Recreation Budget Memo

**Topic: January Regular Meeting**

From: Parks & Recreation Staff

Prepared by: Sheila Long, Parks & Recreation Director

**Background**

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting is held the third Monday of every month at 6 PM. Every January, this meeting falls on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. It is customary to move the meeting to the next business day or the following Monday.

**Discussion**

The board will discuss staff's recommendation to change The January meeting to Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Sample Motion:**

"I make a motion to change the January regular meeting to Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021."

**Topic: Department Updates**

From: Parks & Recreation Staff

Prepared by: Sheila Long, Parks & Recreation Director

**Events & Cultural Programs**

**Winter Market**

- Held a Zebulon Farm Fresh Market Winter Market on Saturday 5 and 12.
- Thank you to everyone who came out and supported the market and our vendors.
- On December 5 we had a total of 301 customers attend and on December 12 we had 222
- Overall, the vendors were happy with the outcome, especially their sales. These two events had two of our highest average vendor ratings compared to our other events throughout the year.
- Had a lot of great conversations with vendors, market customers, and downtown business owners regarding the Alley Space. Everyone is extremely excited about the improvements in downtown and how great the space looks. They cannot wait to have more events in the alley and in downtown Zebulon!

**Santa Cruise:**

- On Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup> Santa cruised to 12 locations in Zebulon with the assistance of the Police and Fire Department to wish the Zebulon community a very Merry Christmas.

**Zebulon Toy Drive:**

- Toys are being collected from Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup> to December 18<sup>th</sup> to be distributed to local Zebulon youth by the Share His Glory organization.

**Art Programs**

- Continue to be well attended and mostly maxing number of seats available.
- New executive orders have limited the number of participants in classes to 10 again.

**Community Center**

**Tree City USA:**

- application was completed and submitted

**Fitness Classes & Memberships**

- we have seen a drop in numbers since the latest Executive Order requiring masks while working out
- Fitness Room memberships are starting to build back up

**Partnership Concert**

- Partnered with the Miss Zebulon Virtual Christmas Concert at the Community Center on December 1.
- Event was held with strict monitoring of the indoor gathering regulations and all performers wore a mask, even while performing.



## Parks

### Park Signs

- Installed signs at Little River and Wakelon Elementary
- Cleaned Park sign at Wakelon

### Winter Projects

- Locked soccer goals for winter
- Deep cleaned park bathrooms
- Installed Bike Racks at Community Park, Whitley Park, and Gill Street
- Leveled gravel driveway at Maintenance Shop, Community Park driveway, and extra parking lot
- Coordinating repair project to fences, dugout and field at Zebulon Community Park

## Administration

### Master Plan

- Continued review of Master Plan progress and coordination with consultants
- Requesting consultants provide a more thorough review of collective input and development of the visioning section of the plan.
- More information to follow

### Budget

- Budget development for next FY began in November.

### Technology

- Staff has begun the first phase of utilizing Asset Essentials as a work order system for the parks and the next roll out phase will be for all staff to utilize the platform for requests and reporting issues
- Expanding use of Public Input to develop an Engagement Hub website to host various meetings, surveys, and projects.
- Assed utilization of Rec Desk after one year of use and plan to continue use of this platform at this time.

### Economic Development

- Coordinated and supported Downtown Conversation meetings with the Planning Department.
- Presented to the Board of Commissioners about the Farmer's Market's role in economic development in Zebulon.

# Parks & Recreation Department Budget Message Fiscal Year 2020-2021



There shall be a Parks and Recreation Department for the town, established and continued under the authority of North Carolina General Statutes. (1985 Code, § 31.59)



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It is the duty of the Parks and Recreation Department to establish and conduct a system of supervised recreation that will provide activities that are diversionary in character and aid in promoting entertainment, pleasure, relaxation, instruction and other physical, mental and cultural development and leisure time experiences for the citizens of the town. (1985 Code, § 31.61)

Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department works to enhance the lives of our citizens and visitors by providing beautiful parks, play opportunities, wellness programs, and educational opportunities. From sports leagues, fitness classes, art programs, travel experiences, educational presentations, summer camps, to the Zebulon Farm Fresh Market, there is something for everyone. The department also maintains and operates six public parks within the Town of Zebulon. These parks contain walking trails, walking loops, athletic facilities, playgrounds, picnic shelters, a disc golf course, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts, and natural areas. Zebulon Parks and Recreation also manages the Zebulon Community Center which has a gymnasium, classrooms, exercise/ weight rooms, and an art room, all of which can be rented for family or business gatherings.

### **Small Town Life**

The very nature of Parks and Recreation speaks to intentions of the Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan Focus Areas: Small Town Life. We value customer service and strive to offer the highest level of service to our community in an effort to treasure and continue the sense of Small Town Life. In order to create opportunities for the community to come together are seen in a variety of ways: parks, sports, fitness programs, cultural programs, and events.

Zebulon 2030 placed an emphasis on the development of special events in our community. The parks and recreation department took a look at the offerings already in place. We considered opportunities to combine or expand efforts to meet this community goal:

- Celebrate the Arts moved from the Zebulon Community Center to Town Hall and partnered with Zebulon Elementary School to offer a larger event that offered art activities and youth performances.
- May Day was expanded to include a Friday night kickoff concert.
- Zebulon Night Out was transitioned to the Parks and Recreation Department and combined with the farmers market closing event to create a fall festival, Hay Day.
- The Downtown Tree Lighting event combined efforts with the Holiday Market and expanded offerings to include a regional band, craft vendors, and snow sledding.

Most importantly, the department placed an emphasis on partnerships. In order to truly embrace Small Town Life, it is important to seek opportunities to work together to celebrate our community, support growth, and create places for people to gather. These partnerships will be how we continue to grow and meet the needs of our community.

### **Vibrant Downtown**

There is a saying that your downtown is like the living room of your community. To view Zebulon's Downtown in this manner, it would mean without a doubt the Parks and Recreation Department does and will play a vital role in revitalizing our downtown. Department staff works closely with the planning department to stay up to date on new interests and investments in downtown. We are constantly seeking opportunities to partner and celebrate those wishing to be a part of our downtown community. To help create and celebrate our vibrant downtown, the parks and recreation department has:

- Expanded the Downtown Tree Lighting Festival
- Planned Pop Up Markets to take place downtown
- Supported efforts of ZDAC
- Sought opportunities to collaborate with Planning and the Chamber of Commerce to attract new businesses and investors to downtown
- Partnered with downtown businesses and small business owners (painting and pottery programs)

- Developed an events committee to help support town sponsored and future non-town sponsored events

The department has also sought to establish a town commons and to activate alleys in our downtown. The town commons has proven to be more challenging as originally anticipated; however, the department remains dedicated to identifying a public space in downtown Zebulon to create a place for people to gather, encourage extended and repeat visits, and to support events. In these efforts, the department has been coordinating with downtown property owners along alleyways owned by the town to seek approval to string bistro lights to their buildings. These alleyways will introduce new opportunities for events and activities, celebrate a strong pedestrian highway already in our downtown, and create a new vibrancy downtown. Staff is currently working through the logistics of power to get started.

### **Growing Smart**

As the town prepares for substantial growth, the Parks and Recreation Department has been working to position itself to continue to provide a high level of service and be prepared to adapt and expand to meet the growing and changing needs of our community. Most importantly the town has embarked on it's first Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan which will produce a community focused document to guide recreation decisions for years to come.

To enhance the level of service to our park system, the department made changes to the operations of parks maintenance. Part time staff were assigned specific parks to conduct general park upkeep tasks such as cleaning bathrooms, picking up trash and blowing play areas. This change reduced the amount of time staff spent driving to various parks and increased accountability of staff. Parks maintenance operation changes also included the parks staff assuming the responsibilities of maintaining Gill St Park which was formally being addressed by Public Works. The department also piloted contracting general landscaping (mowing, weed eating, edging, bush trimming, etc...) at Whitley Park. The pilot program proved to be an effective solution to positioning the department to properly maintain the park system moving forward.

FY2021 is going to be an important year for Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department as the town's Parks and Recreation Master Plan is slated to be approved and implemented early in the year. It is imperative that the department continue to reorganize staff and operations to optimize levels of service to the community. The department also worked with the community to trial new recreation opportunities in the current year that are recommended to continue and/or expand in the coming year. Examples of these items include:

- Expanding the general landscape contract to include 3 additional parks
- Transition the part time staff assistant position to a full time recreation assistant position
- Expand use of part time staff allowing professional staff to focus on enhancing levels of service and prepare for the implementation of the master plan.

## **BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

In the FY2021 budget request, I have requested an increase beyond the CPI amount for the departmental budget. In addition, I have requested the creation of new line items. With the intention of developing a clearer accounting of the department budget and operations, I have transitioned expenses to more appropriate line items.

Prior to the development of the FY2020 budget, a detail budget for each department line item was not available. I worked with department staff to develop a detailed budget for each line item. Over the last year, I have been working with staff to continue analysis of the budget. The FY2021 budget was developed with the following:

- consider initial observations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan process

- consider existing program costs
- consider desired program and improvement costs
- review the previous year's spending trends in the town's financial software, MCSJ
- consider the Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan and other planning initiatives
- consider the town manager's FY 2021 budget goals.

### **New Line Items**

I have requested the creation of new line items in order to provide you and the Board of Commissioners a more detailed accounting for the cost of operating the benefits the Parks and Recreation Department offers the community.

#### Marketing & Advertisement

This new line will reflect the cost of creating community awareness for services and opportunities offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. These expenses were previously taken from Material & Supplies and/or Contracted Services.

#### Advisory Board

This new line will support the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the efforts to create a platform for a more engaged and effective appointed board. These expenses will support training, community engagement efforts, and other opportunities needed to pursue Advisory Board goals.

#### Park Landscape

This new line will reflect the cost to contract general landscaping of four town parks. The two joint use school parks are not included in the recommended contract for general landscaping.

#### Cemetery Landscape

This new line will reflect the cost to contract general landscaping of the cemetery.

### **Budget Review**

#### Full Time Salaries (New)

##### Background:

The parks and recreation department has requested two full time positions, Recreation Assistant and Park Manager. These positions will be necessary in the years to come in order to maintain current levels of service and to meet the future needs of our growing community. The parks and recreation master plan process has included an operations and staff assessment. Initial observations by Ballard\*King indicated a need for additional staff and reorganization of staff and operations. The recommended changes were considered necessary to maintain and expand current levels of service. A memo from Ballard King is included as an attachment to detail initial observations and recommended first steps.

The recreation assistant position will combine use of part time staff to enhance and support expanding parks and recreation operations, programs and events (including the farmers market). The department will seek to transition two part time staff assistant positions to the full time recreation assistant. A dedicated park manager will help the town plan and implement small, medium and large scale projects associated with public space not only in our parks, but also in areas such as downtown. Details for both positions were indicated in the request for positions.

##### Fiscal Analysis:

The service level community members have come to expect reflects a professional parks and recreation department. There are minimal alternatives that would make a significant difference in the expense associated with tasks the requested positions will complete.

The full time Recreation Assistant would no longer require current part time funds allocated for market management and department staff assistance in the amount of \$29,760. Increases to the budget for additional staff are noted below:

	Salary	Benefits	Training	Computer	Cell Phone	Office Furniture	Materials & Supplies
Recreation Assistant	\$35,469-53,205		4800		\$420		
Park Manager	\$49,912-74,865		\$1500	\$1400	\$600	\$1200	\$500

**Policy Analysis:**

Department operations support all focus areas of the Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan. These positions would support existing and allow staff to expand programs, events, and community engagement that support Zebulon 2030 in the following ways:

- Vibrant Downtown
  - Revitalize downtown Zebulon
  - Develop events, entertainment, and cultural attractions to draw people downtown
- Small Town Life
  - Promote more community events and festivals.
  - Enhance and create more community gathering places
  - Increase the connectedness and walkability in the community
- Growing Smart
  - Plan for appropriate land use to meet transportation and housing needs
  - Maintain appropriate staffing to support expected service levels for the growing community

**Risk Analysis:**

There is a risk that staff will fall behind on expected levels of services from current and future residents.

Part Time Salaries

**Background:**

The current FY budget reflected a breakdown of part time staff hours by work unit for the first year. The department continued to refine these budgets. Part time adjustments as noted by Ballard\*King to maximize use of professional level staff is also reflected in part time salary requests.

**Major changes in part time staff are noted below:**

- Reduction in part time staff used to operate the Farmers Market. The Recreation Assistant will support market management needs throughout the year in addition to other tasks.
- Eliminate administrative part time staff utilizing the recreation assistant to support administrative department needs filled by this position.
- Expand use of the part time staff to serve as facility attendants to process registration, check in participants, answer the phone, greet guests, and conduct basic cleaning needs. This will free up professional level staff to focus on planning and implementation of current and new programs and events.

- Adapt use of parks maintenance part time staff to support more detailed park needs and take on additional tasks requiring a higher level of skill as general park maintenance is contracted for four of the parks.
- Increase use of part time staff for athletics to support the need to utilize two gym spaces during the winter basketball league.

Fiscal Analysis:

The service level community members have come to expect reflects a continuous and expanded need for use of part time staff. There are minimal alternatives that would make a significant difference in the price of the tasks the requested positions will complete. Work unit part time increases are noted below:

Work Unit	Amount +/-	Line total Request	Reason
Admin	-13,260	0	Duties will be filled by Full Time Recreation Assistant
Farmer's Market (Exist)	-18,640	5360	Duties will be filled by Full Time Recreation Assistant
Community Center (New)	+12,076	36,479	Use of additional part time staff to cover the facility from 9AM-4PM. This will free up professional staff to concentrate on development and implementation of programs. This increase also reflects the transition of any part time staff expense for any program or event hosted at the Zebulon Community Center with the exception of summer camp. Examples of such programs include gymnastic, pottery, and Veteran's Day. These events were being captured in the programs/events line item.
Programs & Events (Exist)	-2,525	9,455	The reduction of this line reflects transition of community center related programs and events being tied to expense lines identified for the Community Center. It also reflects a reduction, as staff will not pursue all day track out programs in the next fiscal year. The demand on staff at this time will make it challenging to implement such a program at the level of service we offer other programs.
Parks Maintenance (Enhance)	+6720	49620	The department currently has one part time employee dedicated to mowing. As the department reorganizes and contracts basic landscaping, mowing needs will be limited to athletic fields, joint use parks, and the GSK partnership property. The responsibilities of this position will be expanded to support more skilled, detailed and technical support of our park system. Use of equipment such as the bobcat and tractor will be required. The expansion of duties to the mower should reflect an appropriate rate increase to \$14 per hour.
Athletics (Enhance)	+674	9314	Using additional gym space during the winter basketball league will require additional score keepers and site supervisors.

Policy Analysis:

Department operations support all focus areas of the Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan. These positions would support existing and allow staff to expand levels of service that support parks, programs, events, and community engagement.

Risk Analysis:

Should this increase not be granted, there is a risk in disrupting staff responsiveness to staff, management, and customer needs. There is also risk that staff will not be able to respond effectively and efficiently to recommendations made by the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Cell Phones (Enhance)

Background:

This line has been increased to provide a cell phone stipend to the recommendation new full time positions.

Fiscal Analysis:

Due to the nature of parks and recreation, staff members need to be available by phone when away from their desks in order to implement their duties, programs, and events. By ensuring staff are available by cell phone, we are able to provide speedy responses to other staff, management, safety concerns and customers (as appropriate). The rate of reimbursement is stated in the Cell Phone Policy and implemented within our department.

Policy Analysis:

Continuing the practice of providing a cell phone reimbursement is consistent with the town's goal of maintaining the appropriate and expected level of customer service both internal and external.

Risk Analysis:

Should this increase not be granted, there is a risk in disrupting staff responsiveness to staff, management, and customer needs.

Electricity/Water (Exist)

Background:

This line has been increased to provide a more accurate accounting of expenses related to utility cost at our parks and facilities.

Fiscal Analysis:

The actual expense for utilities has exceed budgeted amounts over the past two years. An increase of \$6454 over the FY 2020 budget should account for the annual cost of utilities, as projected based upon the past two years. These utility costs are based upon existing conditions and are not related to any new or enhanced conditions of the park system and facilities.

Travel & Training (Enhance)

Background:

Continuing education is important to ensuring staff is growing, networking and up to date with industry standards. In the upcoming budget year there will be a continued emphasis on staff participation in continuing education to ensure we have proper training and knowledge to serve our customers confidently, effectively and efficiently. Increases account for recommended full time staff additions to the department.

Fiscal Analysis:



This line is currently budgeted at \$5,000 and supports five full time staff members. This line has been increased by \$2300 in order to ensure new members of the department have access to training and certifications.

Policy Analysis:

The Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan identified Growing Smart as a focus area. Investment in staff ensures that they are prepared for growth and will be ready to provide appropriate levels of service to our customers. Staff development with a specific focus on developing funding to support succession training and networking supports growing smart efforts. Training staff in industry standards, trends, and practices aides in the development of new and improved programs and recreation opportunities that we hope will attract new residents to our community.

Risk Analysis:

Should this increase not be granted, there is a risk that staff would not be up to date in industry standards, trends and practices. There is a risk that staff will fall behind on expected levels of services from current and future residents.

Grounds Maintenance (Enhance)

Background:

It is imperative that town parks are maintained with focuses on safety and user activity to ensure our parks meet user expectation, industry standards, and law. The department currently maintains 5 parks including 4 baseball fields, 3 multipurpose fields, 1 disk golf course, 2 tennis courts, 4 basketball courts, and 1 paved trail. 4 parks with playgrounds and 219 cubic yards of playground mulch. This line item supports expenses related to cleaning supplies, field treatments and preparations, tree services, fire ant treatment, safety surfacing replacement for playgrounds, and miscellaneous park repairs.

Fiscal Analysis:

This line item has been increased by \$15,000 to account for the following:

- Routine Field repairs at Zebulon Community Park, Field A will include laser grading to level the playing field creating a safe field for play and enhance drainage. Such field repairs should be done routinely every 4-6 years. The cost is \$8000. All athletic fields will need to be placed on a rotation for such routine maintenance and field management. Staff recommends cycling implementation of this field management plan over several years. In FY22, staff will recommend a second field to enter the field management plan.
- The department has several parks and playgrounds with ageing equipment. Repairs and maintenance to this aging equipment will be necessary to extend the life of the equipment. Staff recommends \$3,000 to support replacement of park and playground equipment.
- The Advisory Board has approved park rules to be implemented across the park system. Signs will need to be ordered and installed to notify park users of the rules. \$3000 is being requested to implement signage.
- An additional \$1000 reflects the actual cost of routine biannual fire ant treatment at Whitley Park and Zebulon Community Park.

Policy Analysis:

By properly maintaining our park system and expanding opportunities at our parks we are reaching the goal of enhancing and creating more community gathering spaces.

Risk Analysis:

There is a safety risk associated with not properly maintaining our parks, fields and playgrounds which could result in a lawsuit from a user injury. According to the National Parks & Recreation

Association, the majority, 70% of playground injuries occur from public playgrounds. Injuries most commonly resulting in ER visits include: fractures, lacerations, and cuts. Swings and slides lead in equipment resulting in injury and more than 70% of injuries are a result of falls to the surface. Concerns with unlevel playing surfaces cause concern for tripping hazards and injured ankles. Fields with ruts tend to hold water decreasing drainage and causing unfavorable playing conditions which impact our user experience.

#### Vehicle Maintenance (Exist)

##### Background:

This line has been increased to reflect actual costs over the past few years. The current budget is not sufficient based on the age of our fleet and expenses being incurred. The current fleet consists of older vehicles that were passed to the parks and recreation department from public works over the years. The department had 7 vehicles at the beginning of the current fiscal year. One truck was removed (without replacement) from the fleet this year after a series of costly repairs such as transmission issues. In addition, we have trucks that are more than 20 years old. These trucks continue to require maintenance and in some cases, parts are difficult to locate. Should department fleet requests not be met, additional funds will be necessary to keep the department trucks running.

##### Fiscal Analysis:

Due to the nature of parks and recreation, staff members need access to vehicles in order to maintain parks and support department programs and events. To reduce vehicle maintenance costs, a newer fleet is necessary for the parks and recreation department.

##### Policy Analysis:

Continuing the practice of providing staff with access to a department vehicle is consistent with the town's goal of maintaining the appropriate and expected level of customer service both internal and external.

##### Risk Analysis:

Should this increase not be granted, there is a risk in disrupting staff responsiveness to staff, management, and customer needs. There is also risk that staff will be unable to properly utilize staff to conduct daily maintenance of the park system.

#### Team Uniforms (Exist)

##### Background:

The FY 2019, a spring soccer league was added to the offerings of the parks and recreation department. Participation in the first year was higher than anticipated and our second year is shaping up to grow. We anticipate the third year to reflect similar growth. With the amount of growth facing Zebulon, we anticipate all athletic leagues to reflect similar growth. Staff will be working to identify partners and opportunities to accommodate as many players as possible. The increase in players registering for youth athletics will directly reflect an increase in cost of team uniforms.

##### Fiscal Analysis:

To offer these leagues at the service level community members have come to expect, there are minimal alternatives that would make a significant difference in the price of operating these programs. A decrease in expense would reflect a decrease in quality of uniform provided to players.

Team and league sponsors are sought for all leagues. FY 19 secured sponsorships totaled \$7,354. League participants will pay registration fees. Sponsorship funds will be sought in FY21.

Policy Analysis:

It is an objective of the parks and recreation department to provide physical activity programs for youth and adults, provide summer activity for youth, and encourage youth to be outside. Expanding athletic programs supports the goal of enhancing and creating more community gathering spaces through new opportunities.

Risk Analysis:

There is a risk that staff will fall behind on expected levels of services from current and future residents.

Community Center Materials/Supplies (Enhance)

Background:

The Zebulon Community Center celebrated 10 years of service to the community in 2019. This landmark also indicates that we should anticipate repairs and equipment replacement in the years to come. In addition to regular department programs and special events such as Veteran's Day, the center supports community rentals for family reunions, weddings, banquets and more. The department supplies tables and chairs for internal and external use at the community center. The tables are in poor condition and need to be replaced. The chairs are showing signs of weakness and staff anticipate a need to begin replacement of chairs in the years to come.



Fiscal Analysis:

The cost of replacement tables will be \$1416. The community center charges rental fees for private uses of the facility and for the use of tables and chairs. In FY 19, \$20,895.50 were collected in rental fees.

Policy Analysis:

Zebulon 2030 prioritizes enhancement and creation of places for people to gather to support the Small Town Life focus area.

Risk Analysis:

There is a risk that staff will fall behind on expected levels of services from current and future community center participants and users.

Computers

Background:

The request of additional staff will require the purchase of a computer and equipment. In addition, staff is requesting the purchase of a tablet for the community center to aide in program registration utilizing the recommended registration & management software, RecDesk. A tablet for the parks maintenance work unit to use in the field will support the facility management software that has been requested in the upcoming budget year.

#### Fiscal Analysis:

Each new computer and supporting hardware is expected to cost \$1400. The tablet and support items such as a safety case and credit card attachment are expected to cost \$600. There are no other cost effective methods to provide these resources and services to our staff and customers.

#### Policy Analysis:

Ensuring necessary technology is available and up to date allows staff to ensure job related duties and the expected level of service is reached.

#### Risk Analysis:

There is a risk that staff will fall behind on expected levels of services from current and future residents.

### Contracted Services

#### Background:

This line will reflect a \$3925 increase to provide the department with facility management software offered by Dude Solutions that is web based. This software will assist staff in scheduling and tracking routine maintenance and asset management projects associated with parks and park facilities. The software will include routine safety inspections which will also improve record keeping. The system will track maintenance, developing data to assist in budget management. This software will:

- Increase staff productivity
- Increase automation and reduced back-end work
- Avoid disasters and unforeseen costs

#### Fiscal Analysis:

This line will reflect a \$3925 increase to provide the department with facility management software that is web based. This software will provide better tracking and analysis to support future budget development. Implementation of Dude Solutions will not reflect additional charges for training. Other software options to support facility management tracking will come at a higher cost.

#### Policy Analysis:

Ensuring necessary technology is available and up to date allows staff to ensure job related duties and the expected level of service is reached. Department staff identified facility management software as a priority in order to be current, effective, and efficient as we strive to offer outstanding customer service and experiences.

#### Risk Analysis:

There is a risk that staff will fall behind on expected levels of services from current and future residents.

### Farmers Market

#### Background:

The department will support the sixth year of the Farm Fresh Market in the upcoming market season. Farmer's Markets across the nation, North Carolina and our region are struggling. Struggling markets tend to be a result of:

- Over saturation of markets
- Lack of coordination with vendors and other markets
- Younger demographics don't cook
- Decrease in farmers, specifically produce farmers.

These challenges were also apparent in Zebulon. The market took a lot of pressure to bring in large numbers and fill a hunger from our community to support events. On average, farmers markets tend to draw 1-2% of your population. Last year, our market averaged 5% of the population. This number removes any outlier attendance days. In comparison, Holly Spring's farmers market average attendance is 2% of its population.

There were times last season that the market did not have produce, a variety of conditions attributed to each of those circumstances, but overall the market had 4 regular produce vendors throughout the season. In comparison, the Holly Springs market averages 7 regular produce vendors. Over the offseason, department staff spent time reaching out to produce vendors and other markets to get a greater understanding of their challenges and expectations:

- The location and layout of our market is challenging. It is too spread out and doesn't provide the feeling of a market found in other locations
- Local produce wasn't available during the entirety of the planned market season
- The market events being offered hurt sales rather than help them
- Customers at our market spend less per sale than they get at other markets.

In an effort to set the market on a path to be more sustainable and to limit perception challenges, staff changed the framework for the upcoming season. The department is separating "special events" from the regular market season. The regular market season was shortened to reflect the available produce from our community. In addition, the market will offer a spring and fall pop up market on a weeknight downtown to offer a local outlet for the handful of vendors with product available during that time, and to pilot a weeknight market for future consideration.

The market will offer themes throughout the regular market season that will help create connections between our community and our local food sources. The market intends to change how it implements past initiatives such as food demonstrations. This year the market will bring in a nutritionist in addition to a chef to offer learning demonstrations and tastings. The goal is to teach the community the importance of eating local and how to cook with items they can find at our market.

#### Fiscal Analysis:

A decrease of \$3,800 reflects a transition of the former market season to a shortened regular season market and special events. Funds used to support events such as May Day, Hay Day and the Downtown Tree Lighting which combined efforts with the Farmers Market will properly be reflected in the Special Events line. These events will still prioritize working with our small businesses, vendors, that participate in the regular farmers market season.

#### Policy Analysis:

In offering the market we are reaching the goal of enhancing and creating more community gathering spaces. The careful analysis of this market over the past year and implementation of changes reflects efforts of the department to grow smart.

#### Risk Analysis

There is a risk that the department fails to offer expected levels of services and recreational opportunities from current and future residents. If the market continues in its former framework, it risks not being sustainable. Staff will need to continue to work to evaluate opportunities that can be sought to improve chances of sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency.

### Special Events

#### Background:

For many years the Parks and Recreation Department offered an annual festival, Arts in the Park. The town suffered revenue loss nearly 10 years ago that impacted the operating budget across

the town and the Parks and Recreation Department felt these cuts. Arts in the Park was one of the larger expenses of the department and was cut in order to maintain as many levels of services as possible. Department staff began to offer smaller events such as Superhero Day, Market on the Lawn and Celebrate the Arts. In 2014, the department received a grant that supported starting a Farmers Market. The community was missing large community events and the Farmers Market began to fill that void.

As previously noted in the farmers market section, staff is separating the pressure of offering events from the Farmers Market and will allow the market to focus on operating in a manner that supports providing quality customers to its vendors and educating the community in the value of eating fresh and local. Some funds will transition to the events line to help the continued support of events such as Hay Day, May Day and the Tree Lighting while ensuring the goal of including market and small business vendors is a priority.

It is also important to recognize the desire of the Police Department to transition Zebulon Night Out to the Parks and Recreation Department in an effort to refocus their energy on creating strong and personal relationships with the community. Fire, Police, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation collaborated to develop a fall festival, Hay Day. This event takes the pressure off of the Police Department to plan and implement Zebulon Night Out. Funds allocated from the police and administrative department for this event will now be recognized in Parks and Recreation.

Events such as Trunk or Treat and Veterans Day Celebration have been reallocated to Community Center Programs in an effort to create a clear accounting of the offerings of Community Center planned and hosted events.

In 2018, the department partnered with the Zebulon Chamber of Commerce to grow May Days and the Downtown Tree Lighting. These events are now primarily planned by Parks and Recreation Staff. In 2019, staff reflected on the goals driving the Downtown Tree Lighting. It was recognized that we weren't quite meeting our goal or the community desire for a large scale event downtown to draw attention and support to current and future businesses. Staff worked with sister departments to close Arendell Ave to relocate the event, hired a regional band and made it snow. Working with our partners and downtown supporters, the Downtown Tree Lighting highlighted the following successes:

- 4 downtown restaurants participated (some selling out)
- 12 downtown businesses and organizations participated
- 10 Non-Profits and Churches participated
- 2 breweries & 4 food trucks participated (some selling out)
- 18 small business, craft and farm vendors participated
- 4000 community member participated.

The Downtown Tree Lighting was very well received by the community. Many stating they wanted more opportunities for like events. It is not feasible for the town to carry the weight of all these events. As the community grows and new business join our community especially downtown, it will be imperative that we position ourselves to support others in the community willing to pursue private planning and implementation of public events. We are already fielding questions for street festivals and 5ks. The town also already supports events such as the Zebulon Takes the Cake 5k, Relay for Life, and the MLK Breakfast. The town has developed an Events Committee which includes staff from police, fire, public works, and the parks and recreation departments. This committee will not only work through town events seeking support from various departments, but it will also review any events seeking town support. Town support could include street closures, electrical support, emergency personnel, or other financial support. Staff recommends allocating funds to support private initiatives seeking to offer public events.

Fiscal Analysis:

An increase of \$26,798 is recognized in this budget line. Significant increases are attributed to the expansion of the Downtown Tree Lighting event, which is estimated to cost \$16,375 next year. This expense includes:

- Contracting a firm to close the streets and set a detour route
- Hire a regional band and provide sound, electrical and support equipment and technical assistance
- Marketing
- Renting additional porta potties
- Snow Zone and sledding
- Entertainment and activities

Town events proposed for next year are highlighted below.

Event	Expense Change	Total Cost	Notes
Easter Egg Hunt	463	1163	Staff intends to rethink how the annual Easter Egg Hunt is offered to create an Easter Party featuring games and activities.
Celebrate the Arts	340	1190	This event grew last year from a small event serving 75-100 people to an event that partnered with other organizations and supported over 463 participants last year.
Downtown Tree Lighting	10,875	16,375	See prior notes.
Concerts/live music		1500	In addition to concerts at the May Day Kickoff and Downtown Tree Lighting, the department will seek other concert/live music opportunities that could take place downtown, town hall or the parks.
Movie on the Lawn		3000	No change.
May Day		9075	Includes May Day Kick off and Saturday activities
Hay Day		\$4820	See notes.

Additional Expenses

Expense	Amount	Notes
Event Safety	1500	To provide safety equipment and supplies to keep staff and the public safe during events.
Event Promotions	2000	The department will seek additional opportunities to promote events which may include marketing of multiple events at one time. Ex: Direct Mailing
Private Public Event	5000	Recommended to support private initiated and implemented public events.

Funds accounted previously in other budget line items to support Hay Day, May Day, and the downtown tree lighting are noted below:

ZNO (From PD)	\$3500
ZNO (From Admin)	\$700

Market Events	\$3800
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\$1700 is no longer recognized in this line item; however, they are recognized in Community Center Programs to support Veteran’s Day Celebration and Trunk or Treat.

Sponsorships will be sought in the upcoming budget year to bring in additional revenue and to support these events.

United Arts is a potential funding source; however unreliable. They have limited funding and only allow for requests to be 20% of the total “project.” On average they barely fund 10% of the total project due to the large volume of requests. The amount of work it takes to seek these funds and implement proper reports is inconsistent with the funds being awarded.

**Policy Analysis:**

The efforts proposed in the above request for special events support all focus areas of the Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan. Events support Zebulon 2030 in the following ways:

- Vibrant Downtown
  - Revitalize downtown Zebulon
  - Develop events, entertainment, and cultural attractions to draw people downtown
- Small Town Life
  - Promote more community events and festivals.
  - Enhance and create more community gathering places
- Growing Smart
  - Maintain appropriate staffing to support expected service levels for the growing community
  - Position the town to support private investment

**Risk Analysis:**

There is a risk that staff will fall behind on expected levels of services from current and future residents.

Cultural & Recreation Programs (Recreation Programs Coordinator)

**Background:**

This budget line that was developed in FY20 to support cultural and recreation programs. The department has realigned some programs and events initially assigned to this line to the Community Center Programs line. Essentially, if a program takes place at the community center, it will be reflected in community center specific lines (exceptions athletics and summer camps).

This line item recognizes increased spending to support nature programs at Little River Park and neighborhood events at Gills St Park. The FY20 budget piloted both programs and found success in each. The department would like to expand efforts in each.

**Fiscal Analysis**

Increased spending to support programs at Little River Park and Gill St Park are detailed below:

- Increase Gill St Park expenses from \$400 to \$1500 and offer two neighborhood cookouts. Funds will be used to offer entertainment such as a DJ, food for participant and activities.
- Increase Little River Park expenses from \$400 to \$800 will offer a series of nature programs in the fall and the spring.

These programs could be offered at a lower expense, but would not offer a top quality event designed to meet unique objectives.



## Policy Analysis

Little River Park- In December of 2017, Site Collaborative presented Little River Park Community Visioning to the Zebulon Board of Commissioners. This presentation reviewed community engagement findings to develop a vision for Little River Park following the dam breach attributed to Hurricane Matthew in 2016. The study conclusions included:

- Everyone within the community is excited about the future of Little River Park
- People want a nature-based park with opportunities to explore, walk, learn, and recreate
- All preferred future uses can be accommodated with either a pond or a river
- There doesn't appear to be strong sentiment to either rebuild the dam completely or to remove the dam completely
- There is strong sentiment to recognize the dam and its cultural significance to the Town and community

Gill St Park- In speaking with the police chief about collaborative program opportunities we discussed possible programs at Gill St Park to encourage neighborhood resident engagement. This outreach program will increase exposure to programs and offer opportunities to serve citizens that may not have the means.

## Risk Analysis

There is a risk that the department fails to offer expected levels of services and recreational opportunities from current and future residents.

## Marketing & Advertisement

### Background:

The department will dedicate time and attention to a comprehensive marketing effort that will maximize awareness of recreational services and benefits available to community members. The department will not only share the message of our programs, but also our parks featuring maps to identify places for people to gather, play and be active. In FY 2020, the department program guide was developed by a marketing firm and printed three times a year. Expenses reflect department wide marketing and outreach efforts.

### Fiscal Analysis:

Due to the nature of promotion and advertising, there are a variety of methods to create awareness. We will utilize as many cost effective means as possible to continue to share the opportunities available. I believe it is necessary to take advantage of new marketing avenues and expand/improve existing. Effective marketing and promotions will reflect increase in park use and program/event participation. These expenses are existing and currently recognized in Materials and Supplies.

### Policy Analysis:

It is important to share with the community our message about the department, parks, programs and events in order effectively reach the goal of enhancing and creating more community gathering spaces through recreational opportunities.

### Risk Analysis:

There is a risk that the department fails to effectively communicate the opportunities offered to current and future residents. There is also a risk of loss of community awareness.

## Community Center Programs (Community Center Coordinator)

### Background:

This budget line was formed for FY 2020. Items from Cultural Programs and Special Events are being reassigned to this line item to better reflect the operations of the Zebulon Community

Center and its programs. Such programs include Gymnastics, Flip, Flop and Drop, Preschool Dance, Painting, Pottery, Veterans Day Celebration, Trunk or Treat, and Senior programs.

Increased requests of this budget include a transition of the long time program, Family Movie Night, following changes to the ability the department can promote movie titles with the existing license. The department is recommending decreasing the number of movie nights to four per year, paying for a different license that will allow some promotion using the movie title. The community center will also offer quarterly Family Fun Nights with a variety of fun activities.

The Department is regularly having to respond to changes in community demand and trends. This year the community has expressed greater interest in arts based programs such as painting and pottery. The budget has been increased to support the demand for such programs.

#### Fiscal Analysis:

An increase of \$7,675 to this reflects largely a reallocation of funds from other budget lines to properly reflect expenses associated with the Community Center. Programs moved to this line item include:

- Flip, Flop and Drop
- Gymnastics
- Preschool Dance
- Trunk or Treat
- Veterans Day
- Senior Breakfast & Lunch special programs

An increase of \$1,975 would support the transition of Family Movie Nights and to offering the quarterly Family Fun Night. There is not a cheaper alternative to offering these programs effectively for our community.

#### Policy Analysis:

It is an objective of the parks and recreation department to provide arts and physical activity programs for youth and adults. By expanding programs we are reaching the goal of enhancing and creating more community gathering spaces through new opportunities. Strategic course analysis was also identified in FY2020 budget goals as a focus for the parks and recreation department.

#### Risk Analysis:

There is a risk that the department fails to offer expected levels of services and recreational opportunities from current and future residents.

### Advisory Board

#### Background:

Prior to last year the board met regularly, but not monthly. Attendance was not consistent, and the board was mostly receiving updates from each work unit of the department. A retreat led by Recreation Resources Services was held with the advisory board in March of 2019 where attending advisory board members assessed their involvement in regular advisory board functions. At this meeting it was realized by staff and members that we needed to change the framework to position the board to participate in regular advisory board functions. The following milestones occurred for the advisory board in 2019:

- Town ordinance for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was rewritten to provide similar structure and accountability as other town appointed boards.
- The Tree Board responsibilities were moved the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- The advisory board added public comment to its agenda

- The advisory board received training from the town clerk
- The advisory board appointed a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson
- Advisory board members were sworn in

These strides have put the advisory board in a position to conduct business, provide feedback on staff recommendations, and to provide other recommendations. In January 2020, the advisory board held its second annual retreat. At this retreat, the advisory board reevaluated itself using the same information in 2019. The advisory board recognized the difference from previous years to the current format and are excited for the new opportunities. Based on their current assessment, the board prioritized the following:

- Complete Master Plan
- Engage in outreach efforts (e.g. host tables at events, attend community meetings)
- Engage in programs

#### Fiscal Analysis:

Staff is requesting the development of a new line and allocation of \$2000 to be used to support the functions and growing interest of the advisory board. Funds will be used for trainings, meetings, and outreach efforts. In addition, the advisory board has expressed interest in leading a volunteer appreciation effort.

#### Policy Analysis:

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is an appointed board established to assist the department by making “recommendations for the most efficient and improved manner to provide quality recreation for the citizens of the town” (Town Ordinance, Chapter 31.62-66).

The Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan identified Growing Smart as a focus area. Investment in the advisory board ensures that they are prepared for growth and will be ready to provide appropriate involvement with the department.

#### Risk Analysis:

There is a risk that the advisory board fails to offer desired assessment, support, and levels of service for current and future residents.

### Landscaping

#### Background:

The current park system is made up of 6 parks and 1 community center in the below categories. The town also has an informal agreement with GlaxoSmithKline to use property adjacent to the municipal complex for recreation purposes. In total, the department manages 116.4 acres. At present, the department manages all parks with one full time crew leader and a handful of part time employees that are limited to working no more than 1000 hours a year. These employees are working 3-4 hours a day, 5 days a week. The crew leader is responsible for all routine maintenance, spray treatments, repairs, field prep and more. Ideally, the department should have a park manager, crew leader, and 2 crew members to properly manage and develop Zebulon Parks. It is worth noting that in addition to their routine maintenance, Public Works conducts basic landscaping of Little River Park (cutting and trimming 4.8 acres every 10-14 days) as well as maintenance of the cemetery.

Understanding that it will be difficult for the town to hire all the needed staff across the organization, department staff sought an alternative solution in the mid-term. Basic landscaping of Whitley Park was contracting this year in a pilot program. It has proven to be successful and allowed staff to focus on other areas of the park system such as Gill St Park. Basic landscaping has included weekly mowing, weed eating, blowing, bush trimming and edging. It has also included season leaf and debris removal, biannual tree pruning up to 12 feet, and a weed and feed

program. The department wishes to expand this pilot program for the next three years to include Little River Park, Gill St Park and Zebulon Community Park. Staff would continue to maintain recreation facilities such as athletics fields and courts, wooded areas, joint use parks, and the GSK partnership property. In addition to basic landscaping, department staff wishes to continue to work on park beautification efforts such as mulching and planting done around Whitley Park picnic Shelter. Areas these funds could be used include park entrance signs across the system.

In an effort to maximize efficiency and free up public works staff to attend to other growing needs, a cost to address biweekly mowing, trimming and blowing, leaf removal 3 times per year, and Holiday Cuts. Public Works would continue to handle trimming of trees and bushes.

**Fiscal Analysis:**

The costs for landscaping at each facility are as noted below:

<b>Park Landscaping (New Line)</b>	
Whitley Park	6000
Gill St Park	6000
Little River Park	12000
Zebulon Community Park	18000
Beautification Efforts	8000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Cemetery Landscaping (New Line)</b>	<b>\$21,600</b>

The alternative of this contract would be hiring 2 additional full-time staff members and purchasing additional equipment. Salaries before any benefits would begin at approximately \$30,000 each. Benefits, training, supplies and small equipment would likely be another \$30,000. The department would also need to purchase an additional truck, mower, and trailer which could cost \$70-80,000.

**Policy Analysis:**

By properly maintaining our park system and expanding opportunities at our parks we are reaching the goal of enhancing and creating more community gathering spaces (Small Town Life). By seeking the midterm solution of contracted services will be preparing for growth in a more cost effective manner as we prepare for future park maintenance needs (Growing Smart).

**Risk Analysis:**

There is a risk that staff will fall behind on expected levels of services from current and future residents. The deferred park maintenance list will continue to grow and over time cost the town more to properly address.

**Not Requested**

Personnel

The Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan will conduct an operations and staff assessment considering the existing level of service and the future level of service as our community grows. We anticipate the plan to demonstrate additional need in upcoming years for additional full time staff to support parks maintenance tasks. The current short term solution is the utilization of part time staff. This is not giving us the ability to address all the needs of our park system. In the mid term, staff is recommending a full time Park Manager and a contracting general landscaping in 4 parks following a successful pilot program at Whitley Park. In the long term, staff anticipates the full time need for parks maintenance to include 1 park manager, 1

crew leader (existing), and 2 maintenance workers. This long term need will be evaluated through the Master Plan process providing recommendations for the current level of service and as our community grows.

### Facility Rental

As the community grows and program demands transition, the department will need to look to using facilities beyond the Community Center. Staff piloted using the Middle School Gym for 9-10 Youth Basketball and this option provided relief to the schedule for players, coaches and their families. Staff recommends expanding the use of the Middle School Gym in FY 2021. In addition, staff is already having to utilize spaces at Zebulon Town Hall to support some programs based on community center availability and conflicting programs. To maintain growth in levels of service and programs, staff will continue to push outside the walls of the community center and seek opportunities to have programs at other facilities that are available in Zebulon (EX: Zebulon Lion's Club, Eastern Regional Center, HOA Community Buildings, etc...). Future budgets may reflect costs associated with renting such facilities.

### Community Center Chairs

The Zebulon Community Center celebrated 10 years of service to the community in 2019. This landmark also indicates that we should anticipate some repairs and equipment replacement in the years to come. The chairs are showing signs of weakness and staff anticipate a need to begin replacement of chairs in the years to come.

### Development of Department Divisions

The Parks and Recreation Department will seek to create and develop divisions in future years. Creating divisions will create a more transparent accounting of expenses associated with different work units and functions of the Parks and Recreation Department. Divisions will also create stronger levels of accountability for professional staff of the department. Divisional budgets will create clear lines of definition of responsibility and contribution to department goals at large. Anticipated divisions are as follows:

- Administration
- Community Center
- Cultural Programs and Events
- Athletics
- Parks & Facilities

Through this process, the department will be seeking to transition funds related to parks and recreation facilities from budgets allocated and managed by Public Works. We seek to follow the same process successfully implemented with the Fire Department. The fire department budgets for and manages any items relevant to maintenance at their facility. They coordinate with contractors and public works as necessary. This process is very similar to one the City of Rocky Mount follows. Each department and their divisions are responsible for working closely with the property Management Division (Finance Department) to ensure that maintenance items are accounted for and addressed in a timely manner. The departments communicate regularly to ensure each group is aware of the others needs. As funds are managed by the individual departments, the decision of where to spend available funds is made by the affected department. Requisitions and payables are also submitted by the affected department. It takes great team work and collaboration; yet, it was a very successful process.

### **Revenues**

The department is not recommending fee changes at this time. Staff recommended a Standard Operating Procedure for addressing cost recovery. This procedure was approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in its January 2020 meeting. The Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan process is completing an operations assessment which will also take a look at fees associated with

services offered by the department. Using these two processes, the department will continue to evaluate fees and at the completion of the Master Plan will consider recommendations for the board.

### **Workload Indicators & Performance Measures**

We will track our service to the community on a consistent basis. The department will submit quarterly reports reflecting accomplishments and levels of service provided. Examples of measurements and markers we intend to track are:

- Small Town Life
  - Rentals of department managed facilities
  - Participants in summer camp
  - Participants in athletic leagues
  - Participants and Vendors in the Farmers Market
  - Participants in other programs and events
  - Maintain 6 parks and their facilities
- Vibrant Downtown
  - Participants at events held downtown
  - Partners & small business participants in downtown programs and events
  - Walking and Fitness visits at the Zebulon Community Center
  - Support of the annual Christmas Parade
- Growing Smart
  - Coordination of an Events Committee/ Support non-town sponsored facilitation of events
  - Volunteer coaches
  - Reorganization of staff and operations
  - Development of divisional budgets
  - Analysis of the Farmers Market/Adapt to trends
  - Track maintenance using Facility Management Software
  - Maintain and develop partnerships

### **Attachments**

- Operations Assessment Initial Observations
- Quarterly Report Sample