

Moretown Recreation Committee Meeting  
Draft Minutes

Meeting Date – November 27th, 2023

Meeting Time – 5:45 pm, Location – Town Office

Members Present: Chris Stephenson, Mike Strojny, Sue Werntgen, Becky Auger, Neal Mostov, Saiward Turnbaugh

**Public Present:**

None

Meeting called to order at: 5:55 PM

**1. Public Comment**

Laura Arnesen

Laura joined the meeting via phone call which was requested prior to the start of the meeting. As Executive Director of the MRV Recreation District (MRV RD), Laura shared a PDF proposal called 'Moretown Case Statement' (attached) and proceeded to walk through the 3 page document. Laura's goal was to get feedback and ultimately endorsement from the Rec Committee before bringing the document directly to the Selectboard. The net ask is a combined \$20,000 annual funding partnership starting in 2025. This would not be incremental but would replace the \$3,000 funding ask in 2024 for the airport road facilities. For comparison, the valley towns are annually funding at \$40,000 each.

Midway through the document it was asked if the case statement was mostly focused on equity to which Laura said 'Yes, that's a part of it respectfully'. Neighboring towns have been paying 10-40k annually over the last few years (longer) and yet the participation from Moretown children in the sports programs, as just one example, represents roughly 20% of the utilization for the kids programs. There are over 300 Moretown kid participation examples in 2022 to speak of and Moretown has not historically been helping cover those costs. It was noted and appreciated in the letter the current annual support from Moretown of \$2500 towards the airport road facilities specifically. Following more discussion the committee agreed that the equity ask was reasonable to explore and recognized that the discussion had not been fairly known/warned in our agenda, and therefore a motion to consider our support would be premature regardless of the outcome. It was agreed to propose a special meeting on December 11th at 5:45pm at the town offices to move the discussion forward providing time for the MRV Rec District to approach the Selectboard directly on their requested January timeline.

Additional discussion included:

How would this affect the Moretown Rec Committee? Would it replace it?

*Answer: Not necessarily, nor recommended, that would be up to Moretown to determine. Warren for example continues to operate their Rec Committee outside the MRV RD. However, the Moretown Rec Committee would be able and encouraged to apply for grant funding, roughly \$50k in grants are administered annually. Examples: Ongoing maintenance fees could be requested via annual grants, installations like a new field and/or replacing the tennis courts, adding a new tennis court, adding a new basketball court, expanding parking, etc. could all be*

*eligible for funding.*

Would someone from the Rec Committee have to serve on the MRV RD board?

*No, not necessarily from the Rec Committee itself. The participation from Moretown on the board is highly encouraged and could be anyone appointed by the Selectboard and not limited to the Moretown Rec Committee.*

How would the MRV RD consider Morefest?

*Morefest would continue to work independently but the MRV RD could provide additional support in many ways from simply helping with advertising to potentially grant funding and/or shared event volunteerism and cost coverage.*

*What would the MRV RD role be in managing the town forest?*

Not necessarily any role at all. Moretown would have the ability to ask for grant funding for projects in/on the town forest but the MRV RD does not need to play any management or operational role. Many of the towns have town forests that are managed outside the MRV RD.

*Would the portolet fees be covered by the MRV RD? Tennis court maintenance?*

Not necessarily. Many towns manage their own facilities and budgets to operate them. Moretown could ask for annual grant funding although it would not be guaranteed. Tennis court maintenance specifically, as an example, would be a logical ask for grant funding.

Next step, call a special meeting targeting Monday 12/10 6:30pm. Updated document coming from Laura, to be circulated.

## **2. Agenda**

- Approve Minutes 10/23/2023
- Budget Updates
- 2024 Budget Proposal
- Eco Classroom Updates
- Portolet End of Season, next steps
- Town Forest Management Plan Update
- Courts
- Trails
- Morefest 2024 Discussion / Winterfest
- Website
- Other updates

## **3. Approve minutes from 10/23/2023**

<https://www.moretownvt.org/minutes-and-agendas/recreation-committee-minutes-agendas/>

Motion to approve the minutes pending corrections that the draft copy mistakenly showed Meg Schultz in attendance but she did not actually attend the 10/23 meeting. And Mary Lou was in attendance as a member of the public. Susan made the motion, Becky seconded. No further

discussion, all in favor. Approved.

#### **4. Budget**

Chris clarified with Neal that he has copies of the tennis court pickleball nets and painting materials. Chris will process them with the town clerk putting Neal on the path for reimbursement.

#### **5. Courts Nets**

Woody and Darlene took them down, and Woody stored them in his barn again. Thank you Woody and Darlene!

Neil looked into what it would take to add a Bocce facility as a follow a group request in our last meeting. In talking to the non-profit couples field and a private court owner it looks to be roughly \$8,000. It was agreed that we could likely invest less and still have a usable court. At this time it was agreed there was not enough vocal demand, nor is there a project coordinator champion to spearhead prioritizing this work at this time.

#### **7. School / Eco Classrooms**

Chris to follow up with Wasted on pricing or 2024 and if they have accessible unit availability for consideration.

#### **8. Portolets**

The unit was picked up by WindRiver in early November. Note: it was in need of cleaning and TP. Chris and Susan to work on quotes for spring portolet vendor.

#### **9. Town Forest Management Plan**

Chris to send a copy of the most current draft to the rec committee. The Town Forest Subcommittee meets again on January 4th at 4pm at the town office to consolidate final feedback and determine next steps to successfully bring forth the plan for public feedback as a key next step. The plan remains in draft until after public feedback has been gathered and incorporated. The rec committee members are encouraged to provide feedback at any time, now through the pending public feedback session.

#### **10. Trails**

The main kiosk sign replacement project is starting up again. This is fully grant funded and provides us a chance to update the map to include our new facilities such as: The Storywalk, the skills park, the new nature loop, the peace garden, the pavilion, tennis/pickleball courts, etc. Timeline TBD please be ready to review the draft and provide feedback accordingly.

## 11. Morefest / Winterfest

Becky to reach out to Kate and/or our Eco Classroom primary contact to determine if there is a proposed event this winter to consider what support or partnership opportunities exist. Last year's event was on Sunday February 19th and appeared open to the community but focused on current students and their families. The event was a pleasant surprise. Map attached.

## 13. Other

Susan has been working on our ability to get additional rec committee content on the town website to inform the public on the facilities we have and how to utilize them. She is working with Sasha who said that all content changes on website pages have to be reviewed by the entire SelectBoard. There was discussion about how reasonable it was that the Selectboard would have that kind of time ongoing and if that was scalable; the rec committee is looking to keep updated information on trails, events, tennis and pickleball activities, etc. Susan will work on content with Mike to propose site additions for review.

The Great Amazing Bear Story Contest is live and runs through January 31st. Share your 2023 bear stories with the community. Community members may also put their name in a hat to win a bear proof trash toter worth over \$300. Last year 1 of the 2 toters was awarded to a Moretown winner! This year there is also a kids contest with prizes. Chris to send the Bear contest info to Saiward who will work to get it posted on the rec committee instagram feed.

### **Next Special Meeting:**

Monday, December 10th, at 6:30pm in the Town Office

#### *Proposed Agenda:*

- MRV Rec District Case Statement Discussion & Recommendation

### **Next Regular Meeting:**

Monday, January 22nd, at 5:45pm in the Town Office

#### *Proposed Agenda:*

- Approve Minutes
- Budget Updates
- Town Forest Management Plan Update
- Ecofest
- Fields / Drainage project
- Storywalk Relocation
- Trails
- By Laws status
- Succession Planning

Meeting adjourned at: 7:56 pm



# MAD RIVER VALLEY RECREATION DISTRICT

November 2023

**Moretown is an important part of the Mad River Valley community. The Mad River Valley Recreation District (MRVRD) is appreciative of Moretown's contributions to Mad River Park, but is asking this question: "Might Moretown consider a bigger role in recreation in the Valley, namely, becoming a member town of the MRVRD?" Given Moretown's large geographic area, some of which is beyond the Mad River Valley, and reduced commercial tax base compared to Fayston, Waitsfield and Warren, a discounted membership makes sense. What follows are the benefits to Moretown, the case for becoming a member town and a financial proposal.**

### **Benefits of becoming a MRVRD member town:**

- Moretown organizations would be eligible for the MRVRD grant program which gives approximately \$50,000 per year to eligible non-profits and citizen-led efforts.
- Moretown would have one seat on the MRVRD Board.
- Increased social media presence for events and infrastructure on MRVRD's website.
- Full partnership and helping to pay for developing and managing the balance between ecological integrity and recreation and trails. The MRVRD is leading the Conservation Recreation Visioning (CRV) project, a sub-component of the VOREC grant with two main goals:

1. Engage the community in a visioning process to ensure that future initiatives reflect the Valley's dual interests in diverse, high quality outdoor recreation experiences and a thriving and intact natural environment.

2. Articulate a community vision both in writing and spatially (map) - for balancing environmental health and recreation in the MRV, safeguarding valuable natural resources, and planning for long-term stewardship opportunities.

### **Case for Moretown Becoming a MRVRD Member Town:**

- Equity in supporting youth sports valleywide. 20% or more of players on youth sports teams hail from Moretown (except for spring soccer and lacrosse when those sports are offered in Waterbury). See the last page of this document for a spreadsheet detailing MRV Youth Sports participation by town. Right now Fayston, Waitsfield and Warren residents, through their taxes, are paying for youth sports organizations and covering for Moretown.
- Equity in supporting important recreation non-profits like The Mad River Path, Mad River Riders, Ridge Runners, etc. which are frequently used by Moretown residents.
- Utilizing the expertise of the MRVRD Board and Ex. Director to improve utilization, development and maintenance of Moretown recreation infrastructure.
- Additional funding to the MRVRD would allow greater support of our recreation partners. For instance, the Mad River Path recently went from a full time Ex. Director to a half-time Ex. Director

because they couldn't fund the full-time position. Supporting our mostly volunteer recreation organizations in a bigger way will lead to improved recreation infrastructure and services.

**Financial Proposal:**

As of 2023, MRVRD has a total annual budget of \$122,250. Fayston, Waitsfield and Warren pay \$40,000 each and Moretown pays \$2,250 to support Mad River Park. (As a benchmark, both Waterbury and Bristol's recreation budgets are over \$300,000 each.)

In 2024 MRVRD is asking Moretown to pay \$3,000 toward Mad River Park. The costs for MRP were approximately \$16,000 in 2023. Mad River Park gets approximately \$4,000 in income from leasing our fields. Annual expenses minus income is \$12,000 (split by 4 towns is \$3,000 per town). In the past Moretown has paid 25% of the estimated annual expenses. We are hopeful that Moretown will consider joining MRVRD as a half partner starting in 2025.

In 2025 and beyond, Moretown's annual payment to support Mad River Park would be replaced by one annual payment of half of what the founding partner towns pay (\$20,000 per year for Moretown now). There would not be a separate payment for Mad River Park. Moretown's share of the park would come from its annual contribution. The hope would be that Moretown would pay half of whatever the three founding towns pay moving forward. Fayston, Waitsfield and Warren would need to vote on adding Moretown to MRVRD (per our MOU).

As stated earlier, MRVRD acknowledges the difference between Moretown, geography and tax base, vs. the founding three member towns. We hope the Moretown Recreation Committee and Select Board will consider this proposal and bring it forward to the residents of Moretown.

Respectfully submitted,

MRVRD Board of Directors & Laura Arnesen, Ex. Director MRVRD, [laura@mrverd.org](mailto:laura@mrverd.org), 802-917-1056

**MRV Youth Sports Participation by Town**

	Don Haddox	Maggie Stone	Maggie Stone	Charlie	Charlie	Dawn Lamonia	Brie
	Summer Soccer	Fall Soccer	Spring Soccer	Little League	H. Youth Basket	Lacrosse	Bill Koch
Warren	72	60	18	34	22	25	18
Waitsfield	236	95	40	61	29	33	43
Fayston	74	64	13	22	5	25	6
<b>Moretown</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>
Waterbury	67		15	8	95		
Duxbury			34	3	7		2
Other			21	8	4	1	3
Total	577	278	159	184	195	92	91
<b>% Moretown</b>	<b>22.18%</b>	<b>21.22%</b>	<b>11.32%</b>	<b>26.09%</b>	<b>16.92%</b>	<b>8.70%</b>	<b>20.88%</b>