

**Virginia Recreation and Park Society  
Central Service Area Meeting – June 1, 2022  
via Teams  
Minutes**

Minutes are in draft form until approved at the next meeting on 9/14/2022.

Attendees: Jessie Honaker, Paul Wilmoth, Marlie Creasey-Smith, Joe Stovall, Nilay Patel, Tom Gates, Sue Black, Emmy Houck, Karen Robinson, Jeannine McConnell, Matt Spruill, AJ McCage, Sureatha McGhee, Chris Clarke, Charles Hester, Sharon Entsminger, Tabitha Martinez, La Forest Williams, David Potter, Janit Llewellyn, Kimberly Barrow, Brooke Mays

**Business Meeting**

Marlie called the meeting to order. Roundtable Introductions.

Minutes:

Minutes from the March meeting were shared and reviewed. Moved and second to approve the minutes from the March 2022 meeting. Voting for minutes to be approved.

Secretary:

Minutes will be added to the website under the CSA section. Meetings to be posted to calendar as well as any events or future meetings. Anyone who would like to get involved with CSA can contact me for meeting information if needed.

Sue Black and Paul Wilmoth added about member clicks and having individuals update their profiles.

Finance:

No update

Vice Chair:

Pickleball tournament looking to be held October 1<sup>st</sup>. Looking at two venues Rockwood Park and the venue on Hull Street. Someone also suggested the Pouncey Tract Park in the western part of Henrico. Would like everyone to come out and join. Gearing more towards beginners to come out and have a good time but also welcoming individuals who want to compete.

VRPS CSA social after one of the meetings and go to River City Roll. Encourage everyone to be there possibly after September meeting to get everyone back together. Have the meeting and then have a meeting point after.

LTI recently happened and was full of important information but, also gives you an opportunity to meet new people from different locations. Encourage people to go to LTI.

Update your member click profiles so that there is accurate information.

VRPS Information:

Tabitha Martinez:

Parks management institute has reached out to Tom Gates who is a part of parks resource group to help coordinate.

Introduction of Sue Black (VRPS Executive Director)

Sue Black:

New magazine sent out. Great to meet everyone. LTI was a great way to be with that group of managers who were so eager, kind, motivated, and driven. Going to Kansas to meet with council of executive directors in other states to see what best practices are out there and can learn from each other and also help out the others. Northern service area is having their social tomorrow so looking forward to this upcoming social for CSA.

Tabitha Martinez:

VRPS conference everything is going smoothly. Scholarship is 50% off of early bird due June 30<sup>th</sup>. Speaker proposals due June 15<sup>th</sup> and speaker packet on website. Early bird registration closes July 15<sup>th</sup>. Virginia Beach Conference Committee has done amazing job setting everything up.

Matt Spruill:

Groups working on VRPS membership structures as well as bylaw revisions for all groups to operate in the same way and make things easier for everyone and an email will be sent out.

Tabitha Martinez:

Management conference next year. Once speaker proposals close for annual conference you will see that activate for management conference. Look for that later in June.

VRPS email went out today through the VRPS list serve for next board of directors so please make sure to vote.

Roundtable:

3 areas of discussion: summer camp staffing or general staffing, July 4<sup>th</sup> plans, covid protocols or updates

Nilay Patel (Henrico):

Henrico recreation and parks summer camp to look different. Police Athletics League taking over summer camp and seven-week programs. Hosting in recreation and parks buildings and schools. Relieve the duties of staffing and they have the ability to do more. Staffing numbers have decreased due to COVID. Before covid had 67 applicants for summer staff. When posting the positions, a month ago only had 4 applicants. Might be long term or short-term decision but it frees up some stress and shifts focus on to other areas. Offering week long camps that staff can handle a little easier and do not have to rely on part time staffing. Hosting July 4<sup>th</sup> over on Meadow Farm Park. Juneteenth event June 20<sup>th</sup> an event that was started last year. Covid conversations that haven't been had in a while due to rising numbers. Moving everything outside for the most part. Reach out to other locations to see what they are doing and to have more conversations and share resources.

AJ McCage (Hopewell):

Summer camps staffing would to have liked to have 11 staff and has 6. Camp ratios don't exceed 1 to 8 or 1 to 10 if at full capacity. Last year they were at a 1 to 6 ratio. Camp training this week and next week has backup in case something happens.

Tabitha Martinez (Hopewell):

4<sup>th</sup> of July done the Saturday before which is July 2<sup>nd</sup> with three viewing locations. John Randolph Medical Center parking lot to view as well as city marina and river walk. Removing Covid protocols for now letting people know that they are following guidelines and referring to those with case-by-case scenarios that could come up. No outbreaks last year and will continue to do things to keep it that way.

Charles Hester (Richmond):

Summer camp won't start until after July 4<sup>th</sup> due to schools not ending to the end of June. 7-week camps. Same issues as others when it comes to Covid and recruiting for the CIT program. Pools opened on Memorial Day Weekend which is the first time it has been able to happen in a while. Will be operating 7 pools this summer. July 4<sup>th</sup> will have fireworks and entertainment. Will host environmental programs with CITs for the first time. Following CDC guidelines. Some numbers have gone up in Richmond.

Hired first TR Manager working with colleges and has had students working with parks and recreation for most of the last school year. Has done surveys and getting out in the community to assess individuals with special needs.

Paul Wilmoth (Chesterfield):

Staff opportunities available in a variety of areas.

Jessie Honaker (Chesterfield):

Hiring inclusion coaches for the summer for TR camps but also any inclusion request throughout parks and recreation.

TR holds specific camps such as Kid Quest Camp for individuals ages 7-12, Teen Odyssey Camp for individuals 13-17, and New Directions Camp for individuals 18+. Also holding a camp in August called Adventure Quest for individuals 13-17 with all outdoor adventures had to take a break from this due to Covid in the past. Following what the CDC suggest and have stayed within those guidelines with not sharing supplies for different activities.

David Potter (Chesterfield):

Vicki Kiger is the new special events coordinator and is planning July 4<sup>th</sup> new fireworks vendor and returning kid zone with inflatables. For summer camp, Ericka Bynum has 3 full day camps from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. in locations with affordable fees and meals provided. Also have locations with half day camps. Working with Police Activities League who is having 18 officers helping with different camp locations this year. COVID protocols we are continuing to follow the guidance. Moving more back in the office and back to full programs. Cleaning protocols put in due to Covid will continue to be followed. Police

department funding salaries for the officers to work at the different camp sites. Last year, only had 2 staff members and this year we are around 15 to 20 in seasonal staffing.

Marlie Creasey-Smith (Chesterfield):

Last year's camp we had our HR liaison, Finance and other full-time staff helped staff camps.

Chris Clarke (King George):

Currently day 2 of camp and had 60 kids in camp. Fully staffed every camp started with 50 participants and got enough staff to have 60 participants. For July 4<sup>th</sup> second year. Saturday after July 4<sup>th</sup> and using American fireworks which also does the City of Fredericksburg. They will host the event on July 9<sup>th</sup> and the event has been well received. Continuing to follow CDC guidelines.

Sue Black: Why is there no one to work? What is the root cause and how can we fix this?

AJ McCage:

Few responses from college aged individuals and high school students. Looking at opportunities differently. Current camp counselor wage is \$11.75 per hour. More pay and less liability and burn out in different areas. People's schedules are a lot more flexible then working a 9-5. Wage does not come close to be competitive. Supervisor pay is coming in at \$14.04 an hour. Emerging adult population is looking at opportunities in a different way.

Paul Wilmoth:

People want flexibility but not the hours we offer. We are not growing new professionals like we used to. We are not promoting our profession as well we need to be. We need to be vital like we were when Covid and figure out how do we let people know we can be vital all the time. Chesterfield Schools working on a program to work with high school students to get work experience through shadowing and on the job training.

Matt Spruill:

We rely on returning staff heavily and when they didn't return, we reached out. They said they don't want to be tied to Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., and 8 weeks long. Could do couple days a week but not that. Need to look at how we staff moving forward. Did not want to do it this year.

Charles Hester:

They can get jobs anywhere that pay what we pay. See that in Richmond because you can get a job anywhere that pays \$15-\$20 per hour.

Paul Wilmoth:

Week on week off for staff. 1 week off 1 week on then 2 weeks on. Do 2 – 5 weeks instead of 7-8 and gives staff flexibility to not feel tied down.

Jessie Honaker:

4-week summer camp. If I am a college student looking to make money to go back to school, I can go work somewhere else and get \$15 per hour with multiple hours and weeks throughout the summer that is preferred over 4 weeks of pay. A lot of college students need the summer jobs to save up for college. We raised rates this year for summer staff RAS III is \$17 and RAS II is \$15. Still opportunity to make more but the 4 weeks guarantee only with a few additional events is not comparable to what they can make at other locations with more hours.

Tom Gates:

Every school system used to be same schedule now no one is scheduled the same amount of time. College kids have same schedule, but some can only work 4 weeks and others can work 6. Affecting everything such as summer camps due to the different schedules. There is a separation in all the different counties.

AJ McCage:

In Hopewell there are a lot of students who have deficits in the school system. They are trying to bridge gaps in educational learning from the long summers so that they are not losing all the information. The school system has to deal with deficits when they lack resources as well. Year around school is the way to go so that students are not losing as much as they would. Hopewell has intersession programs that offer camp like style with transportation, activities, and meals for free. Trying to get kids to pay for a camp that the schools are offering for free.

#### VRPS Programs:

Paul Wilmoth: Two exciting VRPS programs later this year. The Real Talk series from September-December. There will be 4 sessions that will take place. The other program is a front-line staff experience in September. Bring everyone into Henrico to have training time and networking.

#### NRPA:

AJ McCage:

NRPA has opportunity for outside educational discussions. LDN combination of education and roundtable discussion. Modern day book club to review podcast, research article, movies, and books. Happy to share information.

Next meeting is being held on Sept 14 at 11 a.m. with details to follow. Make sure to update your Member Clicks profiles.

Meeting adjourned