

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 AT 4:30 P.M.
VIA ZOOM**

Present: Chairperson Kathleen Kapusta
Councilperson Jim Trakas
Councilperson Chris Walchanowicz

Also Present: Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Vice Mayor Dave Grendel
Councilperson Tom Narduzzi
Councilperson Kenn Synek
Councilperson Dale Veverka
Finance Director Blaze
Recreation Director Tom Walchanowicz
Community Services Office Coordinator Amber Veverka
Clerk of Court Angie Zidanic
Procurement Coordinator Dennis Zdolshek
Recreation Department April Lemke
Recreation Department Linda Farace
Finance Assistant Maggie Osysko

Chairperson Kapusta called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Chairperson Kapusta said I would like to take a few moments before we begin our formal meeting and acknowledge the passing of my dear friend and a friend to many of us I am sure, Marilyn Senick. I don't know what words to say other than her presence was part of the Community Services center. I have known Marilyn since 1996 when I was a contract worker for the City and had the pleasure of remaining not just a co-worker but a good friend of hers for all those almost 25 years. She gave more than we can ever imagine, and every moment she was thinking of the City, whether she was here or not and what she could do. Her greatest joy was trying to do more for our residents and having the amazing staff that she had, both on her side and who she worked with on the Recreation side. Many, many times she shared that with me how none of these things could have happened without the unity and the cooperation of both departments and the staff who worked there. A great loss to all of us; I hope she is enjoying a well-deserved reward now, and we will miss her dearly.

I would to start off, Angie if you would for us with our drug prevention programming updates. How are you doing Angie?

Clerk of Court Zidanic said I am good Chairperson Kapusta. How are you?

Chairperson Kapusta said good, thank you.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said I would like to start off with talking about the Drug Free Clubs of America program. There has been a change, and I am just going to read to you the update that I have from the schools. Due to the uncertainty of this school year, the school has decided to suspend operations of their DFCA chapter. I learned early in September that the IHS team is not satisfied with the DFCA organization. They were supposed to test during Covid by mailing tests to the parents; but school staff has been unable to confirm this, nor have they been able to confirm if Cleveland Clinic has signed on to be the testing partner, and that confirmation has to come from DFCA. The staff does not feel that Covid was the problem, but with disappointment and concerns with DFCA prior to Covid. The plan is to spend this school year as they rebuild and look into other options.

I would just like to point out that Independence has traditionally set high standards for our programming, and although DFCA may be a fit for other communities, we are not looking to just check a box that we have a drug testing program. So, the IHS team will use this year to find a quality and authentic program that meets our needs.

Chairperson Kapusta asked any questions of Angie?

I have a few. Okay, when we talk about the IHS team do we know who is comprising that team?

Clerk of Court Zidanic said well Mary Dolejs and Eric Wells; Mary and Eric have spearheaded the program at the high school and neither one of them feels that they want to continue with DFCA.

Chairperson Kapusta said two staff who have always been involved with our students, so that's good for evaluation. I also appreciate that they have taken a look see at this and stepped back. I think sometimes we get into programs, and we don't maybe evaluate them as well as we should or as often as we should. We kind of just accept them. So, I give them credit for having done that. Thank you. Keep us posted on that Angie.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said I definitely will, and then moving on to Campus Life. The advisory team was notified in May of this year that Ashley Tengler would be taking a full-time position in the YFC development office. So, we now have a new Independence Campus Life Director, and his name is Jim Eller. The advisory team has vetted him on more than one occasion, spoken with him via Zoom and feel that he has a good fit for the community. Jim has been active throughout the summer. He was meeting with students one to two times per week since mid June; and then once school began, he started two middle school programs, small groups, one for boys and one for girls which meet at the home of a parent. He reports they are very well attended. He will also be helping with the Dale Carnegie class at the high school as soon as his mandatory quarantine is over because of what happened at the middle school. He only missed one night which was Monday night. Dale Carnegie started on Monday night, but he will be helping out with that class as well.

Then he and Ashley, although Ashley is no longer the Director, she plans to remain active as a volunteer and really kind of mentor and coach Jim to help him learn our community. So, they will be meeting with the middle school principal Jamie Vanek to brainstorm ways that Youth for Christ can serve the community during this unique season.

Chairperson Kapusta asked any questions? I just really wanted to make a comment. I had the opportunity to serve on Angie's advisory committee, and it was interesting for us because I think the question that was in the minds of many of us, how was such a program functioning. There's usually a lot of interactive activity, and how is that going during these times? We knew they would be reaching out to the students through social media opportunities or written texts, things of that nature, other communications. It was interesting for me at least to hear that some of their areas actually found new students coming in who maybe hadn't been involved before; and their premise was, the staff's premise was or their evaluation of it was, that perhaps they were now reaching out because of the forced situation with the Covid days. They were reaching out and touching students personally who maybe didn't want to be part of a big group or weren't comfortable in that kind of environment. Maybe some not even comfortable with face-to-face; so I think this just really reinforces to us that uniqueness of needing to mold the program to our students. I am sure that as we hopefully get to move back to some degree of normalcy in time that the staff from this program will look at that and probably still entertain a portion of a program of that nature too where they could still be interactive with some of the students who might not want to be part of a big group.

It certainly reinforced to us that they are continuing to reach out, and it's critical in these times because we read so much of the focus being upon the physical; but we all know that it is psychological, perhaps depression, anxiety, loneliness, whatever it might be. I think that having a program like this now serves an enhanced purpose. So, please let them know we appreciate it.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said absolutely. Any other questions? There were none.

Moving on to the prevention specialist; you may already know that Meg is contracting with the schools alone for the 2020-2021 school year which has reduced the cost of the contract to \$65,000 which is a decrease of \$27,300. The City has entered into a MOU with the schools to pay half of that amount to assist them in supporting the students and families of Independence. This also will continue Alexa's involvement in consulting with the after school program staff which they found to be very valuable; and Alexa is also able to serve as the counselor on call during the summer months. That was something that was very important to the summer camp program staff.

Alexa's current caseload right now is 22 students and families. Three of those are from the primary school, nine from the middle school and ten from the high school. There were three new referrals this year, all from the high school; and the remaining 19 were continued from last year. There are 20 students receiving in person sessions, and one student is receiving virtual sessions. One has requested to delay services until mid October.

The issues that Alexa is addressing are responses to Covid-19 and healthy coping, suicide and its impact, anxiety, depression, trauma, grief, family and peer conflict, stress management and

substance use. She also have been checking in with each family who received services last year to determine what resources and services are needed for the students; and she has also worked to provide referrals to outside counseling, resources to families upon request.

Chairperson Kapusta said thank you. Any questions or comments?

Angie, I know this is not on your agenda, but would you be able to share with us maybe a little bit about some of the redesign or where we are going with 25 & Alive?

Clerk of Court Zidanic said I actually do have it as my next point because it really is part of our prevention. We have always considered 25 & Alive to be the prevention arm of the court. If we can help students before they come into my office, the Mayor's office, that is what our goal is. So, because of Covid we really were not able to meet. The school people were busy trying to redesign how they were going to business. We were redesigning how the court was going to business, so we actually just had our first meeting again in September; but unfortunately the two people who were in the rebranding sub-committee were unable to attend.

We also want to take this time to utilize the expertise of Alla Lora. She is the Communications Director for the City. I believe she will play an integral role in helping us. So, we have a sub-committee meeting, we are looking to schedule it for October where we can meet with Alla and kind of go over what we have done so far, the brainstorming, and then hope under her direction we can move forward.

Chairperson Kapusta said I think this is somewhat similar to what I was talking about when you made the comments on the Youth for Christ program, never being stagnant, kind of re-evaluating and making sure we are meeting the needs to be best of our ability, and if there are new needs, being aware of them.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said one of the programs we are looking at, and we talked about this at the last Community Services Committee meeting, and the school is still interested in bringing the movie Angst to our community. That would be helpful to teachers and students. Basically, it's a documentary designed to raise awareness about anxiety which I think a lot of our kids are feeling right now.

Chairperson Kapusta said these are the times we are happy we have such a large auditorium, right?

Clerk of Court Zidanic said exactly. That was all I had on my report.

Chairperson Kapusta said thank you. Are there any questions of Angie? There were none.

Thanks Angie.

Chairperson Kapusta said we will move on. Next on the agenda we have Community Services, is that the order we still want to go in, Community Services and then Rec? Is that agreeable?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said I think Rec will go first if that's okay.
Chairperson Kapusta said as long as it's good with Amber, fine.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said I have a Power Point I am going to pull up here.

Basically, we have a Power Point that goes over all of our agenda items. So, we are going to start with capital improvements. Again, the big thing we did this past year so far was the Liberty playground Phase 2 improvements. As you can see, we imported a lot of pictures for you; but we began in late 2019 with removal of the old unit, and the beginning stages of ground work. Then we really started right before Covid hit in March, we were working as the weather permitted. We did have a decent March. We did have limited staff, but we were still able to get a lot done. Again, in this Phase 2 we had a lot of drainage issues which we corrected out there. We just had this 5 inch rain back here on Labor Day, and everything fared really well. We really went the extra mile with the drainage, and everything is working out very well.

We had a completion date set for the end of May, and obviously the playgrounds were all closed down throughout the State of Ohio through the Governor's mandates. We were able to open on June 15th. We had a ribbon cutting, and people really love what we have. Again, we came under budget. I think there was one Saturday where we had to work two of our full-timers overtime for four hours, but other than that we had next to no overtime with this project. We came under budget compared to what we said we needed. We talked about \$130,000, and I think we are under \$125,000. All the work was done mostly by the Rec Department, Tech Service and Service Department assisted a little bit too. We had a volunteer, Roger Carpenter, helped out on the days we poured the stamped concrete; so I think he helped us out for four hours on the four days that we poured the stamped concrete. Everything worked out nice. It was a safe and efficient way of doing things, and we are very happy with the results. We have a lot of pictures. We also started putting on some Facebook and Twitter comments. You know again, this is just a very interactive section. We have a sand and water table, the instrument panels. If you ever go out there, and just stop in your car and hear the kids using the instrument panels. You see the kids in the sandbox and water table. It really worked out nice.

We did some other things that went above and beyond with some landscaping out there. We built some garden beds as you can see. We worked on the sprinkling system, got the sprinkling system back in operation and made some provisions for some future lighting down the road and some future electrical in the gazebo area and camera. I am working with IT right now to get some cameras set up over there and some possible audio sound out there so we can maybe play kids music. We are looking at that.

Chairperson Kapusta asked are you going to do more about the playground Tom?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said one last thing I just want to say I got an envelope in the mail from a Northeast Ohio Parent Magazine, and here I knew nothing about this; and we were actually the runner up for the parents' choice as the best playground in northeast Ohio. So, I thought that was nice, and that was even. We got rated this before this Phase 2 was even done. They were basing this on the Phase 1 that we did. So, again, I wish we kind of had a turnstile out

there to see how many people are using that playground in a given day because it's just always busy. There are always kids out there, and it's nice to see it really being used.

Finance Director Blaze asked Tom who beat Independence out, do you know?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said it was actually Lakewood, but they have a big monster of an area. It is three times the size of ours.

As we go through, there are a lot of comments on our social media pages. Kathleen, anything on that?

Chairperson Kapusta said first of all, does anybody have any questions or comments to Tom about the playground?

Councilperson Narduzzi said I just wanted to give Tom kudos. What an improvement, it's beautiful up there Tom; and the only question I have is that, it's not really a question. I just hope we maintain it because towards the end of the old playground, it started to get a little shabby. This is just, it's beautiful. It's well done, it's well planned out; I just hope that we put aside a specific group of people to maintain that to keep it looking like this for years to come.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said thanks for those comments. Yes, right now we do. We are fortunate to have a couple of people who have been with us for a while, mainly Mark Chaney and Gus (inaudible), two older fellows. Gus is retired, and he is our ground inspector; and he's out there once a week going over everything and making sure it's good. Obviously, we have our crew of the people who clean it. Now we have to spray it down at night, sterilizing it and sanitizing it. We are on top of it, and we are actually going to try and put a coat of wax on the poles which would help preserve the color integrity. Again, we are just trying anything we can. We blow the poured in place rubber off almost on a daily basis because kids will track the mulch from the other sections over onto it. It is a big job to keep it pristine, and it takes a lot; but we have a pretty good crew on it. So, thanks Tom for that.

Councilperson Narduzzi said you are welcome.

Chairperson Kapusta said I would just add. I know you have done this in the past with other projects from the Rec Department, and we have other departments that do this as well. I really appreciate the use of our existing staff to assist with the construction and anything related to these projects so that they can be utilized, especially when sometimes some of their duties may have changed a little bit during this Covid virus. I know that was an emphasis of the City to try to restructure things and allow employees to remain on but doing productive projects; so I thank you for that.

I would also like to acknowledge Roger Carpenter, a former employee. I think it was great that he was willing to come forward and volunteer. I know that he has skills in that area.

Lastly, I would just like to say I am probably in that area probably four to six times a week, and other than when this weather starting to turn now, it has been such a pleasure to look there. I

have never once been past there that there haven't been roughly a half a dozen or more families and children. Not only do I always think that playgrounds are critical to the development and the fun for young children, but I think even more so during these unusual times. Maybe there are families that are home more, and the home kind of gets constraining. Now they have an outlet, a great outlet to continue to come and bring their children to; and it's just a very positive thing. So, thank you, and thank the staff who continues to work to offer this for the children Tom.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said thank you.

Mayor Kurtz said I would like to reiterate exactly what Chairperson Kapusta said. We received so many comments of the hard work of our staff and how they were able to be so nimble as to use their skill sets, use some of the people that have worked so hard. I also would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge once again the Rec Department personnel and that same group that did the park improvement, playground improvement. The same group did the front patio for the City Hall. So, it's great in house work, and I appreciate what they do and their great attitude about what they do. We can handle anything Tom says. So, great job of the team.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said thank you.

Moving on, the other thing, the capital that was actually slated for 2021, and we had some issues. We had a 20 year old chemical controller at the outdoor pool; and I went to Vern and Maggie and Dennis and presented some issues that we were having. We had this for 2021, but here's an instance where the Finance Department were great, we all work great together. We were able to move this up to this year, and we did replace the three chemical control units for the outdoor pool; and that was very critical in our operations down there to make a nice smooth transition, especially this year with this pandemic. We needed to make sure that those pools were all in balanced water, and I am very grateful that we were able to move this to this year. I thank the Finance Department for making this happen, and again it helped make the outdoor pool, the whole operation go a lot smoother this year. So, we did that this year.

Just throw a few things out there because I can get lengthy because it's been such a busy year here and a crazy year for that matter; but when we were closed at the Civic Center, we got a lot of stuff done over there between the Rec Department and Tech Services. A lot of lights were changed out to LED lights. New ceilings were done in the upstairs and downstairs, both corners of the building. The pools were drained. Maintenance work was performed. We touched up the main pool. The grout on the tile on the whole pool area was re-grouted; and the tile looks like brand new tile. We did have a contractor who did that, a resident contractor, who did just a phenomenal job. The whole pool area looked like brand new, it really came out nice. Then obviously we did a thorough cleaning and organizing of the entire building.

So, when we were closed, we were very busy getting a lot of stuff done. Not one day went by when we weren't just doing something to improve the whole building. We were able to get a lot done, if there are any good things to say about being closed. We were able to get a lot of stuff done.

Moving on, the fountain in Elmwood pond was replaced. We replaced a 12 year old fountain. Kiwanis donated \$5,000 towards it. The cost was a hair under \$8,000, and this new fountain has LED lights; and it has a little bit different spray pattern than the prior fountain. This one is more of a three tier set up, and at night it looks really nice. During the day it looks really nice, but at night especially with the LED lights; it looks really nice. I just want to thank the Kiwanis for helping us out with that. That was a big help.

Chairperson Kapusta said may I just suggest that the picture is one we use Mayor when we promote different things about the wonderful City of Independence to live in. That pictures is spectacular.

Mayor Kurtz said noted. Go ahead, Tom.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said moving on. In late summer Claudia and Marcia and Rita have been asking for shade over at the Fieldhouse for their programs, and we were able to put a shade structure up. This shade structure is a massive 34' x 32' structure, and it's up about 15' high. It's a really impressive structure. It's over the play structure. It's at the Fieldhouse, and they haven't had a chance to take advantage of it obviously because we put this up after their program was done; but this is going to be welcome next year when they are out there because the big thing now is shade. Everybody wants shade. So, this was another undertaking. We did this in house with our in house staff because we have a lot of experience putting up shade structures. We did all the ball diamonds and outdoor pool in the past year.

That completes some of the big things we did this year up until now. If there aren't any questions on that, I am going to move on to our proposed Five-Year Capital.

Chairperson Kapusta asked no questions? Alright Tom, it's yours.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said just to go through this kind of quickly, the yellow highlight is just kind of things that we either tweaked, added or deleted. So, the copier, we forego from this year and moved it up to 2021, and then we are going to add \$5,000 because we are going to upgrade to a lot better copier than what we have now.

Under the exercise equipment, I want to add the word furnishings because there are times when we buy furnishings for the upstairs, and it doesn't really fall under the equipment portion. So, just changing the wording up so we can cover more bases, and then again, we have been doing this for years as far as trying to keep our equipment updated and having the best possible stuff we can upstairs in our Civic Center.

For 2025 we added the replacement of a 60 inch zero turn riding mower. Our cargo van, Amber will touch on this during their presentation; but we are going to take their van that they are giving up. It's a 1997, and it sounds like an old vehicle, which it is; but overall the vehicle is in very good shape because it's always kept inside at the Civic Center. We don't really want to transport kids or people in it because obviously it's a 23 year old vehicle. We don't want to use it for transporting people, but it's good for tables and chairs. That is what we used to use our cargo

van for; so we figure we should be able to get about 4 years out of that van. So, we are going to use that van. In 2024 we will replace that van.

For 2025 we put in for a replacement of a 2012 model Kubota, and again, the last thing on this page is I wanted just to say that I am strong advocate of the dog park someplace; and I think we should be looking at budgeting money for this. I know some people don't agree with that, but again I think it was a week or two weeks ago, we had an e-mail from another resident who had really wrote a nice letter saying she really thinks we should look at a dog park somewhere. She understands the issues we have with the ballfields. It's not really the place for dogs out there, but right now we are allowing them. It's a need that the City has, and I think we have to keep that on the books going forward.

On the second page of the Capital, going on to Public Lands & Buildings, the Old Rec, the flooring in the gym, we have to do something with. So, we put in for 2021. We did foregoing \$30,000 for this year, so that did come off from this year over at that building.

Again, the chemical controllers were done this year, so we are taking that off from 2021.

The slide flume interior resurface, what we added was structure paint also because we were just going to paint the fiberglass slide portion; but after looking it, evaluating it, the metal structure is going to need painting. So, we added \$10,000 to that, and that is for 2022.

Then the splash pad, hopefully, we can keep it for this year; and then we can get \$75,000 for next year because I want to try to push to see if we can get a small splash pad open at the outdoor pool for possibly Memorial Day of next year.

Chairperson Kapusta said if I can interrupt you Tom. Where about at the pool are you considering that for? Do you know?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said we have an area right where the walkway entrance is right off the sidewalk. If anybody wants to stop, and I can show you exactly where, but it's an ideal location. There's power there. Our storm and sanitary sewer is there, and our water line is there. So, there are all sure connections to all of our main infrastructure is right there. This would be an ideal place, and it's in a location where if the pool is not open. Let's say we get nice weather at the end of April, we can open that splash pad and still have the pool closed. So, we are going to have a double gate on it so when the pool is open, it is accessible from inside the pool. If the pool is closed, it's accessible from the outside. I have been scouting the areas, and that would be the best place that we think and probably the most inexpensive place to put one also just because we don't have to run the utilities far.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked Tom is that the area you showed me last year when we looked?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said that's correct.

Vice Mayor Grendel said thank you.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz going on, we have been putting away, starting in 2022, \$30,000 each year for water feature replacement in the existing outdoor activity pool. Again, that pool was built opened in 2000, by the time we want to do this in 2024 or 2025 all those water features are going to be 25 years old. So, that's the time to replace and upgrade those water features in that outdoor activity pool.

The last thing on this page is the locker room renovations.

Mayor Kurtz said you said 20 to 25 years, it's 20 years now. Are there any changes you have seen evolve that you could adapt to our configuration that would be upgrades?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said well the splash pad is going to be a big upgrade. I will say that because a lot of places now have these splash pads. What's nice about the splash pad is that it doesn't raise your operating costs that much because you don't have to have a lifeguard there. They are basically self-monitored. So, that's what is nice about that; but when it comes to upgrading that facility Mayor, we have a nice massive activity pool, it's just a matter of getting modern features in it. So, that's what this money is going to go towards. It is solid.

Mayor Kurtz said got it. Thank you.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said talking about the Civic Center lockers need to be upgraded. We were going to do it this year, but with the pandemic we want to move that to next year; and that's why we would like to move that \$200,000 from this year to next year. Then we can take off the 2022 and 2023 \$10,000.

The last page of the proposed Five-Year Capital is we had on there for LED lights, and again Tech Service has been slowly converting everything over. I don't think we need this extra \$10,000 for these two years.

The last thing I did add on for 2023 is that we have this play structure right here by City Hall by the Annex pavilion in the wooded area here; and that does need to be replaced. That's 25 plus years old. So, we need to replace that. So, I am just putting away money to do that down the road.

Chairperson Kapusta said Tom explain to me where that is.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said that is right off the City Hall parking lot. That would be west of the City Hall parking lot, but east of the Annex pavilion. We call that the Annex playground area. That's in the wooded area. That area is north of the Building and Engineering Departments.

Chairperson Kapusta said now I know where it is.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz asked does anybody have any questions on any of the proposed Five-Year?

Chairperson Kapusta said you can go forward Tom.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said we will keep going. Current department operations, I know some people have been in the Civic Center. I know Kathleen I don't know if you have been since the Covid, but it looks a little bit different in there now. We had to do a lot of different things. We put the protection up for our employees on the desks, both Community Services and Rec. So, basically to sum this up, we went by the Governor's guidelines. We got the building opened. We opened on June 1st when we were able to. One of our own restrictions we did put was residents only, and this is working out very nicely. We have not met any max capacity at this point, which is good. The only area that we get sometimes close to being at certain hours at max capacity is in our pool area. We have three lanes, and you are able to reserve a lane. Obviously, there are certain times of day when people all want to come, so sometimes the people have to alter their time when they need to come; but overall, again I said this before, and I will say it again, our forefathers, and I know Greg the Mayor was in office when we built that Civic Center. They were fortunate enough to think ahead to build a big facility for the size of our population. So, again, we are very thankful for that. So, at this point we have not had to turn people away.

Again, the next slide is just some of the guidelines that we had to go through. Certain things are off limits, and again you can read through these at your leisure; but I don't want to take up that much more time.

Throughout the park, our other facilities, we did open up throughout since June, and signage, that was one of the requirements, to put signage up at the Hemlock Trail, Elmwood Park, around the Fieldhouse exterior. We have ample signage up, and we do have our staff trained. They are doing the extra work. We have the sanitizing guns. I call them that. They aren't literally guns, but they are sprayers that spray down certain facilities that we have every day. We have extra staff every two hours wiping down high touch surfaces so we are abiding by all the guidelines, again, just some feedback from our social media.

Moving on to the outdoor pool operations and wrap up this past year; I am going to turn it over to April Lemke who is going to say a few words for the outdoor pool. Again, I want to thank April and Cee especially who sat for two weeks straight; they sat and went over the Governor's guidelines to opening up these facilities. They found a way to make it happen. They found a way to get this place opened where many other cities just, whether it was financial reasons, or just didn't want to put the effort; but a lot of other cities were not open this past summer. I am really proud of those two and the rest of the staff who really went the extra mile to get this facility opened and opened it safely. We had a good summer, and I am very glad we did open it because we had a lot of 90 degree days. I think we had 18 90 degree days this past summer, and I couldn't imagine having that facility closed on a 95 degree day; and we are all outside the fence looking in at the pool. I just couldn't imagine it. April, do you want to say a few words.

April Lemke said I would say all the residents were thankful. Almost every day we heard thank you as they were coming and going. They were glad they lived in Independence where we decided to open the pool. Many cities as we watched, we had meetings virtually with Directors from other cities, and so many did not open. We are just very grateful, myself and the staff, we

had the support to be able to do that this summer. We did make adjustments to how we operated according to the guidelines. We posted the changes. Everyone had to wear masks, coming and going. Tech Service Department helped by putting touchless, sinks, toilets, all the dispensers. Everything was touchless. We had residents bring their own chairs so nobody was sharing equipment. We put all our equipment away so if they wanted they had to bring their own. We did all the stuff just to minimize any kind of sharing of chairs too.

The resident only policy was very, very popular this summer. Everyone was happy that they could come in and feel comfortable coming here and not have to deal with crowds. Our capacity was 250 people. We met that a few days that were really hot, but it always came around the time where we would close down for a half hour to clean, and that would kind of restart for the next block of time. People would leave, and then we could bring a whole new group in. So, I think all the rules worked out really well. I just have to say we work with a lot of high school and college age staff, and they went above and beyond anything that we trained them to do. They just really stepped up this summer and were very responsible for following the guidelines.

We did have the regular attendance that we have monitored throughout the summer in June. You can see the numbers there. I don't think you have to read all the specifics, and the day camp did use the pool four days a week; and we had a 42 member swim team that was able to practice. They weren't able to compete, but they did come practice every day. We spaced out their days so that they weren't running into each other and being crowded in their lanes to make it work for social distancing as well.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said our pass sales really aren't that far off from last year, believe it or not. Our family passes, if you compare them to last year, were a little bit down, but the individual resident passes were actually, well they were a little bit down also too; but overall it was pretty close to what we had last year. The seniors were down more than half, but overall as you can see, we had quite a bit of pass sales. A lot of people did take advantage of the pool.

April Lemke said I ran into a lot of the seniors at the Civic Center, and they were able to reserve lanes and stay even more distant up there. So, the regular swimmers at the Civic Center who may normally have come outdoors, just chose to stay indoors this year and avoid the potential of running into more people which the outdoor pool was obviously more used than indoors this year. So, they just felt safer using the Civic Center which was great. All summer we were able to leave it as mostly adults using that facility because of the outdoor pool.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said great, thanks. Then the last thing was just again, we got a lot of comments from residents as you can see. They are very grateful of us that the City was able to open the outdoor pool. Thanks April.

We are going to move on to programs during the pandemic. Again, we try to do whatever we can to serve the residents. Some of the things are virtually. A couple of things I want to talk about that stand out is we had the one outdoor movie at the Fieldhouse because we were going to do a camp out and movie, but instead we chose to do a drive-in movie. That worked out real nice, and again we had a lot of good feedback from that.

We had a virtual Recreation page back when we had the Civic Center closed. It was added to the website with activities such as a virtual Easter Egg Hunt and City puzzles. We created a list of activities for families to do at home.

Indy Fit did a bunch of different things, and Linda Farace is going to say a few words in regard to the Indy Fit virtual pages that she had.

Linda Farace said when we closed down, I knew that there was a want and need for everybody to stay active and keep up with their fitness; but I also knew that there was a need to socially connected. So, one of our most popular instructors, Jayme and I decided we were going to do live Facebook workouts; and that's what you are seeing on the screen now. As you can see, we had hundreds of views on all these videos; and during the time of these videos she was teaching, I was communicating with people via Facebook. So, they were able to interact with us at the same time, and you could see by the numbers that it was pretty popular.

So, we also started a YouTube called the Indy Fit YouTube page where we have classes that people can take at any time that they want that is convenient for them, and we have done classes from the Better Balance and Chair Yoga for our seniors to strength and cardio classes for others. We have even done adaptive fitness classes. So, we pretty much reached every demographic we could, and we have been getting great reviews from that.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said thanks Linda. Then moving on, we did have a modified Little League season this past year. We started a little bit late, and it went through July. We did just about every age group except for the younger kids. With the guidelines we had we just couldn't find a way to keep the smaller kids away from each other. So, the program that Claudia Duhan normally runs, we did not have which was the 3 and 4 Kickstart t-ball. We did not have the regular t-ball also. Again, we wanted to have programs, but again we wanted to keep everybody safe; and we just felt that this age group it was too tough to keep people away. Other than that, we had no issues with our season that we did have. I thank Dimtri for putting that together and enforcing the guidelines, and most people. The spectators were social distanced. We just had a few little things we had to remind people of. We were making announcements during the games, and it was a nice season.

Then on the next screen here we had the drive in movie. Residents sent a nice e-mail here to us and again some good feedback from the drive in movie that we had.

Also, Joel Woods who is a resident had a parent group that basically created a travel football program, and to make a long story short; this a group of Independence residents that were passionate about football. We assisted them, and they did most of the work; but they are using our facilities, the old middle school. We are lining the fields for them. They put together basically a travel flag football program that is a little bit more aggressive than a Rec program. We are working with them throughout the season here, and they did what we call the Victory Football Camp. We had that back in July. It was a little fundraiser for them because they formed their own 501c3. They are a really great group of Independence residents, and we are very thankful for all that they do for us and our residents.

Going on here to upcoming programs; and again this fall we have our soccer going. The only soccer program that we are not doing again is the 3 and 4 year olds soccer. We do have from age 5 on up going, and then we do have our own modified version of a flag football program going on now also.

We just had meetings last week with our surrounding cities in regard to our late fall early winter basketball program, and we are just putting it together now. We will at this point have that, as long as things don't change. We will be having that program also.

A couple of other things we have here planned. Linda, I don't know if you want to expand it on it, it's our two big events coming up in October.

Linda Farace said the drive in movie went over really well. Families are asking every day for me. They love the events. They miss the events we couldn't have; so next Friday, October 9th we are doing Indy Kids Rockin Night Out. This is a free family event. We have the Rockin Robots are doing a concert, and it's going to be followed by Robots the movie; and there's just going to be lots of fun activities and things to do that night. Even our staff is excited about this one. Everybody is really excited for this event. We have 73 families signed up so far. So, it's going to be a lot of fun.

Moving closer to Halloween, the drive in movie is going to be a Haunted Halloween drive in where we are doing the Nightmare Before Christmas, and we are going to have free popcorn. We are asking people to come in costume. So, we have a couple of really fun events to help people stay social in October.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said I talked about the soccer. Here is just some information about what we have so far with our soccer, and then going on here, the final thing I want to talk about is April has been working on fall programs for swimming. She is making modified swimming lessons, and she has been working on water aerobic classes, anything we can do. We are trying to abide by all the guidelines, be safe and offer our residents whatever we can. That basically sums it up. Again, we are grateful to the Mayor and Council for support of all of our programs and our department and everything that you guys do for us. We appreciate it. Thank you.

Chairperson Kapusta asked are there any comments or questions for Tom and his staff?

Mayor Kurtz said I would just like to reiterate things we have said throughout this whole chaotic year is that the staff, Community Services, Rec Department staff have been absolutely very unselfish this entire Covid situation, this entire year. They have gone beyond the call of duty, and their attitude and willingness to work to find a solution. They never told me no or can't do it or don't want to do it. They have been absolutely, I can't say enough about their level of commitment to the community and to all the people who reside and come and use our services. So, I want to thank them again publicly. I have done it repeatedly personally, but I can just tell you publicly I can't say enough about the way they performed this year and continue to perform.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said thank you.

Chairperson Kapusta said I would just like to say that as I watched your presentation this afternoon a couple of things came to my mind. One was probably much like with the comment that I made to Angie about the changes and modifications in our programs and working with our youth in the high school and middle school because of Covid, I would wager that you would probably be adapting some of the very things that you have put into place during this period which will in the long run enhance the safety and the well-being of our residents. So, I think that's great, but I would challenge anybody who watched this presentation and listened to you to believe that this was going on during the Covid period because what you guys have done and put forth; and I pride myself on trying to always be reading and being aware, and you opened my eyes to a lot of things too that even I didn't know when I tried intentionally to be aware of what was going on.

I do have a question, like your classes that you were doing. I know when I made an effort to try to reach out to more of our senior population during these months, and obviously it's my bad because I didn't realize you were doing a lot of those things online; otherwise I would have strongly encouraged. I think we have more seniors than we believe going online at this point and time and maybe even reflected in some of those numbers that you shared with us earlier. Are you continuing those programs at this point and time, some of those exercise programs, the Chair Yoga, things like that?

Linda Farace said we are not doing that on a regular weekly basis, but we are continuing to occasionally upload videos to our YouTube channel. That way they can take them at their convenience, and they are the same class that they would take one of the days if the Civic Center was opened, such as the Better Balance classes and the Chair Yoga. They are on our YouTube page. I have that information given to the Mayor so he could occasionally mention that. One of our senior classes that we do have now, our instructor through Covid when the Civic Center was closed down, she was actually e-mailing them, calling them with the weekly workouts so that she could keep up with them by doing that.

A lot of our instructors were doing virtual things on their own to stay connected with the people who usually took their classes.

Chairperson Kapusta said so I will now start to look there so that I can share and pass on that word. I don't know if this is something that's too much or something that we might want to consider; but I am sure we will get it to when we talk about the Community Services side and the excellent programs they are doing, one of which is the lunches. Maybe did we think that at some point in time we could have flyers. We even though we like to believe we are more tech savvy as we are getting our senior population, some of them still could use that piece of paper to know hey I could go on. Here's how I get on to the City's website or YouTube or whatever you are going to have your things on, and I am going to go and look for those programs. So, maybe just periodically if you can drop a flyer in that they could kindly give out when they are giving out the lunches, that might be another way to reach some of our folks.

Linda Farace said we could definitely do that, absolutely.

Chairperson Kapusta said thank you. Like I say, nobody would believe that this was during the times when we had to scale back on things. So, congratulations to all of you. I echo the Mayor's sentiments. Are there any other comments before we move on? Thank you. It was an excellent presentation.

If we could go to Community Services, Amber you and I don't know who else you might have there with you today.

Community Services Coordinator Amber Veverka said possibly Rita will be joining us by phone. She was on her way to Wyoming. She said her reception wasn't great, but she would try to pop in.

Chairperson Kapusta said all yours.

Community Service Coordinator Amber Veverka said good evening. I just also want to acknowledge Marilyn Senick. I am definitely missing her tonight, and this is one of those projects we really liked working on together, and we looked forward to. I hope that we've been able to learn all we can from her, and our team just really wants to honor her memory and make her proud.

Chairperson Kapusta said while you are getting that ready, I would also comment again, having seen Rec's presentation and anticipating what Amber is going to do now, that you guys put so much effort even into the presentations you make for us for these meetings; and don't think that they are not appreciated because they are. It's really enlightening to us, it allows us to hopefully not only know what you are doing, but take that message out to the community more. I kind of want to laugh because you know we are pretty regular about trying to do our quarterly meetings for this committee because there is always so much information you have to share with us; and as you know we didn't do the June one because I talked with both of our Directors, Marilyn at the time and of course Tom. There was a mutual agreement that we have things going on, but we had even more things to go towards as the Rec side was going to be opening on June 1st, and Marilyn and her staff were trying to look at summer camps and things like that. So, we felt it was better served to use that time to prepare for those things, and now that we have seen this last quarter of how it was doing, I think we made a very wise decision. So, thank you.

Community Service Coordinator Veverka said I just wanted to say thank you to Tom who has been a great resource during this tough time. So, thanks to him and his staff. They were very helpful and very approachable.

I am going to dive right into some capital, just a couple of things to discuss. One of the items our Ford Crown Victoria, this we chiefly use for mail, errands. We are not using it as a transport vehicle, but we would like to look at replacing this. We do have the money set aside for a transport interceptor. I do not think we need a new vehicle being that we are just using this internally. So, my suggestion would be if we could get a used vehicle at this time, and not touch that money for a new vehicle. I don't really see it necessary. If an SUV is available from the Police Department, that would be great. It has about 118,000 miles on it.

Chairperson Kapusta asked so you have initiated that conversation already Amber to get that vehicle?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said no not yet, but I would like to look into that.

Chairperson Kapusta said it's a good idea.

Mayor Kurtz said it's an excellent idea. That thing has to be retired. I am looking and laughing at it. We definitely either repurpose something or find something energy efficient that will last a long time.

Councilperson Trakas said I think Chief Wright used that car before.

Mayor Kurtz said it looks like it's before my time.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said I have driven it before, and it runs like a top, knock on wood.

Mayor Kurtz said Amber let it go. We already got them to the threshold, don't tell them it runs like a top.

Councilperson Trakas said I'll trade you. I have 155,000 on a 2013.

Mayor Kurtz said Amber when we get the go ahead, you don't say anything, just keep going.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said I'm an old car girl, you know me.

Mayor Kurtz said that's true.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said so Tom briefly touched upon this. Our Ford Club Wagon, we have not used this thing in quite some time. The camp staff, I consulted them about it, they do not want this van replaced; and so Tom he would like to use it for tables and chairs. It's great that he can get some use out of that. What the camp staff suggested was some golf carts. They suggested two four to six passenger golf carts. They only need a vehicle nine weeks out of the year; so to me it doesn't make sense to get a brand new vehicle that they don't even think is practical. With the golf cart, it makes it easy to transport the kids, but also when they have jugs of water and supplies and things. They can get closer to their places they need to access in the park and other places on the City campus.

I spoke to Tom about this, and he seems to like this idea. We could potentially share these vehicles. I think it costs far too much to rent them than to purchase. We would be looking at electric vehicles, but these are vehicles we could use potentially for special events, Home Days. Tom even suggested possibly tours of the Hemlock Trail for those who can't access it. So, they would definitely be utilized if we were to go this direction.

Mayor Kurtz said good idea.

Chairperson Kapusta asked questions, comments? I would echo that I think it's a good idea Amber. I guess my only word of caution would be, and I know you guys will amply take care of this. I just see these little ones trying to get out, jumping out of the vehicles; and we know that golf carts are enticing to most of us and obviously that would be an area we would need to be a little cautious. I realize we aren't taking them down I-77, but even around our own campus.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said our suggestion would be to outfit them with seatbelts so the children wouldn't be flying around too much.

Chairperson Kapusta said thank you.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said and then I just wanted to discuss the Community Services atrium. This is something we have brought before in past meetings. It's obviously not something we have to worry about right now being that we are closed to the public; however, I definitely want to look at the furniture out there. We have had a couple of incidents where seniors have tumbled out of broken chairs that have broken on them. We really want to look for something that's easier to clean, something that they can get out of, something more practical. I have a little wish list put together. Vinyl seats would be on our wish list. We did the vinyl seats in the Willow theater, and that's been fantastic if there is a spill or accident. Then a coffee station, something that seniors can use easier; our current setup is something like card table height, and they are having to bend over. The coffee station would be more hygienic because you will have little kids who will want to put their fingers on everything on the coffee station.

Then a couple of more things about tables and general seating; so this is something that we would like to get moving and so we are kind of putting together what we think kind of our wants and needs in that area.

Chairperson Kapusta asked questions?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said I know we discussed a kitchen remodel the last couple of meetings.

Chairperson Kapusta said Amber it was the last couple of years, but go on.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said and I know in talking with Tom, he made an interesting suggestion that we might look into some grant opportunities. I am not really sure what's going to come up out of this pandemic, but if there are some grants that are coming up that we could take advantage of, it might be nice to look into that when we go to do the kitchen.

Chairperson Kapusta said I always favor that idea, you never know what's out there until you look.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said if there are no questions about capital, we will move on to some programs and services.

Chairperson Kapusta said sounds good.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said so we have some ongoing programs and services while our side of the building has been closed. So, things like the daily resident call ins, the Meals on Wheels, the Welcome Wagon we are still doing. We also resumed our individual senior transportation in May, and that's for medical appointments and secondary things like prescription pickup. So, those numbers have settled down around 40 which is pretty good. We have one driver right now working Monday through Friday to help with those.

Then in April and May our team assisted the Fire Department in contacting our residents over the age of 55 which there are about 2,800 of them in town. We wanted to check in on them to just make sure that they had everything they needed. We checked to make sure that they had enough groceries and medication. We asked them if needed any assistance. There were questions provided by the Fire Department. So, we did about 743 surveys, and those surveys were specifically for those 65 and over, although we could call everyone 55 and over. Then we also made follow up calls as requested if they wanted a call back to check on them again.

Our modified hours of operation which are currently the same; we are there Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We are closed on the weekends.

Chairperson Kapusta asked any questions?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said so we started a couple of programs during the pandemic to kind of boost morale and to provide service for the residents. The first of which was around Easter time, we did the springtime surprise in conjunction with the Recreation Department; and that was a drive thru Easter Bunny visit. The kids who signed up got a little treat bag for Easter, and 242 people participated in that. I added some feedback and some pictures that they sent us of the kids' happy faces. The community really seemed to enjoy that, and it was something that we could safely and something the staff was very enthusiastic about.

We also during that time passed out these puzzle pieces. This is called our Indy Spring Project. It's our community puzzle craft. It's almost ready to display. We had 187 participants of this project, and essentially everyone was given a card stock puzzle piece to take home and to be as creative they would like. These are some of our returned pieces that are on a display that is Claudia is putting together.

Chairperson Kapusta asked what are the plans for that if any Amber, once that's put together?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said so in earlier discussions the idea was to put it in downtown Independence in one of the store windows. Now that it's getting a little chillier, the idea would be to display it inside possibly near the entrance; and then people who come to work out can see it and then we will also post some pictures on line for people to view it from home.

Chairperson Kapusta said and you said Claudia is putting it together, is she doing that with a degree of permanency then like with the glue process that they sometimes use or what.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said they are glued on.

Chairperson Kapusta said that will be nice. It's a lot of work, and it's nice to be able to have that to enjoy and look at in closer detail and especially when we get back open and more folks can come to the center.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said and we also did a sunflower growing contest. We had 50 participants, and they could either use seeds provided by us or they could use their own seeds. We had two winners, the tallest and largest. The gentleman on the right with the baby, he was our winner for tallest sunflower, 13 ½ feet. So, people really seem to like that. It was something that they could do as a family, and also they could do this from home safely. So, this is definitely something we would like to do as an annual program.

Chairperson Kapusta said it's a neat idea.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said then we also did another contest called Chalk the Walk, and we had 34 submissions for that. The winners were determined by people's choice award, and people could vote for them on Facebook. All the pictures were uploaded, and they had a week to vote. So, these are our top three winners, and everyone really had a lot of fun with that; even the people who were just viewing the photos and voting. They really seemed to enjoy that. They got to go and see all the kids having fun.

Chairperson Kapusta asked how many entries? 34, I see now. Do we happen to have pictures of the others beyond just the top three?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said we do. All of the entries are on our Facebook page. They are posted there for the votes. So, you can go to the Recreation/Community Services Facebook page and view all 34 photos.

Chairperson Kapusta said thanks.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said and we are really grateful that Linda was able to put together some workouts for our seniors and the Matter of Balance classes; but there is a need for the seniors who don't have computer access. So, I partnered with April to do a mailing called Senior Fit; and this was at home workouts. Linda Hendrix was our model for these, and we were able to send this to residents 65 and over who participated in these programs that you see and also mailed out by request. So, we mailed out 34 of these so people could work out in the comfort of their own home, and this was mid April to mid May that most of these went out. It included the exercise benefits for seniors, some tips for working out at home and then some exercises that you could do from a chair and some stretches as well.

That is our segway into adult programming. Our 55+ lunches, we started doing these in a drive-thru style on May 15th, and then we added in the Tuesday lunches on July 14th. This is for residents only. We have a couple of caregivers who have the meals as well, and then it's for 55 and over. I think we have two people who are not in that criteria, and that's due to permanent disability. We do deliver for those who are qualified for transportation; so we are delivering probably 20 meals Tuesdays, and about the same on Fridays as well. These are catered meals, although we provide the dessert. So, you will see on the chart on the left, as the dates go on, the

numbers go up. So, we started with what our normal lunch would be, and word of mouth has just led us to 300. This week we are doing something like 335 or 340.

Chairperson Kapusta said obviously I don't think we could question that you are meeting a need there, that's pretty significant, those numbers, even with the masked man who's there to possibly scare them.

Mayor Kurtz said now wait a minute.

Chairperson Kapusta said I have heard so many comments from people, all positive, not one negative; and you know, I said this before when we talked about even the meals that we provided over the years to our residents at the center. I know the food is nice and great, but it's still about doing something different. People will say I can't go anywhere, but I look forward to going to pick up my meals. What we are doing for the people in that respect is great too, and I would once again like to say as well, I appreciate the acknowledgement Mayor that you and the staff did for Marilyn; and I know I heard a lot of positive things about that too. Folks thought that was very nice to remember Marilyn in this process.

Mayor Kurtz said she was part of this team and deserved every ounce of appreciation that we could show.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka asked is Rita here? Rita was not in attendance.

I will just briefly go over summer camp. We had a modified program for summer camp. Our team was great, and they really just rolled with these changes. As you can, I did a comparison to last year just to show what we did differently in order to make it work. We did have a late start to the program which was understandable with all the new regulations. So, we started July 6th after the holiday. We also offered this Monday through Thursday instead of Monday through Friday. We had 70 campers. Compared to last year and having to deal with the capacity limits, it was not too bad. It was still a popular program. The group sizes were limited to 10 campers and counselors per space; and we could not unfortunately have field trips. I know that's a big draw of camp, and so that was a bummer to have to forego those; but there was still a ton for the kids to do. They did crafts. They were able to use the outdoor pool which was fantastic. They had a runners and walkers club. They logged 1,500 miles in six weeks. So, they had a really great team of counselors there who kept the kids active and kept them busy. They ended it with a pizza and ice cream party with a DJ.

I would like to mention our before and after school programs. We currently are operating these programs at the Independence Primary School, so it's kind of learning as we go. We have 7 kids in our before school class right now, and our after school we have 54 students right now. We have of course limited capacity, and no intermingling of groups. So, we are trying to accommodate those who are currently in the program, and that's chiefly because of those capacity limits; but secondly, with the intermingling of groups you want the kids to be with the same set of kids all the time and kind of reduce that exposure. So, we had to limit it to K-4, and that is primarily because of the transportation. We are not moving the kids, so we are not accommodating middle schoolers right now. It's held in the cafeteria, the gym and they have a

flexible learning center that we can use as well. We are following the school safety protocols. So, the masks worn as much as possible, and always inside; and they have 3 feet of social distancing in the school. That's what we are following. Any questions about the before or after school or camps?

Chairperson Kapusta said I see your 3 feet of social distancing. Is that like what is recommended for school? You said they are doing it in the schools as opposed to the 6 that we have always been hearing?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said correct. So, we followed 6 for summer camp, and then the schools, their updated guidance was 3 feet. So, because we are in the school building, we are trying to be as consistent as possible with their rules and protocols. It is also a smaller space. So, I think if it had been 6 feet, we would not have been able to accommodate as many kids.

Claudia ran some pop-up programs over the summer for pre-school and grade school kids. Those were really popular. These numbers reflect several sessions. We could only accommodate 3 to 6 kids, depending on the space; but they did spin art, rock painting, tie dye t-shirts, sun catchers. She was very diligent about the safety of the kids, and the parents were very pleased with these programs. They were asking for more.

Chairperson Kapusta said I'm sure it was a welcome change of pace for a lot of those families.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said and even for an hour to have the parents come and get the kids out of the house for an hour was a blessing to them, just to do something new was very nice.

We did hold our community concerts this summer. We did a delay. We normally start in June; so we started them in July this year. They ended up being very popular, so we were asked to continue them. Actually we are wrapping up this week. It's going to be a little chilly, but these are all our concerts we had. We decided to go with food trucks. We normally would have City organizations selling food at these concerts, but just due to safety and hygiene we wanted to make sure professionals on site to handle the food at these events. So, the residents really seemed to enjoy this. It was safely spaced, and we did have signage as well and encouraged mask wearing.

Chairperson Kapusta said again, I heard very, very positive comments from many residents about this program; and the fact that we were able to extend it so far out of the normal season of what we do was I think appreciated by the many people. The numbers are great; so it's showing you that people did enjoy it. I think those who didn't come probably didn't come just because they were not comfortable yet with going out because I know some folks said boy I wish I could. So, it was a great, great service.

Mayor Kurtz said I appreciate, I think the team does a great job of encouraging these types of events and programs; but also I have to acknowledge Council for, it's a collaborative effort. Council Members call me and say hey are you going to do this, or I think you should continue

this program. You make it a lot easier to crunch through some of these things when you are supporting them. It's because of your individual conversations or the comments you pass along that encourage us and the Community Services team to continue this. So, I appreciate that.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I almost attended every one of those community concerts except maybe one or two; and they were tremendous. They were almost the highlight of the week. I know for our family; I saw a lot of people. Everybody really abided by the rules set aside. It was a tremendous program, and I know that the performers; we had a nice variety of the different musical acts and everything; and they were all excellent. There was a nice variety too. It was just a tremendous program. It really helped us get through the summer as far as a family and our kids and grandkids.

The other thing too, I know my grandkids took part in that. That was the highlight of the summer for them. Claudia does a super job. They have been attracted to Claudia's work and everything. They just enjoy going to any program that she has too. Community Services and Recreation, both have done a tremendous job. You compare them to other communities that kind of closed up shop this year for the summer; Independence could really be proud, like the Mayor said, our employees, our leaders in the different departments, tremendous job. It really helped us kind of cope with this Covid business.

Mayor Kurtz said absolutely.

Chairperson Kapusta said I would just like to make an add to your comment about Claudia. I have known her since our kids went to kindergarten together; and this extends to all the staff, but I just have to say this one personal comment because I know Claudia. When our kids were younger, I used to tell her she could become really wealthy, and she would look at me; and I would say you have to start a party planning business because I could say to her here's a green bean, make a theme about it and she would. So, those are the kind of people who were are fortunate to have as not only residents, but as our employees because all our children and residents can benefit from that.

Mayor Kurtz said again I can't reinforce their attitudes because they encourage us to do these programs. When other communities were shutting down, we were faced with that decision; and having the conversations with our team members, Community Services, Rec team members, and then Council. It was truly a team effort to be able to move forward with all the programs to the extent we did in a measured way. It has proven to be very beneficial to our community in my opinion.

Chairperson Kapusta asked anything else Amber?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said I would just be remiss if I didn't mention our team because being creative is one thing, but taking initiative is another; and everyone has done both of those things during this time. It would have been so easy to just shut down and not do anything, but the care they have for this community really motivated them to bring some programs and to be flexible with the things we were working with. So, our youth programmers, Claudia, Rita, Marcia, I just really want to thank them. Lori Rizzardi with our adult programs,

she doesn't miss a beat and Gabrielle Schultz who, I think we would be running around like crazy if we didn't have her holding us together. So, just a wonderful team that I am blessed to work with.

Mayor Kurtz said thank you.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said just a couple more seasonal events. We just recently wrapped up our scarecrow program. We normally do that inside the Kiwanis pavilion, but this time we provided the t's, and the families made these at home. So, we are getting those returned. If you go around the park, take a look; and you can see how creative the families are. I want to shout out to Mark Chaney for helping us make the t's.

We modified our clambake. We were really missing Fall Fest this year, and we know one of the big draws is the clambake. So, we offered that as a drive up, ready to heat version; and we did just as many clambakes as we normally do for our Fall Fest in the drive up version. People really enjoyed that. So, we did that on Saturday instead of Sunday.

Mayor Kurtz said Amber, one other thing, the feedback was very positive about the clambake, to the point where they were asking me if we are going to do something in October. I think Council and the Mayor are going to put that one on.

Chairperson Kapusta said I would have to add too that both with the meals that come on Tuesday and Friday, as well as the clambake; I think we are all so fortunate to have the caliber, the quality of the food that we have. I believe it's through Lori Pesek. That adds a whole other level to it as well. So, thank you for doing that.

Mayor Kurtz said and if we add the beer or wine, then we will be in good shape. The seniors are wanting their wine. I can tell you right now.

Councilperson Trakas asked why don't we have a Columbus Day clambake and offer some nice dago red as they call it in Little Italy?

Mayor Kurtz said okay, Councilperson Trakas just tipped the scales.

Councilperson Trakas said I have the red sauce.

Mayor Kurtz said if this was a Council meeting, I would be saying call the roll, all in favor. Thank you very much, and we are moving on.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said we were also able to do our Farmers' Market which goes through the month of September. Luther Farms, they had guidance from the Health Department and from the State on how to run that. So, they modified that. They didn't have any, there was no self-serve. There were no samples. They maintained social distancing. So, that worked out really well. I know that we talked about expanding the Farmers' Market, and so we really want to look at that for next year and see if we can make that even bigger and better, have

some more vendors, maybe some music, some food trucks and really make that kind of a small event in the evenings during the week.

Chairperson Kapusta said I don't know how you would feel about this Amber, but it's just some food for thought. Perhaps we might want to reach out to maybe some of our neighboring communities too that are smaller than us even and don't have something like this. I know the bigger ones, Broadview Heights and Seven Hills always have them; but there are some communities around us that are smaller, maybe they would be interested in partnering. I think the benefit of that would be, one that their residents would be able to get the fresh produce and things; but also I think it would increase the volume for our vendors, for our Farmers' Markets, and that might bring more interest in expanding a little bit for us. We might have a desire to expand, but if we don't have enough of the traffic there, it's not going to happen. So, maybe that's something we can give consideration to.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said I like that idea, and that's definitely a good idea. Thinking just off the top of my head, maybe Valley View or Cuyahoga Heights; I don't know what they are doing. Seven Hills has a fabulous Farmers' Market, and I know we have talked about it a few times about kind of how it's run and the different types of vendors that are there. So, we are trying to research that and get that ball rolling.

Mayor Kurtz said I agree. If we had Valley View or Cuyahoga Heights, it could be more robust.

Chairperson Kapusta said we are trying it I guess.

Councilperson Trakas said there's actual farmers in those communities that we could use their products.

Chairperson Kapusta said that's true. You have seen too that Mr. Foote recently passed away.

Several people began speaking at once.

Chairperson Kapusta asked is there anything else?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said so this past May was Older Americans Month. Normally we have a huge calendar of things for our seniors. We do a health fair, we have speakers. We do special events, and we were so crushed that we couldn't give that to them this year. At the very least, what we did was we put together a slide show with pictures of them with their friends, enjoying programs at the Civic Center. We uploaded that to our YouTube channel and shared that as a tribute to them for Older Americans Month since we couldn't be together.

Chairperson Kapusta said I saw it.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said unfortunately when I did the video imbed, it did not want to play; but you could do that if you like.

Then lastly, would be our reopening plan. Our team has met a couple of times. We have attended meetings hosted by the Ohio Department of Aging just to go over what do the guidelines look like. Do we fall under that senior center/adult daycare center umbrella? Those facilities are permitted to reopen as of September 21st. We've talked to other communities to see what they are doing and kind of get a feel for their reopening plans. For example, I can think of Rocky River; they technically opened up September 21st, but they are doing all outdoor programs, and their food is a boxed meal. So, they are having some concerts and some activities like that, but they are not in the building. They are doing that while the weather still holds up.

Lori has called other communities such as Broadview Heights, Brecksville. Brecksville Senior Center, they are just doing their aquatics program. They are not having their programs right now, but they are also under renovation so just the timing isn't right for them. It kind of varies across the board what other civic centers are doing. We do have some requirements from the County Board of Health and the Ohio Department on Aging. The last slide has on the left some requirements, opening with limited capacity based on safe social distancing, limiting entry. One of the other things that was mentioned was that we would need registration for these programs. So, of course we would limit programs to residents only, but also they would have to sign up in advance so that they could reserve their spots. They would only allow, right now it's 10 seniors per program or per session, and everyone would be required to wear a face covering. If there is someone who cannot wear a face covering due to a health condition, and they cannot wear a face covering, they actually cannot participate. It's one of the requirements that everyone must wear a face covering.

Now our proposed plan, what we have been in discussion with is that we are having the election at the Civic Center on Tuesday, November 3rd. Now that's kind of the first time that we are planning on having the doors open to the public; so we are looking at that as kind of a date that we can work from to possibly start some programming on our side. After the election of course, we would want everything thoroughly cleaned. I am sure there is going to be quite a bit of traffic in there, and then the following Monday would be our suggested start for programming.

A couple of ideas we have of some programming that would be safe to implement and just kind of build from there is we could have bingo. We would have to provide disposable cards, and we could space tables out. We would have that limited to 10 participants. The same with the movie, we could have a movie. We would limit that to 10 people signing up, and we could have that for instance on Wednesday and then also Chair Yoga, General Yoga would be; those are all programs that are very doable. I think those are nice programs to start out with provided that we decide to open for programming.

Then at the bottom you will see some youth programs. If we were to bring youth programs to this building, we have two main suggestions. The first suggestion is that we would only have youth programs in one designated area and having senior programming in another designated room. We would also sanitize according to the CDC guidelines, but that's just an extra wall of protection that we have there, just kind of limiting those two groups. Also, we would not have any senior or youth programs happening on the same day to start. So, those are two of our suggestions, and I definitely want to hear your feedback on this proposal so that we can kind of work and form this.

Mayor Kurtz said and you don't have to have the answer today. We are giving you food for thought. If you have a response, then fine; if you don't, communicate it with us when you feel comfortable. When you have a chance, think about it.

Chairperson Kapusta said from your presentation here Amber, would I be correct to assume then that one of the all-time favorite things that we know our seniors love to do, the drop in in the morning would not be open to them?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said that is correct. If they are going to be in the building, the understanding is that they are coming for a program; and they are not just allowed to use the atrium and loiter. We are opposed to serving food right now. If they wanted to bring a thermos of coffee or a bottle of water, that would be fine; but we are not going to start out serving food or doing any indoor lunches. We are going by that based off of the other centers we have talked to.

Chairperson Kapusta said a very wise decision.

Councilperson Trakas said when you say keeping a daily log, you keep a log of the names and perhaps telephone numbers of the attendees so in case there was anything we could contact them. What does the log entail?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said so the log is essentially us knowing who is in each program and when. Through Sportsman which is how we would do our sign ups, we have an account for everyone; and if we would need to do contact tracing at any point, we could easily run and report and it will show everybody who was at the program and their contact information.

Councilperson Trakas said okay. That is fair.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said Jim we do basically the same thing as the Civic Center. We have to keep strict attendance at the Civic Center. If there is any kind of an outbreak in the future, we have all that information.

Councilperson Trakas said great. It looks like a prudent plan to me.

Chairperson Kapusta said I have talked for a long time, and we take this discussion back to more security in that building, maybe a centralized desk. We have talked about that for a decade now; but I always thought that as a community we are too open, too free. I hate to say that, but we know in today's day and age it's probably a little bit of security is better. So, again it may be something that down the line that maybe we will have more of a registration system for even the more open programs, not just like your meals and stuff like that. Who's coming to our movies, things of that nature, and that may behoove us in the long run from a safety perspective.

Councilperson Trakas agreed.

Chairperson Kapusta asked any other questions about this reopening? You heard the Mayor comment that if you have any other thoughts or ideas, please, I am sure that Amber and her staff would welcome that discussion with you because this is whole new world for them as well.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said thank you Chairperson Kapusta and everyone. I appreciate your time.

Mayor Kurtz said thank you everyone.

Chairperson Kapusta said I have a few more questions. I was surprised that we were not doing the Yuletide Hunger Program this year. Is that correct?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said so we are doing a version of the Yuletide Hunger Program. We are not participating with the other groups. We are doing our own Yuletide Hunger Program this year.

Chairperson Kapusta said can I ask just briefly what that might look like Amber?

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said so we are going to be working with the St. Michael's food pantry for the canned food part of that; and then the other side is gift cards. We will have distribution of gift cards mid-December for those families in need; and they will get their gift cards from us at a drive up location.

Chairperson Kapusta said I have a thought too because I am concerned about, the food always for folks; and I know from St. Michael's our pastor frequently talks about the demand exceeding what we have available even at times. While I understand totally that is not an easy thing, food collections at this time; I also don't think it's probably impossible. Maybe there should be, or there could be some thought given to what if any venues might we have to still collect food for our residents in need. I thought about that too late unfortunately over the summer because with those numbers that I saw there, if we could have had just something where people dropped it off and walked away; we might have gotten a nice little supply of food to help with either or own food pantry or the ones of some of our local churches. Maybe, and I know that your publicity out there already; but maybe some of the programs that both the Rec and Community Services Department are looking to still do over these next months, maybe if we could kind of encourage people to bring something and have just the containers where they could leave them. That might be helpful because again I think that probably more than in some years, especially with people losing jobs and things, the need may be greater and the resources may be more diminished. So, I would hate to overlook that as a possibility for our community. Maybe we can keep that in mind.

I have another thought too, we might even, I heard you say we aren't going to be feeding inside the building; so I am hoping that means you are going to have a continuation of some of the drive by lunches. Maybe we should start saying to people hey because they open their trunks or whatever; they could just set the bag of food there, and you could just put it in a container. People might be willing to give if we just ask. I think we have to keep using the different

avenues we have; and again doing it safely. I understand that, but I know there are collections going on. So, there must be a way that perhaps we could do that.

Mayor Kurtz said I think that's a great idea. We should figure out a couple of opportunities where people can bring a can of food or something. It might be an interesting opportunity.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said we had at our clambake, after it was already in publication, I had asked if we could collect food while people were coming through for their clambake. Unfortunately, it didn't get into print, and so it was advertised on Facebook; but it didn't quite get the publicity it needed to get off the ground running.

Fall Fest and Holiday Fest are two of our main events where we get a lot of donations; and we do have some folks that when we open their trunk, they will give us a bag of food. So, I could definitely see putting a little flyer in the bag. Any time when they come through to get their lunch, if they want to give us canned food for donation, we can definitely do that.

I talked to Dar recently, and she had an interesting idea. She said it would be nice to put a collection bin outside the Civic Center, and anyone could donate at any time if they are stopping by or coming to work out. We could just kind of as an ongoing thing just collect those things for this program; and this is a great time to start.

Chairperson Kapusta said I think that would be good.

Councilperson Trakas said just a thought as we are talking about this. A couple of things, one is I worked at a food pantry for about five weeks this year with the National Guard; and one of the things we did do is we did wipe all down all the food that was donated because I know sometimes people get concerned about that. That would be something we would probably want to let the public know that we are doing.

The other thing that just kind of sparked a thought to me was families not really convening and people kind of away from their families because of the year. Maybe we should think about a community Thanksgiving meal where we could have maybe the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Maybe we can all pitch in together, our employees and volunteers and make a meal as a takeout kind of like our clambake; but have that for Thanksgiving for people because a lot of times people aren't going to be able to get together because they aren't going to travel. Does that make any sense?

Mayor Kurtz said we will definitely look into it.

Chairperson Kapusta said I think that would be a very nice thing if it's possible.

Councilperson Trakas said we could probably get some private support, and I think we could probably get it funded from people in the community and some of our vendors. It might be a nice thing to do.

Chairperson Kapusta said and I don't even think it would be inappropriate to ask for either a payment from them like we do for the regular lunches or at the very least a donation. So we are talking about funding programs for our folks in need at Christmas, and if people said hey I'm going to come, I am reserving a lunch or dinner; I am going to pick it up. Maybe people could give \$3, \$5 donation. We could use that too. It's a great idea. I like that.

One thing, and I don't know that I heard anybody talk to this, have we thought at all about the possibility of using to reach out to our community for different programming, Zoom. Have we thought about that? Zoom meetings? The reason I ask is because I know I mentioned this to someone else earlier that in the Village of Brooklyn Heights they are using that with their seniors to do some educational programming with their seniors. So, I guess it's not impossible is what I am saying in terms of, the skill level is really what I am saying. We might have some takers on that. So, as you are putting together your thoughts, and even for your reopening, I think that it's great we are having a reopening, but it doesn't mean it all has to be on site. It could be some other venues, and I think it might take some gearing up, some training for some people, maybe even adult children would come in and help their senior parents understand more about the Zoom because I think it's a very possible platform and another way to reach out to people.

Councilperson Trakas said I love that idea. Our church does a weekly coffee social on Zoom. It's almost all senior citizens, and after church, they have a televised church service. About a half hour afterwards, the priest opens up Zoom, and there are probably 35 senior citizens toasting each other with Greek coffee.

Chairperson Kapusta said that's an excellent point because it doesn't even have to be always wholly structured programs. It might have a portion of it that's structured, and then leave the rest for interaction like we do here. We are here for business purposes, but there's no reason to say that it couldn't be for social purposes.

Community Services Coordinator Veverka said I know months ago the Communications Director put out for the survey to our seniors, and I believe it was on the preferred ways of communication. I would be interested in seeing those findings. You might be surprised by how many people would be interested in using the computer more and seeing how many people we could reach in that manner.

Chairperson Kapusta said and there's also the possibility that there is a learning curve in that too because some of them might say what's a Zoom. Once we can explain to them, or get their adult grandchildren or children into possibly explaining to them, it might become a more viable option. It's worth trying.

Mayor Kurtz said absolutely.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said Kathleen Jim Wotowiec has been using Zoom with the I Can Program just to let you know.

Chairperson Kapusta said that's so neat. That's another area obviously that has social isolation with our folks with some of their disabilities, some of our younger folks. That's great. I am glad to hear that.

Finance Director Blaze said it looks like they are going on a group walk on Friday. They are having some in person outside.

Chairperson Kapusta said I like that idea. Is there anything else that anybody would like to ask questions, make comments upon? I am going to tell you, this is amazing. I just looked at my clock here, and it's 6:20 p.m. I cannot believe that we have been together for almost two hours. This is so fascinating, and your presentation; we said many times throughout the course of this afternoon, and what you are doing and the opportunities, they are abounding. I am excited about it, and I applaud you all.

Mayor Kurtz said thank you Madame Chairperson, members of the committee. Is there anything else?

Chairperson Kapusta said if not, then we will call a motion to adjourn.

Moved by Trakas, seconded by Walchanowicz, to adjourn the Community Services Committee Meeting of September 30, 2020. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.

There being no further business to discuss, the Community Services Committee Meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.