

Egg Harbor Township Board of Recreation Commissioners Meeting  
Egg Harbor Township, NJ

**SPECIAL MEETING - MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, June 17, 2020 7:30pm**

**I. Call to Order**

Recreation Commission Chairperson Toni Rispoli called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Opening Statement Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act**

Parks and Recreation Director Rick Audet read the Opening Statement.

**IV. Roll Call:**

Toni Rispoli, Chair - Present	Amy Smith – Excused
William Warrell, Vice Chair - Present	Paul Trinkle - Excused
Charles Gallagher - Present	Christine Gras (Alt. 1) – Present
Paul Weldon – Present (7:03)	Jonathan Parker (Alt. 2) – Excused
Kevin Stetser - Present	

**V. Public Comment**

None.

Recreation Commission Chair Toni Rispoli closed public comment at 7:32 p.m.

**VI. New Business**

Discussion of Youth Organization

Toni Rispoli read the draft YO letter to all in attendance. Toni Rispoli invited the executive committee members of YO to speak.

Dorothy Madamba – She would like for the Commission and Director to stop bringing up past actions that have already been addressed or discipline issued.

Nicole Fox and Helen Ginis had no comment.

Monica Brunetti – She requested clarification, from the Commission, that they have voted to impose one team at each level of play for YO. She stated that the Recreation Commission has already selected the head coaches for the program. There is a lack of transparency on the part of the Recreation Commission. She supports Dorothy's comments. YO has followed all the rules. The board was prepared to handle these issues. At their February meeting, they were going to form a committee to address the issue of one team. The Recreation Commission should allow the YO subcommittee to work on the issue of one team. The Recreation Commission's January minutes refer to a letter to YO. It was never sent. Where is this letter?

Toni Rispoli – We have not selected any coaches. She spoke to Clark Hughes from the Atlantic County Junior Football League board. Last year there were 15 players on 1 team and 23 players on the other team at the JV level. If YO chooses the Cape league, there are no weight restrictions. Clark Hughes told her his board is willing to change their bylaws on the weight restriction. EHT is the hub of their league. Toni summarized her conversation with Mr. Hughes.

Clark Hughes, Atlantic County Junior Football League Board President - He is here tonight to speak to the facts. He very much wants EHT to be a part of his league. EHT is the hub of their organization. He had no idea that we had these issues going on in EHT. He discussed the history of his program. He stated that his board could address any issue and enable EHT to remain in their league. His league will have financial and operational hardships if EHT were to leave. His is the oldest football league in the region. He asked to have a year to work it out with all the Towns.

Toni Rispoli – The secretary of ACJFL board told him that we already decided to disband from their league. That is not true. She asked Mr. Hughes if he would agree to work out the weight restrictions with his board.

Clark Hughes – He does believe they can work it out. He cannot make any promises at the moment. Their weight limit is up to 200 pounds.

Bill Warrell – We are not making a decision here tonight on which league YO will be playing in.

Kevin Stetser – He was the head coach last year of Atlantic Pee Wee. His roster had 17 players. Fourteen players suited up for some games. Under ACJFL, some kids are forced to be interior linemen. This is contradictory to high school level, where you want size at every position. The max in ACJFL is actually 185. Players 186-200 pounds must be an interior lineman.

Clark Hughes – ACJFL bylaws state that teams must have minimum of 13 players. His program has worked hard on safety issues and have gotten some participation numbers back up. Tony Savastano the ACJFL Secretary had informed him that the Commission was mandating that YO football go to another league

Kevin Stetser – It is not a numbers problem. It is a too many teams problem. No learning of the game is realized on a team with 13 players.

Christine Gras – The coaches have not been selected. A committee to select coaches was just formed. The committee members selected are Kevin Stetser, Jonathan Parker, Christine Gras, Denise Savastano and Bud Brubaker.

Albert Cicchino – Following up on his comments at our last meeting. He has coached in YO for 3 years. His concerns are true. Teams are too small. Too many kids playing both ways. The nepotism that exists on the board is true. We need change for a better program.

Jen Shaw – She wanted an explanation of what an adult age child is. Her son is an adult, not a child. Her son is old enough to fight for his country and old enough to vote. The term adult aged child is unethical. Either you are a child or you are an adult. Her husband did not want their son to be on the board.

Christine Gras – To Ms. Shaw, yes your son is an adult. The larger point in that part of the letter is that certain members of the board were attempting to vote in family members to stack the board.

Jen Shaw – I did not nominate my son. They often disagree on things. Ms. Shaw discussed the history of her son's involvement in YO. She asked why it is an issue that he wanted to be a board member if he is an adult.

Jeremiah Simmons – He has been coaching in YO for four years. He has seen the ins and outs of the program from a coaching perspective. When a team has 13 players, only 9 of them can really play at a decent level. He wants to play in Atlantic league. YO needs to combine to one team. Kids learn from the competition aspect of youth sports. If you do not have to compete for a spot, you are not learning. He hopes the Atlantic league can work on their weight restriction bylaw. He looks forward to coaching this season.

Bayta Owens – On Jen Shaw’s comments, AJ is 21 years of age. Allison Madamba is 19 and has put so much into this organization. She deserves to be a board member. We did not hold nominations in a way to stack the board. There is no nepotism on the board as Mr. Cicchino stated.

Chasity Branca – The Recreation Commission is going to have to do this meeting all over again. The Commission is picking and choosing their issues. Everything is in the minutes. She is going to further review the minutes and come back again. She stated that this was a closed meeting. Chairperson Rispoli stated that all of our meetings are open, the public is always welcome.

Ted Sanchious – He feels compelled to speak tonight. He has lived in EHT for 13 years and involved in sports all his life. He understands sports and draws from a great deal of personal experience in athletics. When he transitioned from the PAL program to YO, he thought everything was fantastic. There has been a lot of talk about YO Family. The past few years, things have changed. His son has experienced first-hand the negative repercussions of a small roster size. The promise of the program has to be about the kids. He has seen a degradation of the program over time. Some kids do not get their fair chance. Kids are the priority. We have to coach and treat all the kids fairly. This is the fundamental role of the organization. We should take care of the kids. We should do one team at each level of play. We need to change as an organization. The focus must be what is in the best interest of the kids. Whatever the decision is, the leadership of the organization needs to change. We need to embrace change.

Dan Wodczak – He coached the JV team with Kevin Stetser. We need to go to one team. We do not have the numbers. His son would sometimes be forced to play four different positions in a game. His son is considering playing elsewhere. We need to run these teams the right way. YO has to get better.

Aaron Carrington – Assistant coach on the Pee Wee level. Some practices had 12 - 14 kids. Kids who were hurt were forced to play in games. We need higher numbers and he does not want kids to have to go both ways. We need to take the time to develop talent. Kids who play line in YO cannot be on the line in high school. More numbers means more safety. There has been favoritism on who gets to play.

Bud Brubaker – Head coach of Cape JV team. YO has been discussing the possibility of one team for years. At this point, we can play on one team. If we do combine the teams, teams may be at 40 players on roster. It is time to move to one team. It is the right thing to do. As far as the perception of nepotism on the board, we need more participation from the parents of our organization. Often we have not had other people to choose from for nominations. We need more parents involved. There are a million rumors out there. People think the YO board is being taken over. Rumors need to stop being spread.

Christine Gras – Let us discuss what the actions of the Recreation Commission actually are. We have formed a coaching selection committee. Our number one goal is to protect the kids of our Township. I would love to see our YO football players move on to EHT H.S. and be successful. Our goal is provide guidance to YO and make the coaching selection process legitimate. I will not be swayed in my vote for a head coach by anyone. The coaches are the ones who have the most contact and most impact with the players. We want out in 2-3 years, we have no desire to be involved forever. We do not want to make all the YO decisions. We are reacting to all the parents who have to come us in recent years with their concerns. We have set a committee of five. We will make our best vote, and then move on. There should be 25-35 kids on each team. Lastly, we encourage the YO board to invite people in and be more open to ideas.

Dominic Branca – The letter referring to an intoxicated coach on the field is old news. That situation was handled. Dominic spoke with the coach 3 days later. The coach told me he was not drunk. In reference to a State Police investigation of their financials, there was an in-house audit. A report was filed with EHT PD who conducted an audit. The State Police found no money missing. The A.C. Prosecutor was not notified. The matter is over. YO has a good board. Have faith in them as a board. Let the board do their job. Don’t be big government on them. Don’t step on them.

Laura Stetser – Her son Jack Stetser has played in the program for four years. The concern of everyone at all times should be for the children. Times have changed and roster sizes have reduced. Proper practices must be held for the teams to be successful. One team at a level and proper coaching is paramount. Coaches need to be properly trained. If we go to one team, we will see better practices and better coaching. If we go to one team, it would help field conditions as well. She fully supports one team.

Brian Wright – I did not plan to talk tonight. He is a coach and a board member. He has been in YO since he was a little kid. Has been on the board for two years. He has no family or siblings on the board. It is important to prepare the YO player to play at the next level. It is not happening here currently. He has been told by board members who to vote for as head coaches. He has been in meetings where bylaws were clearly broken. He is over the drama. He wants people in this room to put their pride aside and do the right thing. It's about the kids. It's not working now. We need to figure it out. The kids are not being prepared. We want to get back to the YO pride that used to exist.

Luis Mendez – He has volunteered in YO program for 11 years. Different members have come and gone. It is not true that the YO board is doing a bad job. The Recreation Commission is not down there helping. He was a board member and coordinator. Being a “yes” man causes problems. We need a difference of opinions. The committee that wants to be involved now have not been down there. They don't know the coaches. They aren't out there watching. He read all the minutes. A vote of no confidence is a frown upon YO. How can we approve a change in June when the season is around the corner? He scrimmages teams from Atlantic. Many kids are way over 200 pounds. Proper channels must be gone through. It is too late for change. There are Roberts Rules to follow, bylaws are changed after two meetings.

Tom Crowell – He has lived in EHT 7 years. He coached taxi teams for 3 seasons. He knows six or seven kids right now that are ready to jump ship. He is from the D.C. area. His father is a coach. There is a division and lack of comradery within YO. One team will help the comradery and make EHT a football powerhouse.

Gene Simeon – He had a long career playing football. He understands the idea of one team. They will be more together when they get to high school. Thirteen kids at a practice is a challenge. He has seen good practices. He has two boys in the program. Some parents will complain that their kids will not play, but in life, you need to compete. Some kids don't belong on the field. Coaches have to put kids first. His kids had the pleasure of playing for Bud and Luis in the Cape league. YO needs to make good decisions for the kids and pick a qualified coach.

Michele Zinckgraf – She does not have a child playing in YO currently. She is a lifelong EHT resident. EHT was great back in the day. It's about the kids. The adults need to remember that. Let's bring YO back to what it used to be.

Marquay Cherry – He has been in EHT for 30 years. One team sounds good but will lead to problems down the road. If we don't have a program for the “filler” kids, we will lose them down the road. Coaching changes happen over the years. Favoritism and nepotism on the board is part of life. We have some kids in the program that are terrible at football. If you don't have a plan, you plan to fail

Helen Ginis – Spoke at commission meeting last week. As a board member, she attests there are issues on the board. It's hard for 13-year-old boys to lose weight. YO needs to play in the Cape league. It is not fair to the boys who will be too big on Atlantic. Being in the Atlantic league will force boys to play the wrong position. Cape league will be best to allow the larger kids to play.

Tracey Crosson – There needs to be one team where all the kids can play.

Christine Gras – The Recreation Commission is not deciding which league to play in.

Online registration was discussed. Toni Rispoli suggested that online registration needs to begin immediately. She recommends YO hold a meeting right away. The Recreation Commission voted unanimously for the move to one team.

Toni Rispoli asked Christine Gras to summarize our plans for the coaching selection committee.

Jen Shaw – who chose the five members of the coaching selection committee.

Toni Rispoli – The Recreation Commission chose their committee members. YO can choose their two people who will sit on the committee.

Jen Shaw stated that she has a problem with the people the Commission has selected for the committee.

Christine Gras – Kevin Stetser knows football by far the most of anyone on our Commission. Ms. Gras detailed the process by which we chose the Commission members to be on the committee. She stated that she feels Bud and Denise are good choices for the committee as well. We are ok with YO deciding their two committee members.

Jen Shaw – Bill Warrell knows football very well.

Kevin Stetser – No one in the room has his credentials as it relates to coaching football. He is not a position coach, in addition to being the head coach, at the high school. He leads people and leads a process. He knows he needs to win more at the high school and that he can be too assertive at times. Playing the game of football correctly in EHT at the youth level is his only goal. Coaches need to attend all the coaching clinics to further their development as coaches. His only motivation is to make football better.

Christine Gras – Kevin has the integrity to keep kids safe. He is not going to overturn any board decisions. Come and talk with him about his thoughts on the process. The cheerleading side of the board should not be selecting football coaches. The same goes for football members of board should not select cheer coaches.

Luis Mendez states that the problem is the team across town.

Kevin Stetser stated that Elite only had three EHT kids on a team roster. There will not be a large influx of kids into YO. He fully welcomes all the players from Elite joining YO at a time the program is set to improve.

An argument ensued. Mr. Mendez referred to someone on the Commission as being a dictator. He stated that Ms. Rispoli knows nothing about football. Mr. Mendez began to yell at the Commissioners, used curse words, and left the room.

Dominic Branca asked Kevin Stetser if he has offered anyone in this room a coaching position.

Kevin Stetser – I am one vote on the subcommittee. I do not want to be a football czar. He does not have the authority to offer coaching positions to anyone. He was not going to sit back and do nothing. Coaches have not been chosen. I am just 1/5 of the process. If things are fixed in YO, players from Elite will join with us. We may still have two teams at a level if enough kids sign up.

Christine Gras- the YO board will have to be reduced. YO will have to decide how.

Jen Shaw – People need to understand that sports rules and times have changed over the years.

Dorothy stated there is a lot of uncertainty over the season if it will even be held. Between the two leagues, only one has a cheer organization. If we are in Cape, there is no cheer.

It was clarified that there is cheer in the Cape league.

Marquay Cherry – We need to go out and recruit kids to form two teams. Get the word out!

Chasity Branca stated that cheer girls bring in more money into the organization. We are not thinking of the girls who do cheer.

Toni Rispoli stated that YO could consider a drill team if they go to one team. That is a cheer decision, not a Recreation Commission decision.

Jerry Cross- the organization has gone downhill.

Lisa Kaelble – She is not going to make her son lose weight to play football. When will we decide which league we will be playing in.

Christine Gras – She recommends YO hold a meeting on this. If we have 60-70 kids, two teams can be formed. We have to start somewhere with the one team.

Bayta Owens – She has an issue with meetings being held in the community center. She runs the stand in the evening and cannot make it over to the Community Center.

Michele Zinkgraf – She appreciates how Kevin is giving his time to the YO program and wishes more high school coaches would get involved in youth sports.

Recreation Commission Chair Toni Rispoli closed discussion under new business.

**VII. Closed Session**

Authorizing the Recreation Commission to convene into a Closed Executive Session to discuss matters which may involve personnel and/or legal matters. Recreation Commission did not convene into Closed Session.

**VIII. Public Comment**

None.

**IX. Adjournment**

<b>Motion</b>	<b>To adjourn the June 17, 2020 special meeting of the Recreation Commission meeting at 9:43 p.m.</b> Motion made by Christine Gras Seconded by Bill Warrell
<b>Vote</b>	All voted in favor. Motion carried 6-0.

*(Minutes as heard by Rick Audet, Director of Parks and Recreation)*

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Toni Rispoli, Chair

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Rick Audet, Director of Parks and Recreation

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These minutes were approved at the July 8, 2020 Recreation Commission Meeting.  
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