

Board of Apportionment & Taxation

City of Ansonia

AMENDED

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ANSONIA, CONNECTICUT

The Board of Apportionment & Taxation of the City of Ansonia held their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 6, 2016 in the Aldermanic Chambers of Ansonia City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to consider requests for new appropriations where funds are available to various departments. And any other business to come before said Board.

**Members Present**

Mr. Cassetti  
Mr. Lopez  
Mr. Smerznak  
Mr. King

**Members Absent**

Ms. Blackwell  
Mr. Duffus  
Mr. Veillette

The Board rose for the Pledge of Allegiance, the record shows 4 members present.

Mr. Smerznak made a motion to accept the call of the meeting. Mr. Lopez seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (4 yes)

**Public Session**

**Ms. Beverly Tidmarsh, Chairwoman School Building Commission**

Ms. Tidmarsh requested the Board consider the communication before them this evening regarding the portable classrooms at Mead School. The approval of funding is currently in process at the State level, the School Building Commission needs approve by BOAT and the Board of Aldermen in order to have the project completed by the beginning of the school year 2017-2018. The goal is to bring some of the Special Education Children back into the district.

**Ms. Alison Rubelmann, Director Ansonia Nature Center**

Ms. Rubelmann wished to present to the Board the Nature Center's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2015-2016. The combined value and real income is \$311,955.40. Ms. Rubelmann requested the Board to place this on file for the record.

No one else requested to address the Board. The public session was closed at 7:10 P.M.

**Minutes August 1, 2016**

Mr. Cassetti made a motion to accept the minutes from the August 1, 2016 meeting and place them on file. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lopez. The motion was approved. (4 yes)

**Communication #1 Police Department \$1,016**

Mr. Smerznak made a motion to accept the increase of the revenue line item #2-001-0307-11-010-0009 Animal Care in the amount of \$1,016 and the expense line item 1-001-0301-12-614-0007 Animal Care in the amount of \$1,016. Mr. Cassetti seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (4 yes)

**Late Communication #2 Cultural Commission \$7,400**

Mr. Smerznak made a motion to table the request from the Cultural Commission at this time, it can be readdressed at the October meeting if someone is present to answer the Board's questions. Mr. Lopez seconded the motion. The motion was approved, the request was tabled. (4 yes)

**Communication #3 Nature Center \$2,000**

Mr. Smerznak made a motion to accept the revenue and expense line item for the Nature Center in the amount of \$2,000 for the Turtle Shell Fund, this will cover the purchase of the first Kiosk Education Station for a self guide tour. The revenue line item 2-001-0305-17-010-0223 Turtle Shell Fund \$2,000 the expense line item 1-001-0850-11-800-0223 Turtle Shell Fund \$2,000. Mr. Lopez seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (4 yes)

**Communication #4 School Building Commission Portable Classroom Project**

Ms. Tidmarsh explained that 6 portable classrooms, 2 bathrooms and a storage closet will be placed in the back of Mead School. Additional parking is being considered on the Referendum in November. The State Funding for the project is a reimbursable rate of 77.5%. The only portion of the project not guaranteed consideration at this time is \$365,424. In order for the project to be completed by the beginning of the next school year 2017-2018 the Commission needs BOAT's and the Board of Aldermen's approval to proceed.

Mr. Lopez made a motion to authorize the School Building Commission to proceed with the portable classroom project, with the knowledge that the \$365,424 has not yet to date been approved by the State of Connecticut. Mr. Smerznak seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (4yes)

With no other business to come before said Board Mr. Smerznak made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Cassetti seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (4 yes)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Duclos  
Secretary Board of Apportionment & Taxation

Att: Nature Center Annual Report 2015-2016

**Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center**

10 Deerfield Lane

Ansonia, CT 06401



Annual Report

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Fiscal Year July 01, 2015 – June 30, 2016

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center is to foster an ethic of environmental stewardship that will connect our communities to the natural world of the Lower Naugatuck River Valley, and balance the demand for recreation with the need for conservation. The Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center, now in its 39<sup>th</sup> year, has been committed to improving the quality of life for Ansonia residents and visitors since November of 1977.

This annual report provides a brief overview of the activities conducted during the last fiscal year. In addition to the Schumacher Pavilion (Visitor Center) and the Redwing Pond House, our park encompasses 146.5 acres of forest land, several wetland areas and old fields as well as community garden plots, three ball fields, a large playscape, the old red barn (once the milk house), and two picnic pavilions. Fortunately the extension to the Naugatuck State Forest added another 600 acres of open space adjacent to our city park. We hope you are a regular visitor to this unique facility and we encourage you to attend and monitor the wide variety of nature and recreation programs offered throughout the year in our city's largest park.

**Volunteers, Support Organizations and other current Collaborations**

**The Friends of the Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center, Inc.**, a 501c3 membership group, provides volunteer and financial support for the park's daily activities – especially for our animal ambassadors and educational programs as well as special events with proceeds from the Nature Store, memberships, various fundraisers and donations from the public. This past year, the Friends received awards from Katharine Matthies Foundation, Give Greater, the United Way, the Frey Foundation, the Wirth Family Foundation, the Clorox Foundation, Hamden and Seymour Rotary Clubs, Ion Bank Foundation, and Wild Ones. Each year the Friends help to organize and staff several Nature Center events, such as the annual Earth Day Celebration, the Autumn Fest, and the Maple Festival. Last year the Friends supported the Ansonia Harvest Festival on Main Street, the annual Martin Luther King Day event at the Yale Peabody Museum. Also attended were the Play and Learn Fair at Warsaw Park, the Ansonia School Readiness open house at Prendergast School. Their attendance also provided a presence at the Massaro Community Farm Family Day in Woodbridge.



Working collaborations exist with the Ansonia High School Life Skills program, Naugatuck River Revival Group, Food Corps, New Haven Astronomical Society, Connecticut Outdoor Environmental Education Association, Northeast Environmental Educators Association, The CT Beekeepers Association, The Valley United Way Corporate Volunteer Council, The Kennedy Center, State of CT Kellogg Environmental Center, The Audubon Society of Connecticut, The Valley Arts Council, The Derby Historical Society, Hammonasset State Park, A Place Called Hope, and New Haven Bird Club.

Our park has been the beneficiary of scout and 4-H group work days, Eagle Scout projects, Amity High School interns, and corporate work parties. This summer the park was selected to be part of the "Week of Caring" by the Valley United Way Corporate Volunteer Council.

Hundreds of volunteers worked hard in the summer heat on our trails and in our gardens from Target, UI, Unilever, Prudential Insurance, and Homewood Suites Hilton. The "Big Build" playground project was the largest corporate project to date it was a 3 day volunteer extravaganza. We give a huge thanks to the very generous Basement Systems who donated \$170,000 in labor and materials.

In addition, Nonnewaug High School students and our own Jr. Rangers completed several park projects. These youth and adult volunteers provide a significant amount of community service, as well as acquiring hands on skills with an emphasis on science and the environment which we hope will be replicated at home, at school and in the work place. Our animal care and ambassador program has been extremely fortunate in benefiting from the pro-bono services of Countryside Veterinary Hospital, Bethany Veterinary Hospital, and Stone Veterinary Clinic.

**Park Programs**

In addition to Ansonia's public elementary schools, and the middle and high schools, the "Charger Club" after school program, and Ansonia School Readiness students and teachers, our educational efforts include programs provided to hundreds of other public and private school classes, area YMCAs, many special needs clients, scouts and their leaders, and home-school classes for all ages. We also mentor pre-school tots and their caregivers, Jr. Rangers, and a wide variety of other weekend and evening programs geared for all age levels during all twelve months of the year. Our one telephone line is busy all day with inquiries regarding program information, natural history questions about plant and animal encounters, and assistance advice for injured and orphaned wildlife. Families, schools, scout groups, as well as, seniors attend classes and programs. Volunteers donate their time nearly every day throughout the year. Community service hours are provided by church and school services along with court mandated workers. Our staff and volunteers also provide outreach and an important Nature Center presence at conferences, local fairs and festivals, public hearings, and meetings as they consistently promote environmental awareness, recreational opportunities and natural history education where and whenever possible.

With the help of volunteers and the Friends of John Adzima a special day was planned and carried out in honor of John's life-long commitment to children and the environment. On that day preschoolers from the School Readiness program learned about turtles, Redwing Pond, how to plant seeds and pick strawberries, and made a nature craft to take home. Before their bus departed, we all enjoyed a snack of fresh strawberry shortcake and whipped cream!

Our beloved facility is a local landmark, and has much to offer visitors. There is a tremendous amount of goodwill embedded in the stone walls and trails of the ANRC, in the memories and hearts of the people who have come here for decades. They come for entertainment, recreation and the peace of mind that only being in nature brings. We have some serious issues however. Funding is always at the forefront, ahead of facility upkeep and even programming. The demand for programs has increased but we do not have the resources to accommodate all requests.

It is time to take the ANRC into the 21st century. Let's envision what the ANRC could become in the years ahead, in a way that enfolds our past with the future. All organizations must grow. STEM education, heralds a new focus in education around the world. During the last half century, a solid Liberal Arts education was a path towards a good job, a broad world view, and prosperity. That has changed, and now students need skills and education that will move them into career paths within technical fields. STEM education is the skills and knowledge needed for the years ahead. It is so vital to our economy to have a well-trained workforce that government and corporations are willing to invest in training, enrichment and in education in these fields. The ANRC is uniquely positioned to offer some of this training, and to a student population that is performing measurably below standards.

**Grants**

At the close of the fiscal year \$2,450.00 in grant funding from IMLS Museum Community Round Trip Project. Family programming is being supported by the IMLS. Environmental education has been supported by a \$1,250.00 grant from the Connecticut Ornithological Association and \$170,000.00 donated in labor and materials by Larry Janesky's Basement Systems for our new playground.

The Nature and Recreation Center received a Connecticut Economic Development grant of \$20,725.00 in order to install a ventilation system in the Schumacher Pavilion (visitor center). Now our building which has air conditioning and makes it very comfortable during the summer months. We also received was a \$9,000.00 grant from the CT Watershed Fund to provide informational exhibits about storm water management in the most environmentally-friendly way for our new planned eco-friendly parking lot in Spring 2017.

**Park Utilization**

A summary of the recorded activities and subsequent participation, as advertised through the Nature Center's publications, such as the seasonal Calendar of Events and various media venues, is listed below for your review. However, since there is no entrance fee or visitor counting mechanism in the park, no attempt has been made to record the numbers of independent and casual visitors, the public's use of the ball fields, playgrounds, community gardens or nature trails. A best guess is that our park hosts between 20 to 35 thousand visitors per year.

The staff at the Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center and the Friends' Board of Directors sincerely thank you for your support during the past year, and look forward to an ongoing working relationship with the city's administration and volunteers.

<u>Number of Educational Presentations</u>	<u>Participation</u>	<u>Volunteer Services</u>	<u>Values</u>
35 Nature Days classes	410	2597 Hours donated by adults	
227 School Classes	4189	Valued at \$15.00/hr.	\$38,955.00
157 Family and Adult Programs	3675		
14 Outreach Presentations	<u>23,145</u>	732 Hours donated by youth	
		Valued at \$8.70/hr.	<u>\$6,368.40</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>31,419</b>	<b>Total:</b>	
 <u>Additional Facility Use</u>		Donated Veterinary Services	\$6,500.00
205 Meetings for Adults and Children	2272		
41 Picnic Pavilion Reservations	<u>2090</u>		
	<b>4362</b>		
 <u>Wildlife Rehabilitation Program</u>		<b>Free Park Use and Classes (not subject to fees)</b>	
Rehabilitation Animals Presented (1/15-12/15)	152	Ans. Public Schools In-kind services	\$21,416.00
Telephone Inquiries and Assists	<u>3000</u>		
	<b>3152</b>		
<b>Combined Total</b>	<b>38,933</b>		
		<b>Combined Total Value</b>	<b>\$73,239.40</b>
 <u>Funding</u>	<u>Income</u>		
Program Fees presented to the City Treasur	\$19,857.00		
Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center Grants	<u>\$173,800.00</u>	Respectfully Submitted: <i>Alison M. Rubelmann</i>	
F.A.N.C.I. Grants	<u>\$45,059.00</u>	Alison Rubelmann, Director	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$238,716.00</b>		

**Combined Value and Real Income - \$311,955.40**