

Shelburne Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes for 12-10-25

Attending: members Dan Post, Diana Hardina, Norman Beebe, and Stefan Topolski, Cowell Director Grace Thorne, and guests Andrea Cummings, Greg Krause, Tom Johnson, Lisa Greaney, Ann Kitson, and Thomas Rabideau

1--- Call to order

- * Dan appointed secretary pro-tem.
- * November 14th meeting minutes approved.

2--- Updates/reports/program check-ins

* Cowell Director Report – see attached report. The birthday party rental from 12/6 left the gym dirty. This was not the first time this has happened. We discussed the need for a rental contract for renters clearly listing the responsibilities they agree to, and the penalties for not complying. Diana will re-write a contract she received from a neighboring town for our next meeting. We agree to immediately require a \$25 security deposit for all one-time rentals. If renters pay by check, they will be asked to write two checks one for the rental fee and the other for the \$25 security deposit.

* Cowell Youth Winter Program (including Friday night possibilities) – grades 3-4 and 5-6 well attended, grades 1-2 and kindergarten not well attended. Diana will work on getting the word out at BSE and Colrain. Diana had a conversation with the Girl Scouts about using the Friday night slot maybe once a month. We discuss the Girl Scouts as a members only group is not the ideal use of the Friday night slot. Still, we like the idea of the Girl Scouts using the gym and given nothing is currently scheduled for that time we agree to have Diana work out with them a day they would like

* Basketball – Tuesday group averaging 8 to 11 participants, we're not sure about the Thursday group. Given that when Diana and Norman checked in with this group back in June there were concerns about the size getting too large after Thanksgiving, it's decided that Diana, Norman and Grace will check-in with them tomorrow night.

* Pickleball – Mary Lou's final report is attached.

* Volleyball – turnout is still inconsistent. Stefan is still hopeful and thinks more advertising could help. Diana will put something together.

3--- Ongoing/new business

* CPA representative – Norman appointed.

* Skating – Tom Johnson presented his research about a refrigerated ice-skating rink. A 44' x 80' rink with boards, and delivery and set-up would be \$127,000. The cost of electricity for a comparable set up in Chicago's climate is about \$1000 a month. A site would be needed for the rink, and it would need to be set up, broken down, and stored every year. Concerns were raised about the initial cost, the ongoing maintenance costs, the electricity costs, the labor required every year, the need to clear the rink of snow, and the short duration of possible use due to the warmer and warmer winters. The possibility of paying for the rink by fundraising was discussed. Tom said that he would continue his research and present his findings at the January meeting.

* Pickleball changes – in response to the committee's request for new directors for the Pickleball program, due to the resignations of the current directors, Lisa Greaney, Ann Kitson, and Thomas Rabideau. came to say that they were interested in forming a leadership team to run the program. The committee was very much in favor of this proposal. The committee communicated its desire to make sure that no one was excluded from play due to the sign-up process, and that there be some sessions when players could drop in without signing up. The committee also asked that Shelburne residents be given preference in the sign-up process, which could be achieved by making the first 48 hours of sign-up available to Shelburne residents only. The leadership team agreed to consider these guidelines. They will also be reaching out to the pickleball community to see what they want. The committee appointed Dan to be a liaison to the pickleball leadership team. The leadership team will meet with Dan and discuss changes they could make to address the concerns raised. It's agreed that changes to the sign-up system and the schedule (on a trial basis) can start this month provided that any changes to the schedule be cleared by Norman. Dan will report back to the committee in January on the changes the leadership team has tried and if they would like changes to the schedule.

* TAB room – Stefan said someone had disassembled the volleyball poles from the stanchions and put them in the back. The hoops for the younger kids were also disassembled.

* Program policies/expectations – Dan had put together something for us to consider but it's late so we'll look at it in January.

4--- Request for future agenda items – Stefan would like us to set up a meeting to deal with issues in the Cowell that continue to go unaddressed. The list has grown since John stepped down as Cowell Director.

5--- Next regularly scheduled meeting – Wednesday, January 14th at 6:30 pm

Date: December 10, 2025

Submitted By Grace Thorne, Cowell Gym Director

Subject: December 2025 Report to the Cowell Gymnasium Recreation Committee

1. The mini splits in the gym are not pumping out air hotter than 54 degrees. On 12/9 someone came to set up diagnostic equipment. For now we are supplementing with oil which we will be getting an oil delivery every 72 hours until the mini splits are back running.
2. John Walsh is still overseeing the blinds problem in the gym.
3. The Franklin Tech electrical department came to take a look at the building and see if it's something they would like to take on as an educational opportunity doing minor repairs. We are still waiting for a response from them.
4. The birthday party rental on 12/6 did not leave the gym the way they found it. How do we navigate rentals leaving the gym in poor shape? Where to put tables in the lobby for parties?
5. The East doors in the gym have been getting stuck open. Can we communicate to programs to pull them shut before they leave?
6. The gym floor is very dusty and slippery. Do we have a way of cleaning the floor to eliminate dust?
7. There are some concerns about door code being well known to many. A change in code will happen next week and the program leaders will be notified.

Thank you always,

Grace Thorne

Director Cowell Gymnasium

Date: December 9, 2025

To: Shelburne Recreation Committee

From: Mary Lou Gallup & Jay Readinger
Shelburne Pickleball Program

Re: Pickleball Program Report
Rec. Comm. Meeting December 10, 2025

Pickleball currently has sessions 6 days per week (none Friday). Four morning sessions, 9-11 AM Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday and two evening sessions 7-9 Monday and Wednesday. All sessions are indoors at this time. There has not been sufficient demand to add second sessions.

Among our current group of regular players, we have many dealing with significant health and family issues as well as injuries, so players are playing less. Since moving indoors for all sessions (11/2) there have been 880 signups to play (excludes waitlisted players) and 19 people who remained on the waitlist i.e. did not get into sessions over 6 weeks. Our stated policy is that if there are 7 or more on the waitlist we may add a second session. In the 2024/25 indoor season we regularly had 2nd sessions on Saturday, Sunday and Thursday with a second session added occasionally on Tuesdays.

Date	# Players	Retired or Flexible Schedule	Working Not Flexible
5-Nov	1	0	1
9-Nov	1	1	
10-Nov	2	1	1
11-Nov	3	3	
12-Nov	2	2	
18-Nov	4	4	
30-Nov	5	5	
4-Dec	1	1	
Total	19	17	2

As we stated in previous reports, volunteering is asked of all players with a few exceptions. Volunteering is an important component of players being fully engaged in the program, getting to know the ins and outs of the equipment, spreading the workload and so much more. Most people generally volunteer; some take a special reminder/invite. Most are happy to do it and understand the need. We suggest a player volunteers once for every 5-6 times they play. This guideline takes into account our knowledge of those who can, those who can't, those who have

been asked not to and those who don't. The calculation is not an exact science but seems to be working well for the most part. There are many ways to establish a guideline and none of them are perfect. So, we established once for every 5-6 times a person plays.

Here are some examples of how we established this number. Please bear in mind this is not an exact science, and this specific example was started one week and finished later so numbers change slightly, but insignificantly:

1	Calculation of Number of Volunteer Spots for Sessions Between 8/31 and 12/4	
	82	# of Sessions Between 8/31 and 12/4 from Signup Genius
	2	# of Volunteer Slots for each session
	164	# total volunteers slots
2	Calculation of # of Volunteer Slots each player should cover based on total # of unique players each player should cover based on signed up between 8/31 and 12/4	
	75	# of unique players signed up between 8/31 and 12/4 from Signup Genius
	164	# total volunteers slots
	2.19	# of of volunteer slots each player should cover if using simple math
3	Reality	
	45	In reality we only have about 45 regular players
	164	# total volunteers slots
	3.64	# of of volunteer slots each player should cover if using simple math
4	Using the actual number of player signups during the period might be more accurate to calculate the	
	880	Actual # of player signups during the entire period (8/31-12/13) from Signup Genius
	164	# total volunteers slots
	5.37	# of of volunteer slots each player should cover if using simple math

Use your own calculations if you like, slice it and dice it how you like, the goal is still the same, to have as much participation as possible from the across the pickleball player community.

We have not had any lessons since September. Hopefully some interested players can step up to help. There is some interest in skill level play sessions to accommodate both lower level/recreational players and higher level/more competitive players. This structure will have to be worked out with those who take over management of the program. We have never found skill level breakouts to be successful with such small numbers of players. The complexities of keeping the group thinking of themselves as a group is difficult to manage and no matter how you slice and dice the program going forward, any division by skill, competitive aptitude, old, young, etc. can create problems. Shelburne Falls has a positive uniqueness amongst all the play settings in the area because of its cohesiveness. sense of community and player volunteerism.

Current lay of the land- local pickleball

Current Local Indoor Winter Pickleball Programs				
Town or Non-Profit Program	# sessions per week	Signup Required	Skill Level Sessions	Limit on # of Players Per Session
Shelburne	6	yes	no	yes
Franklin County YMCA	12 (15 starting in January)	yes	most/ by session	yes
Hatfield Elementary	9	yes	most/ by session	yes
Conway Recreation	8	yes	most/ by session	yes
Northfield Recreation	2	no	no	no
Heath Elementary	3	yes	some	yes
Charlemont	1	no	no	no
Hadley	1	yes	no	yes

There are 3 for profit facilities that local players utilize, Bay Road at Hampshire College, Hatfield Rally House (just opening this week) and “DERP” Deerfield Railyard. Bay Road and Hatfield Rally House are membership based, have skill level play, require signup and limit numbers. DERP is operating illegally in Deerfield and is open to all with drop in play. There are also available play options at some churches, the YMCA and All Sports as you go further toward Hadley/Northampton. Their models do not vary much from those in the chart above.

In September we requested approval for purchasing the paid version of Signup Genius. We did not receive a response and have put in and been reimbursed for 2 months. We will put in for the 3rd month which will take the pickleball program through December 23, 2025.

Given the unreliability of the heating system in the gym it would be helpful to provide the gym’s remote temperature monitoring website information to the pickleball program managers. This would allow them to alert players to unusually low gym temperatures prior to a session so they could plan. I requested the information from John Walsh and have not received it. It would be good for the new program managers to have access to be able to inform players.

Respectfully,
Mary Lou Gallup & Jay Readinger