

S. Tahoe changing how it handles donations

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe is getting out of the GIFTing business.

GIFT – Great Ideas For Tahoe – was started in 2001 by the city’s parks and recreation employees as a means to take donations and then spend them how the donor chose. In 2002, the council, acting as GIFT’s board of directors, took over the job of running it so there would be more oversight. Now it is about to be dissolved.

On Tuesday, the council divvied up the remaining \$37,282.59.

“The city can always receive donations and we’ll set something up that is organized more appropriately,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Funds will be spent according to their original purpose; we expect by years end.”

Reasons to dissolve GIFT include much of the money has been sitting there for years, improvements will be made to city entities and staff time will be reduced by not needing to administer the accounts.

Some of the money is somewhat restricted in how it can be spent based on the giver’s desires. Other dollars were given with broad interpretation – such as youth sports.

One category is for the children’s memorial. The balance is \$898.71. There was a time when money was used to place markers on the tree for people who could not afford to memorialize their child.

The staff’s recommendation was to use the fund for a bench at the site. That is going to happen with a twist. Kenny Curtzwiler, who last summer was instrumental in getting the

memorial tree refurbished, suggested the council come up with a total of \$2,200 for two benches. He told the council that Tahoe Log Works could build two benches that would complement that tree and install them for that amount.

The council agreed this was a good idea. Permits and other things need to be secured before it is a done deal. The money will go directly to the builder.

Other money will go to the senior center, canine agility park, youth programs and equipment, and ice rink.

In other news from the May 20 meeting:

- On a 3-2 vote, the council decided to leave the sandwich board regulations as they are. Councilmembers JoAnn Conner and Tom Davis wanted to expand the allowable timeframe by 24 hours to start on Fridays at 8am.
- Tahoe Prosperity Center, on which Councilmember Angela Swanson sits, received a \$167,000 grant from the California Public Utility Commission for broadband.
- Councilwoman Brooke Laine and fellow Utah-trekkers gave a lengthy overview on their trip to Park City where they learned about how that mountain town went from being reliant on one industry (mining) to being near bankrupt to being highly regarded. Free transit and politicians with backbones were two of the main takeaways.