

1999 RUTGERS Turfgrass Proceedings



THE NEW JERSEY TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

In Cooperation With

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK

Distributed in cooperation with U.S. Department of Agriculture in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Cooperative Extension work in agriculture, home economics, and 4-H. Zane R. Helsel, Director of Extension. Rutgers Cooperative Extension provides information and educational services to all people without regard to sex, race, color, national origin, disability or handicap, or age. Rutgers Cooperative Extension is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

1999 RUTGERS TURFGRASS PROCEEDINGS

of the

**New Jersey Turfgrass Expo
December 7-9, 1999
Trump Taj Mahal
Atlantic City, New Jersey**

**Volume 31
Published July, 2000**

The Rutgers Turfgrass Proceedings is published yearly by the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, Cook College, Rutgers University in cooperation with the New Jersey Turfgrass Association. The purpose of this document is to provide a forum for the dissemination of information and the exchange of ideas and knowledge. The proceedings provide turfgrass managers, research scientists, extension specialists, and industry personnel with opportunities to communicate with co-workers. Through this forum, these professionals also reach a more general audience, which includes the public. Articles appearing in these proceedings are divided into two sections.

The first section includes lecture notes of papers presented at the 1999 New Jersey Turfgrass Expo. Publication of the New Jersey Turfgrass Expo Notes provides a readily available

source of information covering a wide range of topics. The Expo Notes include technical and popular presentations of importance to the turfgrass industry.

The second section includes research papers containing original research findings and reviews covering selected subjects in turfgrass science. The primary objective of this section is to facilitate the timely dissemination of original turfgrass research for use by the turfgrass industry.

Special thanks are given to those who have submitted papers for this proceedings, to the New Jersey Turfgrass Association for financial assistance, and to those individuals who have provided support to the Rutgers Turf Research Program at Cook College - Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Dr. Ann B. Gould, Editor
Dr. Bruce B. Clarke, Coordinator

BUDGETING: AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT TO ATHLETIC FIELD MAINTENANCE

George Van Haasteren CGM¹

For several years now there has been an explosion in athletic participation, resulting in more field usage and more on-going maintenance. This includes the increase in youth programs that we see developing across the country, the popularity and participation of women in high school, college, and professionally, and even the increasing number of adults over thirty who participate in some type of organized sport.

This increase has had a dramatic impact by requiring new fields to be constructed. Unfortunately, the number of personal injury lawsuits has risen, forcing insurance premiums to sky rocket. This has lead insurance companies to insist on greater uniformity in design and construction of athletic fields and also on the development of a documented maintenance program.

Financial restraints have made it important for today's athletic field managers to look more carefully when evaluating and submitting their budgets, especially when it means less money for repair work and the value of having fields built right the first time. Understanding the areas of budgeting, scheduling, and hiring and training practices can greatly enhance your operations by maintaining safe and playable fields.

ALL THINGS BEGIN AND END WITH A BUDGET

Budgeting is never a happy topic, but it is vital to your survival. Often the budget you have to work with and how you work with the budget determine your destiny. Budgets are used to

perform many functions, and they are not weapons used by the bean counters to harm those who oversee and maintain athletic facilities.

Whether you are the head groundskeeper for a major league facility or a college, or if you are the person in charge of a school or recreation complex, it is important to realize that budgets are required for the efficient running of any operation. Operating within a budget is a very important part of your job. Careful preparation of your budget can be a great asset in building any athletic field manager's credibility.

What is a budget?

To work with a budget, one must understand what a budget is. Budgets are a financial plan and prediction. They should predict what is needed to fund and maintain the fields that you are responsible for within a fiscal year. Budgets are a policy document. In financial terms they state policy by identifying what is and what is not funded. A budget is a definition of operational action. This expresses where the resources that you have are to be allocated, for example, equipment, supplies, renovation, and construction.

Types of budgets.

Depending on the organization that you work for there are different types of budgets that may be used. The three that are most commonly used include:

¹ Director of Grounds, Dwight-Englewood School, 315 E. Palisade Ave., Englewood, NJ 07631-0489.

Zero base budgeting. This is a budget that became popular during President Carter's administration. The idea behind this type of budget is for the manager to start with nothing and justify everything. This usually focuses on your output and is similar to a program budget.

Line item budgeting. This type of budget has a distinct line item for categories of expenses such as wages, supplies, equipment, contracted services, etc. This budget is normally broken down into two distinct areas that include personnel services (wages and salaries plus fringe costs) and OTPS (other than personnel service), which includes supplies, contracts, equipment, etc.

Program budgeting. With this type of budget you must define the cost of output for each program. Programs that are included may be field maintenance, lighting, events, and equipment (both maintenance and replacement or renewal).

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A BUDGET (Inventory Everything)

It is extremely important that you know all the areas you service and maintain regarding athletic maintenance. Be familiar with all the locations that your department will be supporting. Find out if any new ones will appear. You should also know the schedules of the programs you are responsible for supporting. This may easily be accomplished by having your lines of communication open and by having your athletic or recreation directors provide you with a list of daily, weekly, and monthly schedules.

Personnel.

Your work force can be your greatest asset, but it is important that you know the costs of the personnel, including fringe costs for those who maintain your athletic field complex. You must look at the base rate of pay for each employee plus include any predicted overtime. Incorporate

the costs of seasonal or part time help and include the benefits as a percentage of labor.

Equipment.

While work loads are increasing, chances are your staff is not. In many cases it is not a personnel problem, but an equipment problem. It is important to evaluate the equipment you have to maintain your athletic fields. It is also critical whether or not there is a good match between the equipment you have available and the staff you have to operate the equipment.

Look at the age of your equipment. Is there a lot of downtime? How useful is the equipment that you have? Purchase or lease equipment based on the areas you maintain plus the personnel you have to utilize the equipment. Rent equipment for special projects or consider outsourcing when needed.

The fields that you are responsible for maintaining.

How many fields are you responsible for maintaining? Do you know the square footage or acreage of the fields you are responsible for? Knowing these few key things can greatly have an impact on your operation and on your budget.

The programs you need to support.

Are your fields being constantly put to the test by the different programs that use them? Are your practice sites also being used as your game fields? Are there different programs that are utilizing only one site? All these factors play a considerable role in your efforts to produce and maintain a safe and playable facility.

As I have previously mentioned, the increase and popularity in athletics has led to an increase in field usage. This increase has a dramatic effect on your budget for maintaining your athletic fields.

Schedule maintenance procedures.

If there is one thing for certain, that is that schedules are constantly changing. What may have not been scheduled a month ago by the athletic or recreation director suddenly appears, causing athletic field managers to reschedule their priorities and redirect their efforts for maintenance of their fields.

Weather, added events, and schedule changes all play a pivotal role in maintaining the sites. That is why it is important that the person in charge of the sports fields has up-to-date schedules. It is recommended that the person in charge of the athletic fields either meet with the person responsible for scheduling or be provided with the latest schedule of events. This can save considerable time and money.

KNOW THE COSTS

FTE x Hours x Frequency + Equipment Costs
Capital vs. Operating Costs

In maintaining your sports field, don't just look at what it costs in relationship to hourly wages. There is more to it. When submitting budget proposals, look at the bigger picture. When mowing, lining, or renovating a field, consider the wear and tear on equipment. The cost for gas or paint must be considered. Also consider the cost for purchasing equipment.

Operating budgets reflect the expenditure used to operate and maintain an athletic field or program during the course of a fiscal year. Capital budgets reflect the expenditures that adjust to the assets of the department. Items covered by capital budgets include machinery and large expenses. Rebuilding a field, installing irrigation systems or lights are considered capital budget items.

CALCULATION

Add up what you know about your existing costs and the level of services you provide with

those monies. Add or subtract what you know will change (e.g., retirements, rate change, additional field usage). If program changes are expected, estimate the impact then add or subtract. Question the need for more or less staff and products based on program changes.

Prepare a defense for everything. Ultimately you are the person responsible for the fields that you maintain and care for. Work to meet the expectations of the people you report to. Base your argument on their expectations.

KNOW WHO THE PLAYERS ARE

Mastering the Art of Politics

It is important to know who the players are. Administrators and directors normally oversee the budgets for which you are responsible. Coaches and organizations are constantly requesting services to enhance their own programs. Find out what the guidelines are. If you know that spending cannot exceed a certain percentage, then requesting an unrealistic percentage can be career threatening, unless you have justification and willing participants. Suggest that those who control the purse strings and use your facilities come and see a product of your work and be amazed with your accomplishments.

PROFESSIONALISM

Improve Your Image

Attending workshops, seminars, or classes shows your commitment and dedication to your professional development. The knowledge and information that you bring back to your place of employment will prove to be invaluable and well worth the money spent.

Joining professional organizations such as the Professional Grounds Management Society, Sports Turf Managers, or the New Jersey Turfgrass Association are a few that will increase your networking and improve your knowledge, including your budgeting capabilities.

DOCUMENTATION

Owning Up to Your Weaknesses

Text writing, spreadsheets, keeping daily log reports, and incorporating either pictures or videos—people in our profession are notoriously poor at all of these. Nothing is more persuasive than a well written document. On the other hand, nothing reveals a weakness more quickly than one is poorly written. If you know someone who can help you, ask them. Maintain logs and in-

corporate either pictures or videos to support the programs that you oversee.

WHAT ALL THIS MEANS FOR YOU!

Remember that the best justification for expenditures is high performance, but that is not enough. To be a leader in athletic field maintenance requires that you are knowledgeable of budgeting procedures.