



CITY OF BURBANK
Park, Recreation and Community Services Department
STAFF REPORT

DATE: March 21, 2013

TO: Ken Pulskamp, Interim City Manager

FROM: Judie Wilke, Park, Recreation and Community Services Director

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION PAPER – YEAR ROUND AQUATICS PROGRAMMING

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council consider the information presented and direct staff as appropriate. Should Council desire the implementation of a year round aquatics program, staff requests \$34,569 in recurring funding to address anticipated programmatic costs (Exhibit A).

BACKGROUND

The Park, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Department operates a summer aquatic program that traditionally begins Memorial Day weekend and ends Labor Day weekend. Programming elements include: learn-to-swim classes, lap swim, recreation swim, fitness classes, swim teams and lifeguard training. In anticipation of completing the new Verdugo Aquatic Facility and at Council's request, staff explored the possibility of offering year round aquatics programming while decreasing the need for the General Fund to support future and existing programs.

DISCUSSION

Staff has developed a plan for year round programming at the Verdugo Aquatics facility. The proposed eight month extension will enable the PRCS Department to offer a total of 11 months of aquatics programming; the facility will be closed one month a year during the winter holiday season to allow for annual maintenance.

Staff focused on cost effective measures to deliver the program including: when feasible, staff will schedule two programs concurrently in the pool to maximize use of lifeguards; expanding public-private partnerships; using contract instructors or renting the facility to offer new special interest programs to the community, such as senior aqua fitness classes, scuba diving classes, and fitness boot camps. Staff has also reached out to anyone interested in partnering to utilize the facility for triathlon training, master swim program(s), as well as working with local and private high schools who are interested in developing youth swim and water polo teams. To supplement expanding

traditional aquatics programming, staff has identified several unique unmet needs that not only would benefit the community but could generate revenue. Additionally, rental of the facility for private parties, including corporate events, will be a new revenue generating feature to assist with off-setting programmatic costs (Exhibit B).

Furthermore, the existing fees for all aquatic activities were evaluated and new fees for activities and rentals that were nonexistent were established (Exhibit C). The additional revenue collected will enhance cost recovery, thus reducing the City's General Fund contribution for aquatics. The fees proposed are also in alignment with what other municipal aquatics facilities charge.

This item was discussed at the February 14, 2013 PRCS Board meeting. The Board was in agreement of implementing a year round aquatics program as proposed by staff, as well as supported the programming and fees.

FISCAL IMPACT

Utilizing partnerships, assuming consistent healthy attendance and implementing the proposed modest fee adjustments, the fiscal impact associated with the proposed year round programming of the Verdugo Aquatic facility is \$34,569. The proposed expanded programming will require at least an additional \$160,154 of seasonal part-time staffing and \$20,000 in materials and supplies (total cost \$180,154); however staff believes that the programs and rentals can generate approximately \$145,585 in revenue, thus leaving only a \$34,569 deficit.

Although fully recovering the operating costs would be ideal and may be possible, it is very difficult to make that assertion at this time having never operated the proposed program for a year. It would be prudent to evaluate the operation after one full year in operation and see how much activity the pool receives, and the success of the programming, rentals and partnerships. In addition, there are some extremely valuable programs that should not be expected to recover their costs, such as recreational swim. The PRCS Department would categorize this as a core program, which should remain affordable and be partially subsidized by the General Fund. Trying to recover the cost for this and other core programs would significantly limit individuals' ability to participate and would be counterproductive to the department's goal of providing affordable recreation opportunities to the community. However, as previously stated, with some experience, staff may find that the year round programming is extremely popular and exceeds our revenue projections, thus ultimately recovering all operating costs.

CONCLUSION

In summary, staff has developed a comprehensive and cost efficient plan to offer a year round aquatics program at the new Verdugo Aquatic facility. Via a multi-prong approach of utilizing partnerships, expanding programming, increasing attendance, maximizing the use of the pool, and implementing modest fee adjustments, the projected fiscal impact to the General Fund is \$34,569. Staff is not only committed to re-evaluating the

General Fund subsidy following the first year of operation, but will continuously make adjustments to the program to meet the community's needs.

LIST OF EXHIBITS

- Exhibit A: New Program or Service
- Exhibit B: Aquatics Program Budget Summary
- Exhibit C: Proposed Fee Enhancements and New Fees