



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2009

ITEM NUMBER: _____

SUBJECT: AQUATICS PROGRAMMING AND FEE REVISIONS

DATE: SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

FROM: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES/RECREATION DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: JANA RANSOM, RECREATION MANAGER

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: ROBBY WAITE, ASSISTANT RECREATION
SUPERVISOR 714-327-7561

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve Aquatics programming and staffing reductions sufficient to cover the cost to provide a reduced lap swim and senior aquatics program schedule during the previously approved ten-week closure period (November 23, 2009 through January 17, 2010)
2. Approve changes to the fee structure to charge \$3 for juniors and seniors and establish new annual pass rates of \$300 for adults and \$260 for seniors.

BACKGROUND:

During the budget deliberations for the current fiscal year (FY10), the Aquatics Program budget was reduced by \$32,000. Staff initially recommended a 24-week closure, which was subsequently reduced after reviewing state laws for lifeguarding. City Council approved a 10-week closure from mid-November to mid-January and increased the use fee from \$3 to \$5 per swim. The City Council directed staff to work with facility users to review suggestions to increase facility use and revenue (see Attachment 1, Council Minutes).

Staff committed to trying to shorten the closure period even further and met with a group of interested swimmers in late July. There were several suggestions discussed at that time, many related to staffing, the possibility of other program cuts, looking at ways to increase revenue while not impacting expenditures, and other operational elements. It was suggested that staff look at providing minimal programming through the closure period – just lap swims for instance.

At this meeting, the group also expressed concern with the \$2 per session increase and requested that staff look at a revised fee program as well.

ANALYSIS:

To reduce expenditures, Recreation/Aquatics staff has begun implementation of a reduced schedule for all lifeguards and instructors, which results in fewer staff staying between programs for light maintenance, administrative tasks, registration and other assignments. In addition, time between programs was reduced, some programs with marginal attendance were eliminated (family fun day, junior lifeguards, junior water polo) and lower level staff has been brought in to handle some shifts that had previously been handled by senior staff. The net result is projected

to save sufficient staff resources to cover staffing to carry on most of the lap swim sessions and senior aquatics sessions through the proposed closure period. Staff proposes to hold lap swim sessions weekday mornings and at mid-day and senior aquatics on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Evening and Saturday lap swims are still not funded.

To address revenue, staff presented an annual pass concept that is intended to benefit frequent swimmers. The proposal calls for a roll-back of the single pass rates from the newly established \$5 fee to \$3 per session for juniors (up to age 15) and seniors (55 and older), along with a corresponding discount for multi-use packs (10-pass/20-pass). Annual passes would be offered for adults (\$300 per year) and seniors (\$260 per year). Juniors would not be eligible for annual passes as the number of drop-in programs available for juniors does not work out as a savings over the multi-use pass cost proposed.

The annual pass concept is not new to the region. Several cities including Irvine, Newport Beach and Laguna Niguel already have this type of program in place. It is also common to private and non-profit gyms (24 Hour Fitness and the YMCA). A survey of rates is attached (see Attachment 2).

Staff presented these concepts to the ad hoc aquatics group at a meeting and by email on September 1. Most of those in attendance, and subsequently by email, felt that the proposed annual passes would be very helpful and that they would take advantage of them to offset the single pass rate increase. Many patrons had indicated that the fee increase to \$5 would “drive” them to other pools such as Corona del Mar where the fees are as low as \$2.50 per swim if one purchases a 20-session card – and senior rate is \$1 per session. While the City can’t match that rate, the group was comfortable with the proposed annual pass fees.

At their September 23, 2009 meeting, the Parks and Recreation Commission voted to support the aquatics programming changes that will allow for reduced programming from November 23 to January 17 as well as revising the fee schedule (see Attachment 3, 9/23/09 Parks and Recreation Commission minutes).

The following fees were recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission for Council approval:

- 1 session passes
 - \$5 adult
 - \$3 juniors/seniors
- 10 session passes
 - \$45 adult
 - \$27 juniors/seniors
- 20 session passes
 - \$90 adult
 - \$54 juniors/seniors
- Annual Pass (good for unlimited use of lap swim, family swim, senior aquatics sessions)
 - \$300 adult
 - \$260 seniors

During discussion of this item with the Parks and Recreation Commission, it was suggested that the annual pass fee be lowered to encourage more swimmers to take advantage of the savings the pass provides. However, the swimmers that would likely use the pass the most are those that come during the highest use times. The capacity of lap swim programs is nearly at its maximum for most of the year (the exception being the months of November, December and January). If more swimmers took advantage of the passes, staff is concerned that the demand for access would exceed the available space and time when these programs could be offered. A lower fee for annual passes was not part of the Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation.

In addition to the work of the facility users, staff is working with the management of the Halecrest Pool – a private membership pool – to provide additional swimming opportunities throughout our “minimal programming” period (November 23 to January 17).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternatives to consider:

- 1) Do not make Aquatics Program changes to provide lap swim and senior adult water exercise programs from November 23 through January 17 but approve fee structure changes.
- 2) Make Aquatics Program changes to provide lap swim and senior adult water exercise programs from November 23 through January 17 but do not approve fee structure changes.
- 3) Do not make Aquatics Program changes to provide lap swim and senior adult water exercise programs from November 23 through January 17 and do not approve fee structure changes.

FISCAL REVIEW:

It is anticipated that revenue and expenditures for the proposed Aquatics Program changes will not be significantly different from those approved for the FY10 budget. Staffing costs have been reduced in several areas to provide sufficient coverage during the "minimal programming period".

Increasing the single pass rate to \$5 may or may not generate increased revenue. However, some frequent swimmers have indicated they would swim elsewhere if the single-pass and multi-use pass rates remain at the rates approved in July. By not increasing the single-pass rate for seniors and juniors, and initiating an annual pass, it is anticipated the City could prevent a loss of some revenue.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed the attached Resolution (Attachment 4) as to form and content.

CONCLUSION:

After meeting with swimmers and staff, Recreation staff is prepared to make modifications to programming and staffing sufficient to cover the cost to provide a reduced lap swim and senior aquatics program schedule during the previously approved ten-week closure period (November 23, 2009 through January 17, 2010). The Parks and Recreation Commission supported implementation of these changes.

Additionally, based upon the feedback of the lap swim and senior aquatics program participants, the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends that Council approve revising the fee structure to assess a single session swim fee of \$3 for juniors and seniors, 10 session pass rates of \$45 for adults and \$27 for juniors and seniors, and 20 session pass rates of \$90 for adults and \$54 for juniors and seniors and establishing annual pass rates of \$300 for adults and \$260 for seniors as described in the Fiscal Review contained in this report.

** Signatures on following page **

JANA M. RANSOM
Recreation Manager

STEPHEN N. MANDOKI
Director of Administrative Services

BOBBY YOUNG
Budget Officer

DISTRIBUTION: City Manager
 Lisa McPherson, Recreation Supervisor
 Robby Waite, Assistant Recreation Supervisor
 Cecily Renteria, Recreation Specialist

ATTACHMENTS: 1 [Excerpts from the 06/16/09 City Council Minutes](#)
 2 [Fee Survey](#)
 3 [09/23/09 Park & Recreation Commission Action Agenda](#)
 4 [Resolution](#)

Aquatics Revisions

09/30/09

1:35 pm