

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Richard Meyers, City Manager
SUBJECT: WARREN H. DAUGHERTY AQUATIC CENTER REPORT
DATE: April 22, 2020

Background

On October 1, 2019 the newly renovated Warren H. Daugherty Aquatic Center opened. The new aquatic center is the result of years of design and fundraising. The City made significant contributions to the project to assist with the funding to include a warm water pool in the new facility. The new warm water pool replaces the City's therapy pool located in the Community Center.

Attached is a report on the new Aquatic Center operation. The report covers the first 5 months of operation before it was closed due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Carrie McCasline will be joining the meeting to answer questions and provide a brief summary of the report.


The 2020-21 Proposed Budget will continue a contribution from the City to assist in funding the community programs of the Aquatic Center.

Recommendation

Information item only, no action from Council.

Cost

No Cost



Richard Meyers, City Manager



Cottage Grove City Council Members,

I am excited to be able to share this report with you about our community pool. As with all of South Lane School District, the pool closed on March 13th and will remain closed until the restrictions from the pandemic are lifted. We look forward to being able to serve our community again when it is safe to do so.

This report will highlight the work that we have done at the pool from our opening on October 1, 2019 through March 12, 2020. Data used for this report will only include Nov-Feb, as those are the only full months where both pools were open. We will be using that data to form our budget and programming decisions for 2020-21. While this is not as big of a data set as we would like, it does give us a great place to start.

As you read through the report, it will be divided into sections including:

Goals for 2019-20

Pool Usage

What we have learned

2020-21 Budget highlights

Next Steps

I will try to be as thorough as possible, but please contact me with any questions or comments that you have. We welcome any and all feedback from the Council and from the community.

Carrie McCasline

Pool Manager

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Goals for 2019-20 for Cottage Grove Pool

Prior to the opening of our pool, we decided to use 2019-20 as a transition year. As a staff we came up with the following goals. I will add how we were able to meet those goals.

Hire and train new staff

This was our first priority this fall. After being closed for over a year, several of our lifeguards and instructors had graduated from High School and were no longer available to work at the pool. We had 6 returning Lifeguards and no returning Head Lifeguards. We offered a lifeguarding class and were able to hire and train a great group of new lifeguards.

Our biggest challenge has been finding lifeguards who are able to work dayshift. This continues to be an area we will focus on when we reopen and moving into 2020-21. With the new design and programming at the pool, we needed to increase our staffing for all programs. For instance, with the old pool, we had 2-3 staff members working at a time, but now have to have 3-5 depending on the time of day.

Maintain all School Programs

All South Lane School District swimming programs have continued, included the High School Water Polo and Swim Teams, Elementary School swim lessons, Middle School swim lessons. We also have individual classes from Owl's Nest, the High School community classroom, and a class from Kennedy that use the pool regularly. The biggest change to the school program is that in the old pool, the classes had the whole pool to themselves, but now these classes are sharing the pool with the public during a lap swim time from 9am-1pm. This has been working well as we have designated lanes for the classes or a section of the warm water pool for the younger grades. The only other change is that we are no longer able to offer pool rentals to teachers for their classes since we are open to the public during the day.

Host Regulation Swim Meets Events

One of the driving factors in the design of the new pool was the ability to host swim meets and other events at our pool. We hosted most of the High School Water Polo games and Swim meets at our pool, as all of the teams wanted to come and see the new pool. All of the responses we heard from other teams and coaches were very positive. We also hosted the High School District Meet which was a huge undertaking! We worked with the High School Athletic Director and the SLSD staff to bring in extra seating and to get everything prepared for the meet. In the end we had:

- 232 athletes
- 12 officials
- 30 coaches
- 30 volunteers

And over 250 spectators at our pool at the same time. The pool did not feel crowded, the spectators and swimmers had plenty room and the pool was very visible for the

spectators. The meet was a success. We did learn some things and will implement those for next year.

We also hosted one Cottage Grove Aquatics Swim Club meet before the closure. That meet also went very well and we are looking forward to being able to host more meets in the future.

Increase lap swim/independent exercise hours

With our new facility, we are able to offer more hours that we are open to the public for lap swim and exercise. We used to be open during the school day from 11-12. We are now open during the school day from 9-1pm. We did keep the 11-12 hour as a time where there are no other classes or activities at the pool so all 8 lanes are available for the public. The other times, there are 2-6 lanes available and at least half of the warm water pool for public use. All other lap swim times have remained the same, with early morning and evening times available daily. With this being a transition year, we wanted to add these daytime hours and monitor the usage. What we have seen is a very large increase in all programs. Adding these daytime hours has made it possible for so many more people to access our facility at a time that suits their needs. We will be looking at all of our data as we make plans for next year to see if we are able to add even more hours for the public. Possible times to add would be to extend the lap swim until 3pm M-F and add more daytime hours on the weekend. Currently, weekend hours are reserved for pool rentals except for a lap swim on Saturdays at 11am.

Transition fitness classes from the Community Center

As we were getting ready to open, all teachers of classes at the Community Center were contacted about moving their classes to our new pool. 2 of the teachers were interested in continuing their classes, and we have successfully transitioned them to our pool. Most of the others are still using the pool during open exercise times, but are not official classes. The classes that are continuing are doing well and have grown. We now offer 5 different classes at different times of the day. This is an area that I think will continue to improve as we move forward.

Continue to offer programs for children and families

Family and Rec Swim hours are available to children and families every evening, Monday - Saturday. We also are continuing to offer swim lessons. When we opened our swim lesson schedules for registration, they filled up in 10 minutes and we had over 60 children on the waiting list. In order to accommodate these families, we added a second class to our evening lessons and were able to get all of the children into the lessons. We did make some adjustments to the number of spaces available in each lessons to increase the quality of the lessons. It is important for us to not only get as many children into lessons as possible, but to all make sure that they are being taught by qualified, trained instructors. With so many new staff members, we did want to make sure that we could maintain the quality of the lessons, so we decreased class size and increase some of our training.

Learn how to run and maintain new pool equipment

Everything about how to run and maintain our pool is all new to us, which is amazing and intimidating at the same time. Luckily, we have a great maintenance department at the School District that is very supportive and attentive to our needs. Together we have learned many things about our new equipment and how to maintain it. We have had a few issues with pool temp that have been resolved. We are so fortunate to have top of the line filters and a UV system that sanitizes our water. Automatic chemical feeds that constantly monitor and adjust based on usage as been a great asset to our new pool. Another addition to our facility is our new scoreboard. We are very pleased with this addition as it allows not only shows all of the times and scores from swim meets and water polo games, but we will also be able to add other images and advertising that can run during the day.

Pool Usage

As expected, our public use of the pool has increased significantly since the reopening in October. This chart is only looking at our Public Attendance which includes all Fitness Classes, Swim Lessons, Public Lap/Family/Rec swims, and pool rentals.

Public Attendance	October	November	December	January	February
2017-18	1740	1508	919	1428	1718
2019-20	2688	3347	2606	3317	4001
Percentage Increase	54%	122%	184%	132%	133%

Here is a snapshot of one month of data broken down by program.

January	School	Fitness	Lessons	Club	Adult Pass	Student Pass	Adult Drop-in	Student Drop-in	Rental
2018	1751	227	309	0	409	128	84	191	80
2020	2569	395	565	309	732	340	111	605	260

This data is analyzed monthly to make any adjustments needed for staffing. We have noticed a few things that don't show up in this data set. Our early mornings have been extremely more busy than in the past, and the check-in procedure we have always used was not working very well. With a few small changes at the front desk, we are now able to get patrons in faster. We have also noticed a big increase in new users each month. We have done minimal advertising this year, and see a need to add more when we are able to reopen. We recently added Silver Sneakers and Renew Active insurance options at the pool and that has brought more patrons in. They are able to use the pool at no cost to them and we bill their insurance.

With the increase in usage, we have also seen an increase in our revenue and expenditures.

Revenue

Year	October	November	December	January	February
2017-18	\$4,069	\$5,011	\$3,370	\$9,678	\$4297
2019-20	\$19,851*	\$13,757	\$6,665	\$13,593	\$13,237

*Includes monies from September for prepaid swim lessons.

Expenditures

Our staff expenditures have also increased. Our average monthly staff expense has gone from \$12,400 to \$18,700. I expect this to increase next year as we add more staff.

What we have learned

Flexibility

The transition from our old pool to the new one is an ongoing process. We continue to evaluate programs, procedures, and processes to make sure we are utilizing all of potential of our new pool. We will continue to make adjustments when we are able to reopen to ensure that we are serving our community in the best way possible. Our staff have really stepped up their ability to adapt to changes as we continue to make adjustments as needed.

The community loves the new pool

Looking at the data, we can see that the community is using the new pool. We have many returning swimmers, but also a lot of new swimmers, with some of them even coming from out of town. Everyone that I have heard from is very happy with the changes and most can't believe it is the same building. We have had several suggestions on little changes that we will consider when we reopen. I am continuing to hear from our swimmers during the shutdown how much they miss the pool and our staff. Word of our facility has also spread and outside teams have requested to swim or host their own meets at our pool.

The design of the pool works well for all of our current programs

We are very happy with how we are able to share the pool between our school classes and lap swim/independent exercise. Having more hours available for lap swimmers has made a huge difference for our patrons. We have also learned that as long as we post signs and posters about what lanes are available when, all swimmers are very happy. We didn't have any complaints about closing the pool for a weekend for the district meet since the swimmers will so excited to have our pool host the meet. There is a real feeling of community at our pool.

We are able to hold major event and swim meets for over 500 people

We are excited to be able to continue to hold major events at our pool. We do have a few changes we are going to make, but overall are very happy with how the district meet went.

Our staffing need continue to increase due to usage

With the layout of the pool, we had to increase the number of guards on the deck for all programs. As the usage has continued increase, we have to continue to add more staff. We are still evaluating some of the staff responsibilities. Several years ago, due to budget restraints, we reduced the manager position hours to part time. We have tried to continue this with the new pool, but in order to manage the new pool, this position needs to be full time. We will be looking to make this change for 2020-21.

The warm water pool was a great investment

The addition of the warm water pool has made a huge difference for our community. Not only were we able to transition the classes from the community center, we have also had a large increase of Seniors who use the pool for therapy and exercise. These are new users who did not use the old pool due to the cooler water temps. We also have a lot of families that use the pool with their toddlers during the day and evening hours.

Budget Highlights

Creating next years budget has come with a few challenges, mainly due to the pool closure. Working with with the data we have, we are estimating the the total operating costs, which includes utilities, technology, and pool chemicals and custodial supplies, to be \$127,536 for 12 months of use. This is the number we will be working with for next year, but will make adjustments as needed when we have more data. Staffing costs for this year averaged \$18,700 per month which would be \$216,000 if we were able to be open for 12 months. This number will need to be adjusted as we look to add back hours to the Manager position. We will have more budget numbers available as soon as some of our staffing decisions are finalized for 2020-21. As always, we are looking forward to working together to make sure the pool is able to meet the needs of our community.

Next Steps

The only constant for our pool this year has been change, and that looks like it will continue into the next year. Here is what we have been doing during the closure.

- We are working to maintain the pool chemistry so it will be in working order as soon as we are able to open.
- We cancelled all of the automatic payments that we were collecting for memberships.
- We reached out to families who had prepaid for lessons to process refunds.
- We are working on updating our staff manual and procedures.
- We have also been learning from experts in the aquatic community about what changes we might need to make as we prepare to reopen when the restrictions are lifted.

Our next step is to finalize the budget for next year. This will be coming out very soon and I look forward to sharing it with you.