

County of Santa Clara
Board of Supervisors
Supervisory District Four
Supervisor Ken Yeager



BOS4-012709-02

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Reviewed by: John Mills
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DATE: January 27, 2009

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM:

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Ken Yeager
Supervisor, District 4

SUBJECT: One-time funding to provide pool access at the Timpany Center

RECOMMENDED ACTION

In light of the Easter Seals Bay Area's (ESBA) decision to discontinue therapeutic aquatic health and wellness services at the Timpany Center as of February 1, 2009, this transmittal recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve the following:

Provide one-time bridge funding for up to five months to allow the continued use of the pool at the Timpany Center for the remainder of FY 2009, in an amount not to exceed \$143,000 (with a net County cost not to exceed \$18,000).

1. Preserve pool operation at the Timpany Center for 40 hours a week; and
 - a. Retain necessary staff to maintain pool operation and associated business services; and
 - b. Maintain a fee schedule for independent swim so as to recoup County costs; and

- c. Conduct necessary janitorial and maintenance services to allow continued use of the facilities; and
 - d. Provide necessary utility costs to maintain the current temperature of the Timpany Center pool; and
 - e. Postpone all capital projects over \$10,000 currently scheduled for the Timpany Center in Fiscal Year 2009
2. Approve Delegation of Authority to the Acting County Executive, or designee, to negotiate, execute, amend and terminate agreements relating to providing pool operation at the Timpany Center for period February 1, 2009 through June 30, 2009, following approval by County Counsel as to form and legality, and approval by the Office of the County Executive. Delegation of Authority shall expire on June 30, 2009.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost to maintain a basic level of service at the Timpany Center from February 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009 is approximately \$143,000 or \$28,600 per month, based on discussions with the current operator, Easter Seals Bay Area (ESBA). Assuming conservatively that 500 out of the 700 current clients will retain their memberships at a cost of \$50.00 each per month, the County should be able to recoup \$125,000.00 in usage fees, recovering all but \$18,000 of the totals costs. (See Attachment A for the budget estimates arrived at through discussions with the current operator.)

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Keeping the Timpany Center pool open for independent swim for up to 5 months from February 1, 2009, to June 30, 2009 will allow clients to benefit from pool usage until such time that the Board of Supervisors is able to make a determination about the future use of the Timpany Center pool. In anticipation of the continued collection of membership fees from at least 500 of the current clients, the County will be able to offset 87% of the cost of maintaining an independent swimming function.

During the same period, the needs assessment which was requested by the Board will be completed, and the Board will have additional information about the Timpany Center operations. Depending on the findings of the needs assessment, as well as the experience of the independent swim operation, the Board can anticipate making a recommendation about the future use of the Timpany Center no later than June 2009.

Independent Swim Program

Hours

Currently, Monday through Friday hours of operation are from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. The Timpany Center is also open to clients on Saturday from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm and on Sunday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Based on data provided by the ESBA, the pool is most frequently utilized for independent swim purposes from 8:00 am to 11:00 am on Monday through Friday. Based on this information and with the limitation of 40 hours, it is recommended that the Center remain open from 6:30 am to 2:30 pm. Opening the pool before 8:00 am will allow more flexibility for Timpany Center clients who work.

Staff

In order to maintain safety standards and business operations, staff will be necessary. Because this action pertains to the continued operation of the pool, not the continuation of classes and programs currently offered to clients, the level of staffing would be reduced from that which is provided by the current operator. See Attachment A for further details.

Visitation Costs

Currently, the ESBA partially offsets operational costs at the Timpany Center by charging usage fees. The daily cost for independent pool use and/or classes is \$14.00. Visitors can also purchase a “basic,” “family executive,” or “family basic” membership. The one-month cost of these options range from \$55.00 - \$110.00 respectively.

The recommendation is to provide two payment options for clients: a daily charge for independent use at \$14.00 per day and a “basic” membership charge at \$50.00 per month per person for the period February 1, 2009 through June 30, 2009.

Utilities

The Easter Seals Bay Area currently pays for the utility costs associated with heating the Timpany Center pool. If the pool remains accessible to the public after January 31, 2009, utility costs will still be necessary.

Maintenance

Maintenance of the pool and janitorial services, now performed through the ESBA contract, will continue to be covered through the contract with a new operator for independent swim.

All other facility maintenance and grounds costs are currently the responsibility of the County and would remain so.

The Santa Clara County Fleet and Facilities Department has planned capital projects totaling \$230,000.00, to be completed in Fiscal Year 2009. These projects include repainting the pool, replacing the ceiling tile, and repairing lighting and the locker room heating systems. As a result of this action, these projects would be deferred until after the Board determines future use of the Timpany Center.

BACKGROUND

On December 11, 2008 the County Executive's Office received a letter from the Easter Seals Bay Area (ESBA) requesting a termination of their current lease of the Timpany Center premises and effective close of business of January 31, 2009. As a result, by month's end, the ESBA will discontinue therapeutic aquatic health and wellness services at the Timpany Center.

On December 15, 2008 the Board of Supervisors directed the County Executive's Office to conduct a needs assessment regarding the future use of the Timpany Center.

The needs assessment will provide a written report that will inform County officials about the optimal uses of the Timpany Center. Incorporated in the report should be an assessment of how the needs of the current client base can best be addressed.

The Timpany Center houses a 100,000-gallon pool, which is heated to 92 degrees, making it one of the largest warm-water pools in the western United States. It is indoor, and completely accessible to people of all abilities. There is also a smaller 102-degree spa that is wheelchair accessible.

Nearly 500 visits are made to the pool at the Timpany Center by the ESBA's 700 active clients. Most visitors are older adults or people with health issues such as arthritis who are recuperating from stroke or surgery. Swimming lessons have also been offered at the facility.

Other warm water pools in the South Bay are located at the Santa Clara Senior Center and Abilities United in Palo Alto. Based on capacity and transportation issues, these services are less accessible to some ESBA clients. Therapeutic swim programs are also available at YMCA Silicon Valley sites, but the temperature of the water is not comparable.

Previous efforts by the ESBA to increase membership and revenues in order to prevent discontinuation of services before this time include:

- For the past 10 years, ESBA has contributed \$5 million dollars to sustaining the therapeutic aquatic health and wellness operations and to fund capital improvements to the Timpany Center; and
- In February 2006, the ESBA launched a membership pricing program designed to make its services more affordable and therefore more accessible; and
- Over the past two years, ESBA has invested in a marketing campaign designed to elevate visibility of the Timpany Center and draw attention to available services; and
- In December of 2007, the ESBA hired a new sales position to focus entirely on recruiting and registering new members.

Although the combination of these efforts has tripled the number of new members signing up each month, the revenue from membership does not fully fund the cost of maintaining the services.

ESBA has been a tenant of the County at the Timpany Center since February 1998. In April of 2006, the County took over management of the Timpany Center facility to allow the ESBA to focus its resources on service delivery as a standard tenant of the Center.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The County will begin the process of developing a contract for independent swim services at the Timpany Center for the period of February 1, 2009, or at the earliest available date after February 1, for a period no later than June 30, 2009.

ATTACHMENTS

- Estimated Budget for Pool Operation at the Timpany Center February 2009 through June 2009