

DATE: November 17, 2017

TO: Chair and Directors
Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

RE: **Function 645-649 Budget Update 2017**

FILE: 1700-02 / 2018 (645)

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

Purpose

To inform the Commission of current budget impacts/issues and operational challenges and to provide information on how these issues will impact the 2018-2022 financial plan for the Comox Valley recreation complex service, functions 645-649.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

This report is for informational purposes only.

Executive Summary

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) board's strategic priorities reflect the scope of work that staff undertake from 2017 to 2021. During 2017, swimming pool regulatory changes have come forward that staff have had to implement in order for the CVRD to remain compliant with safety standards while maintaining service levels. The priority is to provide for public and staff safety. The regulatory change is impacting the 2017 Comox Valley Recreation Complexes 645-649 budget. In preparation for the 2018-2022 financial planning process, staff will further investigate how the regulatory changes and the conditions of the facilities will impact the operational requirements. In addition, due to a recent fatal tragedy at a recreation complex in the Interior, new standards and regulations could be forthcoming that would have a financial impact on future operating budgets. The impacts are likely to include the following:

1. Program/service levels 2018-2022;
2. Staff and facilities users;
3. Implementation of new Canadian Lifesaving Society pool regulations;
4. Upcoming and anticipated arena regulatory changes for refrigeration systems.

Potential impacts from these future regulatory changes and/or inspections will be brought forward to ensure the commission is kept informed. Staff will also engage with facility staff, user groups, patrons and general public to inform them of the situation and raise awareness about standards and regulations required at the recreation facilities.

In summary:

- Due to changes in recreation sector regulations/inspections, the 2017 recreation complexes budget will be impacted;
- Public and staff safety is the CVRD's priority and staff will continue to be proactive to remain compliant with safety standards;

- Communications will be made in a timely manner to engage staff, user groups, patrons and the general public to inform them of any changes;
- Staff are looking into every possibility to help maintain service levels by researching and reviewing all information and criteria, and are continuing discussions with the Canadian Lifesaving Society;
- Next steps include considering budget and service levels for the proposed 2018-2022 financial plan.

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Background/Current Situation

The Comox Valley Recreation Complexes, a part of the Community Services Branch, has three departments: customer service, operations and programs. Programming and customer service staff regularly work at both the Sports Centre and Aquatic Centres, but operations staff are usually based out of one facility or the other.

Due to recent tragic events in the recreation field, new regulations have been placed upon recreation facilities. CVRD staff continue to be proactive in partnership with the province to implement these changes immediately in order for the CVRD to remain compliant with safety standards.

Beyond regulatory mandates, the recreation facilities have other operational and infrastructure challenges. Staff have been forecasting the asset management needs to ensure key infrastructure items can be replaced within the financial plan; however, due to the age of the facilities, it has been difficult to maintain plants/equipment at the highest standards in order to safely operate the facilities.

The CVRD Aquatic Centre pool underwent an aquatic safety review/audit on June 17, 2017, which required an update to the pool safety plan to meet current standards mandated by BC Guidelines for Pool Operations. Upon receiving this audit, the first response was to provide additional staffing support with the goal to reach provincial minimum staffing standards for enhanced public safety.

To maintain a safe level of supervision, owners and operators must establish a lifeguard-to-patron ratio of 1:40 that ensures that the lifeguard(s) will be able to see all areas of the pool that are accessible to patrons, including but not limited to the bottom of the pool.

The 1:40 lifeguard-to-patron ratio represents a **minimum** standard. Circumstances (pool size, depth, design, equipment usage, ability and activity of patrons) may require more lifeguards to be on duty to maintain a safe level of supervision. This directly affects the Aquatic Centre. An additional factor that will determine ratios is water surface area. In swimming pools where patrons can disperse over larger areas, additional supervision will need to be provided.

The previous standards were 1 lifeguard to 50 patrons **within the entire pool facility.**

In order to meet regulatory modifications, staffing levels in 2017 have had to increase substantially. As an example, public swims under the previous standards would have been staffed with a minimum of five to six lifeguards, and, with the current standards, staffing levels have had to increase to eight or nine lifeguards. An increase in staffing levels results in an increase in aquatic salaries and wages. As an example, in one week for seven public swims, staff costs increased from an estimated \$4,410 to \$6,615, not including benefits and WCB costs. Further discussions with the Lifesaving Society may allow for a more gradual implementation to reduce the impact.

The 2017 budget for staff wages to December 31, 2017, was \$2,704,881. Due to the change in regulations, estimated actual costs for 2017 are \$2,945,271. This represents a projected 8.89% increase over the budget.

In order to remain fiscally responsible to our tax payers, future programming and service levels and the 2018-2022 proposed financial plan for Recreation need to be reviewed.

Policy Analysis

Bylaw No. 2410, being the “Bylaw to Establish the Comox Valley Recreation Complexes Service”, was adopted to establish a service for the purpose of constructing, equipping, enlarging, operating and maintaining ice arena-swimming pool complexes and to contribute towards the cost of existing community use facilities and structures in the service area.

Options

This report is providing information for considerations that will be required as part of the 2018-2022 financial plan for the 645-649 recreation complexes service. Further details and clarity on options and operational/infrastructure challenges will be provided to the Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission in the upcoming 2018-2022 financial plan presentation in early 2018 and the following options will be expanded upon for those discussions:

1. An increase to the requisition and/or user fees to fund increased staffing levels to meet the regulatory standards of the Canadian Lifesaving Society audit and other pending regulations to ensure the safety of the public. Approximate cost: \$600,000.
2. Maintain the current requisition and review potential reductions in programs and services such as reduced hours of operations, or maintain the status quo. For current costs, \$240,390 would represent the difference between the budget and anticipated year-end actuals.
3. If approved by the Canadian Lifesaving Society for aquatic staffing, a phased incremental increase to the requisition to find a balance between reducing impacts to the user groups and services by increasing the budget over three years. Years 2018 and 2019: \$250,000 increase each. Year 2020: \$100,000.

This is an evolving scenario and staff are looking into every possibility to help relieve budget impacts and disruptions to programs/service by researching and reviewing all information, criteria and continued discussions with the Canadian Lifesaving Society. The outcomes may change once we fully understand the impacts on the financial plan.

Financial Factors

Implementation of the new standards will require reviews of budgets, program and services. In 2017, staff salaries and wages were budgeted at \$2,704,881 and are currently forecasted to December 31, 2017, to be approximately \$2,945,271, an overage of \$240,390.

Participants in the service include the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland and the residents of Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Island (Electoral Area A), Lazo North (Electoral Area B), and Puntledge-Black Creek (Electoral Area C). The maximum tax levy for this service is \$1.05 per \$1,000 of assessed value equating to a maximum requisition of \$11,966,936. The requisition for 2017 was \$4,520,251, which equates to a rate of \$0.3378 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Legal Factors

To maintain a safe level of supervision, owners and operators must establish a lifeguard-to-patron ratio that ensures that the lifeguard(s) will be able to see all areas of the pool that are accessible to patrons, including but not limited to the bottom of the pool. Lifeguards will provide this supervision during recreational swim periods. As the number of swimmers increase, the number of lifeguards should increase too.

The 1:40 lifeguard-to-patron ratio represents a minimum standard. Circumstances (e.g., pool size, depth, design, equipment usage, ability of patrons) may require more lifeguards to be on duty to maintain a safe level of supervision.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

To manage and meet the needs and expectations of the growing community, the Comox Valley Regional District remains committed to provide all residents of the Comox Valley with access to the services, amenities and cultural activities necessary for a high quality of life.

Access to a range of services and amenities ensures that residents can maintain good health, wellness and overall quality of life. “Access” refers to the availability of the service to all residents regardless of mobility.

Intergovernmental Factors

Discussions with neighbouring agencies will be required as part of the budget review prior to any decisions to change CVRD program and service levels. Working with partnering municipalities will help to ensure the community has access to the various health and wellness programs and services. This could be done through coordinating maintenance closures and the scheduling of programs and services.

Interdepartmental Involvement

A wide variety of departments within the CVRD are part of the budget review process required to implement any changes to this service. This includes the Executive Management Team, Finance, Corporate Services and Human Resources.

Citizen/Public Relations

Communications will be made in a timely manner to engage staff, user groups, patrons and the general public to inform them of the situation and to raise awareness about the standards and regulations required at our facilities and how we remain committed to public safety. Input from this process will be shared with the Commission.

Attachments: Appendix A – “Pool Regulation Governing Agencies”

Appendix A – Pool Regulations Governing Agencies

1.4 Facility Tour and Inspection

The Aquatic Safety Incident Review Audit was completed on June 17, 2017

During the tour, the facility was examined applying criteria developed by the Lifesaving Society from sources that include:

- Lifesaving Society standards concerning operation of public swimming pools
- Public Pool Safety Standards for Canadian Public Swimming Pools
- Public Wading Pool Safety Standards
- Lifesaving Society - Alert, Lifeguarding in Action
- Lifesaving Society BC & Yukon Branch, 10-30 Scanning Window Information Bulletin
- Lifesaving Society BC & Yukon Branch, Rescue Tube Safety Bulletin
- Lifesaving Society Position Statements and Aquatic Standards 1-3
- Government of British Columbia statutes governing public swimming pools.
- Environmental Health Services, Basic Pool Safety Plan; Guide and Pool Safety Plan for Pool Operators
- Public Health B.C.; Reg. 240/2012, August 8, 2012; Guidelines for Pool Design; Guidelines for Pool Operation
- B.C. Building Code, The Building Access Handbook
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - guidelines Section 15.8 is on swimming pools
- The Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) guidelines published by Centre for Disease
- International Organization for Standardization; *Graphical symbols - Safety colours and safety signs*