

City and Borough of Juneau

Aquatics Board

DATE: March 9, 2018

TO: Mayor Ken Koelsch
Members of the Assembly

FROM: Max Mertz, Aquatics Board Chairperson

RE: Aquatics Board Recommendation Regarding the Board's Future

Under its authorizing Ordinance, (2015-23(b), the Aquatics Board sunsets on May 28, 2018 unless the Assembly takes action to amend it. (See Attachment H)

The Board began discussions last summer about whether, and what, to recommend to the Assembly regarding that sunset. The Board met with the City Manager to clarify the best process to pursue and subsequently began identifying a range of pool management alternatives. It then began evaluating each alternative. We met with the Committee of the Whole in November (Attachment A) at which time we explained the Board's governance and management assessment process and explained the range of options we had identified. From that meeting, we understood that the Assembly was satisfied with our process and approach thus far, and we committed to come back with a recommendation in March, 2018. Hence this memorandum.

Aquatics Goals:

The Aquatics Board has defined the following as its over-arching goals:

- To increase efficiency of pool operations and reduce as much as possible the financial support the pools require from the General Fund.
- To increase pool usage and ensure the best possible pool user experience.
- To bring stability and transparency to the governance and management of the pools.

The Board worked hard on exploring each potential management option, analyzing how each might play out, including some preliminary financial analysis. Attached are the "Pros and Cons" we identified for each option along with a list of next steps that would be required once an option had been selected by the Assembly. (Attachment D)

Public Involvement:

After our meeting with the Committee of the Whole, we did further analysis and last month presented the alternatives to the community, seeking their input and suggestions. We sought and encouraged media coverage of these public meetings. We presented to:

- The swimming community and the public (downtown on February 20 and in the Valley on February 28)
- The Chamber of Commerce

- Three of the four Rotary Clubs.

Since the minutes of the two public presentations are not yet available, attached are a copy of the presentation and a Board member's summary of the public's comments. (Attachments B and C) We would have liked to present to, and hear concerns from, the Aquatics staff but Mr. Duncan advised the Board it should not engage staff in this discussion.

Alternatives Analysis:

We considered four general options (see Attachment A):

Option A: No Action

Management of the facilities reverts to the Department of Parks and Recreation. The public would be able to provide input only through the PRAC.

- The Board unanimously rejects this option. We learned on March 6 that this is the option recommended by Mr. Duncan and we have not had an opportunity to review or discuss his rationale. While the PRAC may, and does, provide advice on recreational issues, the Board believes that more accountability over aquatics operation is needed to maintain or improve the current level of service. We do not support recreating a purely advisory Aquatics Board for the same reasons.

Options B: No Change/Extend the Term of the Existing Pool Board:

This requires the Assembly to amend the termination date of the Board. It continues the requirement that the City Manager and Aquatics Board both supervise the Director of Parks and Recreation.

- The Board unanimously rejects this option over the long term. It is difficult for the Parks and Recreation Director to have two bosses, and the Board has found that its priorities do not necessarily align with those of the Director - therefore its ability to make positive changes is hampered.

Option C: More Fully Empowered Aquatics Board

The scope of duties of the Aquatics Board is expanded, similar to the Eaglecrest model. A defining feature would be the responsibility of the Aquatics Board to directly hire and supervise its own Director.

- The Board believes this option warrants further study, and agrees that (if selected) this option should include expansion of the Board to include the Parks and Recreation Director, the School District Liaison, and a representative of Glacier Swim Club as voting members.

Options D: Contract with Nonprofit Entity to Manage the Pools

A process would be developed in compliance with CBJ's code and ordinances, and a management contract negotiated with a nonprofit organization for a designated period, with renewal and termination options.

- The Board does not believe there are any existing Juneau nonprofits in a position to manage the pools. Therefore, it does not support this sub-option.
- The Board believes that the time taken and the requirements to create a new local nonprofit for the specific purpose of managing the Aquatics facilities is beyond the

interest or capacity of the current Board. Therefore, it does not support this sub-option.

- The Aquatics Board has become aware that locally controlled YMCAs manage many municipally-owned aquatics facilities in locations across the US. We have explored this option in some depth (see Attachments E, F, and G). We believe there could be numerous potential benefits from creating a local Branch of the Alaska YMCA. We believe these would include:
 - Continuing local control – YMCAs operate under the direction of a local branch board. That board oversees the local manager, sets rates, sets budgets and does other activities that local non-profit boards perform;
 - Ensuring the same or equivalent level of compensation and benefits for staff;
 - Increasing operational efficiency and reducing general fund support;
 - Maintaining and improving the user experience; and
 - Accessing a greater depth of experience in the management of Aquatics facilities.

The Board would like time to complete a due diligence examination of this option with the assistance of the City Manager, City Attorney, CBJ contracting personnel, and in conjunction with the Alaska YMCA.

Recommendation

The Board recommends that the Assembly amend the Ordinance to extend the Board for one more year (and reappoint the existing members if necessary). This gives the Board time to:

- 1) Complete its due diligence on the evaluation of Option C;
- 2) Complete its due diligence on the evaluation of Option D, and
- 3) Engage further with the community (including the aquatics staff) before settling on a final recommendation to be made to the Assembly.

The Board also requests the assistance of the City Manager, City Attorney and their staff in examining the required terms, as well as the feasibility and desirability of negotiating a contract with the YMCA to establish a Juneau Branch to operate and manage the pools.

cc: Rorie Watt, City Manager
Kirk Duncan, Director of Parks and Recreation
Aquatics Board members
Aquatics Board Liaison to the School District

Attachments

- A. Memorandum from the Aquatics Board to the Assembly Committee of the Whole, November 18, 2017.
- B. Aquatics Board Presentation to the Community, February 2018
- C. Summarized Comments by Public at Community Meetings
- D. Aquatics Board Pros and Cons of the Various Option and Next Steps
- E. YMCA document “Strengthening Aquatic Collaborations: Considerations for Operating a Non-YMCA-owned Aquatic Facility.”
- F. CBJ and YMCA Employee Benefits Comparison
- G. Draft list of Terms for potential Agreement of Management of Juneau Pools
- H. CBJ Aquatics Ordinance