



City of North Port
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Peter D. Lear, City Manager
Cari Branco, Assistant City Manager

THROUGH: Sandy Pfundheller, Director *SP*

FROM: Tricia Wisner, Assistant Director *TW*

SUBJECT: North Port Aquatic Center Lifeguard Recruitment & Potential Operating Hours

DATE: October 2, 2019

During the Commissioner Communications portion of the September 24, 2019 City Commission Regular Meeting, it was requested that a memo be provided regarding the recruitment efforts for North Port Aquatic Center lifeguards along with evaluation of an amended operational schedule for the Aquatic Center given that the facility did not open in July 2019 as initially estimated.

Lifeguard Positions & Recruitment

Based on a presentation by Councilman-Hunsaker and Kimley-Horn and Associates during the April 16, 2018 City Commission Special Meeting, a total of 19 lifeguard positions are required to support full facility operations (competition pool and recreational amenities). This includes 15 on-stand positions and an additional 4 positions to rotate through cleaning, first aid and break. The Department of Health has reviewed the lifeguard plan and positions and confirmed the requirement of these positions/zones.

Given the number of lifeguards needed and the special training requirements, Parks & Recreation staff began meeting with Human Resources in May of 2018 to discuss options for posting opportunities, hiring fairs and streamlined hiring processes. Following is a breakdown of recruitment efforts:

- The Winter/Spring 2019 Playbook published in November of 2018 included a large "We are Hiring" ad to promote North Port Aquatic Center positions.
- City Social media promotion of positions began in April 2019 and positions were posted on the City's website beginning in May of 2019.
- Parks & Recreation Staff attended a career fair on April 26, 2019 at North Port High School.
- Parks & Recreation staff contacted the Sarasota County School District administrative staff regarding lifeguard opportunities.
- Parks & Recreation staff contacted representatives from various swimming entities including Southwest Florida Water Polo Association, North Port High School swim team, Sarasota County Sharks swim team, and the Tsunami swim team to promote positions.

- All positions were posted on Florida Recreation and Parks Association career board.
- Parks & Recreation staff contacted American Red Cross, StarGuard Elite, the World Waterpark Association – Florida region, and Commercial Energy Specialists “CES” (a large pool chemical supplier and operation training organization) to help disseminate information regarding lifeguard position opportunities.
- Parks & Recreation staff reached out to colleagues at Charlotte County, Sarasota County and the City of Sarasota to ask for assistance in promoting lifeguard position opportunities.
- Parks & Recreation staff conducted hiring outreach via an on-air interview with local radio station WKDW on June 6, 2019.
- A Lifeguarding recruitment video was developed by Parks & Recreation staff and released on Social Media on June 11, 2019. The video was viewed 2,200 times.
- Human Resources staff contacted their partner Departments in Sarasota and Charlotte County along with Ad-Vance, temporary employment services.
- Human Resource staff attended the North Port Area Chamber of Commerce job fair on September 27, 2019 and Newcomer Day on May 18, 2019 to promote City job openings.

Parks & Recreation staff have conducted over 40 lifeguard interviews, extended offers to 23 candidates; of those, 4 candidates withdrew through the training/certification process and 3 did not complete pre-hire information or pass background requirements. At this time, the Aquatics Division has 16 StarGuard Elite certified Lifeguards on staff plus 3 StarGuard Elite certified lifeguards on the management team. Staff continues to review all avenues of recruitment with Human Resources and community partners to support operations.

Potential Operating Hours

During a City Commission Special Meeting on July 9, 2018, the City Commission provided direction on the operational seasons and days for the North Port Aquatic Center, including direction that the Recreational Amenities portion of the facility would be closed from November 1 to April 1 annually, while the Competition Pool would be open daily, year-round (excluding Wednesdays October through March). With an October grand opening of the facility, the days available for public use of the recreational amenities would be limited. Per Commission direction, staff has evaluated the operating scenarios suggested during the recent Commission meeting and an overview of the impacts for each is provided below:

A) Impacts of not opening recreational amenities for weekend operations until April 2020:

- Operational savings of \$23,365.
- Estimated revenue loss of \$8,000.
- Training for the lifeguards needed to operate the full facility has already commenced, with an estimated cost of \$3,400 for training, plus the cost of hiring. Delayed opening would require re-training and additional costs.

- Scheduling of staff through end of October has already been confirmed; many staff have second jobs and have notified the other employer of their unavailability.
- Terminating employment at this point may negatively impact our ability to hire lifeguards for Spring Break.
- There would be no flexibility to staff facility rentals.
- Potential negative public perception of the facility.

B) Impacts of extending weekend operations of recreational amenities through Thanksgiving weekend:

- Unbudgeted operational expense of \$22,365.
- Potential revenue increase of \$5,000.
- Current lifeguard staffing levels will not support extended hours.
- Overall operating hours will need to be amended to provide lifeguard coverage for the Recreational Amenities.
- To meet lifeguard requirements, Aquatic supervisory and management staff will need to take a lifeguard position on deck.
- Potential positive public perception of the facility.

Based on the current Aquatics Division staffing level, Parks & Recreation staff have been diligently working out the details needed to support a two-week grand opening schedule with amended hours for full facility operations both weekdays and weekends. At the conclusion of the two weeks, regular operating hours would be instituted. To support this plan, the following adjustments will be needed:

- 1) Management staff will be assigned on deck to rotate through lifeguard positions
- 2) Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation will serve as Manager on Duty
- 3) Aquatic Center Recreation Attendants will be assigned slide dispatch positions
- 4) Community Center Recreation Attendants will be assigned to admissions and concessions
- 5) A maximum 4-hour weekday operational schedule will be followed
- 6) A maximum 7-hour weekend operational schedule will be followed

Parks & Recreation staff are eager to provide the community with access to this new facility and the associated amenities. We continue to evaluate options for a grand opening schedule based on information from the Contractor and City Project Manager and it is our intent to open the Aquatic Center at the earliest time possible, with a focus on ensuring a safe and healthy facility. It should be noted that the adjustments mentioned above will leave the management team unable to dedicate adequate time to administrative duties during the grand opening schedule. This includes responsibilities such as program development, event organization, rentals, in-service training, class instruction, reporting, recruitment/orientation/training and facility maintenance.