

VENETA CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Title/Topic: Veneta Community Pool Update and Recommendation for the 2020 Season

Meeting Date: June 22, 2020

ISSUE STATEMENT

How would the City Council like to direct staff with regards to the opening of the Veneta Community Pool amid the Coronavirus pandemic?

BACKGROUND

Due to the global Coronavirus pandemic, Governor Brown has enacted a series of executive orders for the State of Oregon. Recently, Governor Brown and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) have provided guidance for the reopening of the State. These orders have outlined guidance to reopen recreational facilities with the intent of minimizing exposure and risk to all residents of Oregon. Lane County recently entered “Phase 2”. In this phase, licensed swimming pool facilities are allowed to reopen under very specific guidelines.

There are many challenges to overcome should the Veneta Community Pool open for public use, including, but not limited to: staffing, programming, additional cleaning protocols, physical distancing requirements and vigilant monitoring of the health and safety of our employees and patrons.

Staff analyzed what would be required to implement the state guidelines, how it would affect three key areas: 1. Staffing requirements 2. Programming and 3. Financial impact.

1. Staffing –Due to the pandemic, training for new lifeguards by the Red Cross was cancelled and as such, no new lifeguards were trained for the 2020 season. The City had prepared for the return of 18 staff members and the hiring and training of an additional 4-5 new lifeguards.

A recent poll of the potential returning staff revealed that only eight lifeguards from last pool season are available to return to work at the pool. Of the eight employees, five were willing to work full time, while the other three offer restricted availability. Without additional staff, the pool would need to run with a very limited programming and schedule.

In addition to the certified staff required to adequately guard the pools, additional staff would be needed to monitor for physical distancing, keep up with additional cleaning requirements, scheduling and the tracking of pool users as required by the State. The additional staff would not necessarily have to be certified but it would be preferred for purposes of emergency response.

After reviewing the staff requirements for the mock schedule, the pool manger has concerns regarding adequate coverage for staff absences due to vacations or unexpected events.

Considerations:

- To meet OHA contact tracing requirements, staff is recommending that all participants pre-register for all activities.
- To minimize cleaning, staff is recommending that the locker rooms would be closed. Family change rooms would be open as restrooms, however showering would be discouraged except for the shower located on the pool deck.
- Patrons would be encouraged to arrive at the pool ready to swim and also leave in their swimwear.
- OHA requires that the drinking fountain remain closed.
- All pool equipment used by patrons would require cleaning after each session. This includes kick boards, pull buoys, life jackets, toys, deck chairs, chaise lounges, diving board, etc.

2. Programming – Water safety instruction has always been a primary focus of the programming offered at the pool facility, and this has been accomplished through group and private swim lessons, and swim team. This year, safety protocols would need to be increased to allow for proper physical distancing between participants to minimize risk of exposure to the Coronavirus.

- Group Lessons - State guidelines regarding distancing would require that instructors coach from the deck of the pool and that a family member would be required to be in the water with lesson participants. For this reason, staff believes that group lessons would not be feasible as distancing requirements would also need to be enforced within the pool.
- Private Lessons would be possible following the same instruction protocols as above.
- Lap Swimming - Per Oregon Health Authority, lap swimmers are limited to one participant per lane, while maintaining six-foot physical spacing between swimmers unless they are participants from the same household.
- Exercise Classes may be held if the physical distancing requirements can be met.
- Swim Team - Due to the one person per lane restriction and physical distancing requirements, it is Staff's belief that Swim Team would need to be limited to 12 total members and split into two groups, each participating twice per week. Swim meets would not be offered and spectators would be discouraged during practice time.
- Recreation Swim - Physical spacing requirements are expected to be enforced within the pool for all members regardless of age. For this reason, recreation swims would not be offered.
- Family Swims are more feasible due to the fact that an adult is required to accompany swimmers. It would be the expectation that the adult would help monitor their party for compliance of the OHA guidelines.

3. Financial Impact – In an effort to understand the financial implications of opening for the 2020 season, staff put together several mock schedules as a baseline to determine what could be accommodated with available staff.

To determine the potential costs of running the pool, staff took 2019 costs, removed all personnel costs and came up with a daily and weekly figure for just the cost of the pool facility. Those costs include utility costs, fuel, pool operating supplies, janitorial supplies, etc. With an assumed opening date of July 7th (the earliest that staff feels would be possible), and the typical closing date of September 5th, the season would run for nine weeks. The facility cost for that period would be approximately \$59,400.

Staff used the combined staff hours required to operate a proposed schedule to determine the personnel costs. The personnel costs for the proposed nine-week schedule would be approximately \$39,700.

The combined costs for the proposed nine-week schedule would be approximately \$99,000.

To determine potential revenue, Staff evaluated the schedule based on the projected capacities of each scheduled activity as recommended by OHA. For instance, the pool has six lanes and OHA allows only one swimmer per lane. Based on that, during lap swim times, only six patrons are allowed to utilize the pool at an average revenue of \$4.00 per person. Family swim times would be limited to 60 swimmers for an approximate revenue of \$180.00 per session. Similar calculations were done for Swim Team and potential private lessons. The estimates assumed full allowed capacities. Using this model, Staff calculated the estimated potential revenue for the proposed nine-week schedule to be \$23,400.

With estimated costs estimated to be \$99,000 and estimated revenues to be \$23,400 for the proposed season, the pool would lose approximately \$75,700 and have a cost recovery of only 24%. For reference, cost recovery last year was 40% and over the past five years has averaged approximately 49%.

Other Factors

Aside from the information above, Staff has concerns regarding, but not limited to:

- Enforcement of physical distancing and the reaction from the public as we try to do so.
- The new pre-registration process.
- Limited occupancy requirements and how to be fair to all users.
- The amount of time it may take to usher people into and out of the facility with check in registration at the front desk.
- Potential risk of exposure for our employees.
- All employees wearing masks, including lifeguards on duty while standing in the heat.
- The potential of another shut down and the economic impact that would have on pool employees.
- Proper hydration for patrons if the drinking fountain is required to be closed.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to make preparations to open the Veneta Community Pool for a limited 2020 season.

2. Direct staff to not open the Veneta Community Pool for the 2020 season.
3. Ask for more information.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION

The City Council direct staff to not open the Veneta Community Pool for the 2020 season.