

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION
Parks & Recreation Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: COVID-19, Township Swimming Pools Membership Fees Recommendation

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Date: June 10, 2020

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board: Consider approval of the modified Pool Fee Structure for Pool Membership and Use, due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration: Although the fees are administrative fees, the Board regularly reviews Membership fees.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable): N/A

IV. Other Relevant Background Information: Staff has been monitoring the ever changing requirements for operating various aspects of Parks and Recreation during this pandemic.

The common aspects of this plan include staffing, decision to exclude non-resident including Narberth Borough and ongoing monitoring of guidance as well as staff and members for any changes that will result in alterations to the operation. This plan is to ensure the health and safety of pool members and Parks and Recreation Staff.

Onboarding staff has begun in earnest. (There are two stages of paperwork, including background checks and then finally drug screening and waiting for results) Once we have the required staff through the hiring process, then we can schedule the appropriate training.

Pool operation is now permissible in the yellow phase. Due to the need to physically distance in all phases to reopening, the number of members permitted in the facility at one time will be limited. We will also need to be able to complete contact tracing if someone reports to be positive for COVID-19 and has visited the pool.

Because of the extreme reduction of people in the facilities, people purchasing memberships will not be happy if they are consistently turned away because facilities are at capacity. We are recommending refunding or crediting the couple hundred memberships that have already been purchased with the following operational thoughts.

- We will set up a low cost membership plan and require members to reserve swimming times to avoid lines, ultimately turn people away. This will also

allow us to perform the required Contact tracing if needed. The membership plan and process would be set up and communicated as soon as we receive BOC approval.

- We would only allow residents to register for memberships in our software system which would be valid for the selected facility. The upfront charge would be \$5 per household member between the ages of 2 and 59. (i.e. a family of 4 would pay \$20). Senior Membership fees would remain the same at Belmont \$19; Ardmore \$5 and Children under 2 would remain at no charge for their membership. Guests would not be permitted. This will allow us to verify residency, have appropriate waivers executed, as well as provide us with a database for pool related communications.
- The membership would then be a prerequisite our system recognizes to allow them to sign up for time slots and pay the appropriate “gate fee”. Belmont would be \$2.50 per member; i.e. a family of 4 would pay \$10. Ardmore would be \$.50 per member; i.e. a family of 4 would pay \$2
 - Comparing the cost to a full season membership for a Family of four:
 - Belmont would have cost \$370. In the time slot set up: \$20 up front and \$10 per visit is equal to that family registering for 35 time slots over the 69 days of the pool season based on a July 1st Opening.
 - Ardmore would have cost \$90. In the time slot set up: \$20 up front and \$2 per visit is equal to that family registering for 35 time slots over the 69 days of the pool season if we are able to open July 1st.
- Members on financial assistance would continue to receive their qualified discount on these costs, as set up in our system.
- Senior Citizen gate fees could also be waived as to not exceed their normal full season membership at Belmont \$19; Ardmore \$5.
- Children under the age of 2 would not have a gate fee, but will be required to register to include them in head count for each time slot.
- Registration for time slots would open 10 days ahead, so people can check weather forecasts, but not monopolize a given time slot the entire summer. No cancellation/refund for rain or change in plans. Time slots would be 2.5 hours long. Pools would be cleared 15 mins before the end of each time and the facilities emptied to allow for 30 minutes for the full sanitization. Time slots = 9-11:30 a.m.; Noon- 2:30 p.m.; 3-5:30 p.m.; 6-8:30 p.m.

- To meet the physical distancing requirement we will be able to accommodate 50 members at Ardmore and 90 members at Belmont per time slot. (plus Staffing requirements)

V. Impact On Township Finances:

Pool revenue is difficult to project at this time as the total number of memberships and time slots usage is unknown but, in any event, opening the Pools for swimming, which will require staffing and sanitization, will have us operating with expenses exceeding revenues.

VI. Staff Recommendation: The Staff recommendation is to approve the modified Pool Fee Structure for Pool Membership/Use Plan including the upfront charge of \$5 per household member between the ages of 2 and 59. (i.e. a family of 4 would pay \$20). Senior Membership fees to remain the same at Belmont \$19; Ardmore \$5 and Children under 2 remain at no charge for their membership. Guests not to be permitted and non-residents including Narberth Borough would be excluded, enabling us to serve as many residents as possible.