

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 31, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 63: COLASANTO AND LEE POOLS FEE AND PARTNERSHIP POTENTIAL

This memorandum is in response to Councilman Krupicka's request for information on possible pool fees sufficient to keep the two pools open that are currently slated for closing as part of the Department's Proposed FY 2010 Operating Budget. Additionally, Councilman Krupicka requested information on what it would take for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (DRPCA) to initiate an RFP to partner with a non-profit or other community group to run the two pools currently being slated for closing.

The seasonal cost to operate the Colosanto and Lee pools is \$21,177 per pool. Each pool operates seasonally Monday-Friday 12:00p.m. to 6:00p.m. for a total of 39 days per season. The average daily cost to operate these two pools is \$543 each day per pool. The average daily attendance at the Colosanto Pool in 2008 was 25 residents per day. The average daily attendance for the Lee Pool in 2008 was 17 residents per day. Based on these estimates, a fee of \$22 (Colosanto) and \$32 (Lee) per person would be required to offset the costs to operate these pools. The Recreation Department does not believe such a fee is a viable option. The four small pools have operated free of charge in the past. Moreover, the two other small pools, Houston and Ewald, are slated to remain free of charge to residents in 2009. To require a fee for residents to use Colasanto and Lee pools would not be equitable unless fees were charged for all pools. Furthermore, any meaningful fee most likely would reduce the number of residents who use Lee and Colosanto pools to insufficient levels.

Regarding the potential to partner with a non-profit or community organization to operate the two pools, staff estimates that it would take approximately 60-120 days to work through the RFP process. We do not think this is a viable option at this time due to the relatively short staff turnaround required to generate the RFP prior to the start of the 2009 outdoor pool season in June.

Alternatively, to keep all of the pools open for the 2009 season, the Department could stagger the daily operating schedules of the four small neighborhood pools (Lee, Colasanto, Ewald and Houston). This would spread the impact of the reduction of operating hours among the four

pools. This alternative would enable the City to keep all four small pools open at a reduced service level while providing an equitable level of service at each of the pools. The four small pools would operate 3-4 days per week. Operating hours at the pools would be reduced from 6 to 4-5 hours per day over the course of the operating season. This alternative reduces the initial proposed budget reduction from \$43,113 to \$29,313. This represents a cost increase of \$13,800. These funds would need to be added through the add/delete process for operating supplies and materials for the Colasanto and Lee pools.

Recreation Department staff will initiate a comprehensive review of its outdoor pool program in the coming months. Staff will consider suggestions provided by Council during the Fiscal Year 2010 budget development process and will work to gather input from pool users during the 2009 pool season to incorporate in the Department's comprehensive plan. Staff will provide Council with a report of its findings and recommendations by the Fall of 2009.