

## **LAKE BLUFF PARK DISTRICT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In an effort to comply with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (VGB), the Lake Bluff Wading Pool will require significant repairs to meet the necessary standards. Through a detailed pool evaluation, the Park District learned the Wading Pool was leaking significantly and the Main Pool and Bathhouse areas need significant repair due to code deficiencies, age and mechanical issues.

In August, 2009, Executive Director Ron Salski approached the Park District Board of Commissioners to pursue a Pool Audit. A Pool Audit identifies issues, challenges or opportunities of its' existing pool or facilities. Pool or Facility Audits are common in the Park and Recreation industry and provide detailed evaluation and analysis. At the August Regular Board meeting, the Park Board of Commissioners authorized the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with FGM Architects.

On October 5, 2009, FGM Architects presented the report to the Park District Board which included the following:

1. This report indicated that the Wading Pool was leaking and requires significant repairs (+\$600,000).
2. The Main Pool has significant repairs recommended to be completed within 1-2 years. These repairs are estimated at \$332,100 to \$406,550. To fix all aspects of the main pool lasting 20 years, the total estimated costs are \$2.8 million.
3. To fix all aspects of the pool lasting 20 years, the total costs exceed \$5,000,000.

On October 19, the Board discussed the findings at its Regular Board Meeting resulting in a decision to hold public informational meetings on November 3 & 4. Questions arose and residents have been emailing Executive Director Salski and Board Members with more questions. Therefore, the Park District established a report identifying facts and questions related to the Park District and Swimming Pool.

### **Facts about the Park District and Pool**

1. The 2010 Lake Bluff Park District budget provides for revenues of \$5,315,500 and expenditures of \$5,314,800, resulting in a surplus of \$700.
2. The 2010 budget provides for an ending cash balance, all funds, of \$658,000.
3. The 2008 tax levy provides for \$2,360,645.68 in property taxes, representing 43.8% of the 2009 projected revenues for the District.
4. Residents in Lake Bluff pay 6.4% of their tax bill toward the Lake Bluff Park District.
5. The Master Plan fund has increased from a balance in 2001 of \$78,000 to a proposed budget balance of \$599,000 in 2010.
6. The 2010 Swim Pool budget represents 5.1% of operating expenditures for the District as a whole.
7. The ending cash balance for the swim pool fund is projected to be \$35,500 at the end of fiscal year 2010, or 15.7% of fund balance.
8. \$81,000 or 39.4% of total swim pool revenues are budgeted in pool memberships.
9. The only capital expenditure budgeted in the 2010 swim pool budget is for VGB compliance.
10. The liner installed in the tot pool, main pool and surge tank was installed in 1997 and has outlived its expectancy by two years.

### **Next Steps**

By mid-January, the Park Board and community will receive short term options at a public input meeting. A final board decision is expected by January 31, 2010. At the public input meeting, staff will present various options for the Wading and Main Pool. If you would like to be informed of the meeting dates and up to date pool and park district information, please visit our website, [www.lakebluffparks.org](http://www.lakebluffparks.org) and join our pool e-newsletter.

If the Park District requires a bidding process and permitting, it is important decisions are made no later than January 31, 2010.

## RECENT COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

**Q: What is the state of the Lake Bluff Park District finances?**

**A:** Pool, golf, and paddle tennis are enterprise funds within the Park District with no tax dollars received. A negative balance in any fund pulls from the overall cash flow. In 2009, total swim pool revenue was \$238,000 with a net loss of (\$11,400) resulting in a fund balance of \$55,200.

**User Information:**

**Q: Do attendance numbers include swim lessons and campers who attend daily?**

**A:** Attendance is based on ID card scans or daily payments, this number does not include lessons and campers. In 2009, the pool had 20,245 visits. In 2008, the pool had over 26,000 visits. In 2009, there were 1,938 pool members.

**Q: How did the community rate the pool on the Community Wide survey?**

**A:** The top three highest rated facilities were the beach, the parks, and pool.

**Q: Will the usage rates change if a new pool is built?**

**A:** This is difficult to predict as it will depend on what is built and how it is used by Lake Bluff residents and others.

**Q: Has dialogue been entered into with Lake Forest about building a joint pool?**

**A:** Yes, there have been conversations but there are many aspects to be explored.

**Q: Was the Board aware the pool was in such poor condition?**

**A:** No, the audit pointed out underlying conditions that the Board did not anticipate. The staff has worked hard over the years to maintain the pool, but it was built in 1963. The Board had identified smaller capital repairs (\$15,000-\$25,000 avg. per year) and had planned for them through the budget process; however the Virginia Game Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (VGB) mandated a new review process that identified more significant problems. The VGB is a new requirement enforced by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

## **General Pool Questions:**

**Q: Are you closing the pools for the 2010 season? If so, how long will the pool need to be closed?**

**A:** No decision has been made at this point. The Board of Commissioners and staff will review all short-term options in regards to the 2010 pool season and communicate any decisions by January 31, 2010.

**Q: If a new pool is built, can one pool be open while building a new pool?**

**A:** It depends on the design and location of a new pool.

**Q: Will the pools be shut down if not compliant by the summer of 2010?**

**A:** All VGB compliances must be met before opening in 2010.

**Q: How can you ensure compliance with the state emergency rules so that additional work isn't required in 2011?**

**A:** Emergency rules are no longer in force – the pools need to comply with the state rulings, which are still being finalized.

**Q: Is money in the budget for these repairs?**

**A:** Staff is in the process of preparing a break-even 2010 budget; no dollars are currently allocated for these repairs. The pool generates approximately \$240,000 in revenue per year making it a break-even entity. Most Park District pools do not make money. The majority of revenue comes from membership passes (\$101,000), daily passes (\$32,000), and the rental to the Lake Forest Swim Club. The pool cash balance is approximately \$55,200, which will not cover these extensive repairs.

**Q: How is the Park District planning to pay for the minimum and maximum repairs?**

**A:** The Board of Commissioners will receive financial forecasts and a balanced budget allowing for informed decisions about how to address these repairs and other expenses during the December 8 budget workshop meeting.

**Q: What is the challenge to obtain funds – i.e., bond?**

**A:** The Park District has retained a Financial Advisor to assist with restructuring its debt. The Park District has other debt that is not expected to retire for 15-20 years. If the Park District obtains bonds, it would be extremely difficult for the Park District to pay for the bonds.

**Q: How many Illinois communities of the same size as Lake Bluff have pools in this price range?**

**A:** Itasca has a 1,000-bather load pool for the community of 12,000 people. Lake Bluff pool bather load is 900 for the community of 8,500. This may be too large for the Lake Bluff community. The bather load is based on a percent (3-7%) of the population. Current statistics for Lake Bluff would indicate a bather load of approximately 560. However, with the surrounding communities of Great Lakes and Lake Forest using the pool, additional research may be required to qualify the usage from these communities and therefore calculate the correct bather load/pool size.

**Q: How much would it cost to build a new pool complex – wading, main and bath houses included?**

**A:** The repair or replace costs are similar at approximately \$5-6 million. If bather load is reduced then costs decline; added water features and slides increase costs. Replacement gives the community the option to design a useful, well thought out design that supports how the pool will be used.

**Q: Outline the timetable for minimum repairs, maximum repairs, and for a new facility.**

**A:** All short term options will be presented to the Board of Commissioners by mid-January. Constructing a new facility would take approximately 18-20 months. The repair process needs to begin as soon as possible and would take approximately five months.

If reconstruction or large repairs (\$20,000 or more) occur, significant time is needed for the bidding process; permit process at the state level, and for the actual repairs. If we start too late, the pool will not open in time for the summer of 2010. The surge tank in the main pool is a priority while other repairs can be completed between seasons.

**Q: What is the pool license requirement and cost for 2010 operations?**

**A:** Both pools must be in compliance with VGB for 2010 opening. Cost for the wading pool is estimated at \$612,000 and the main pool cost is approximately \$4,000 for VGB only. The main repair issue of the main pool is the surge tank which may cost \$50,000-\$75,000.

**Q: How are the estimated costs calculated? Is the multiplier of 1.45% too high?**

**A:** Costs are based on actual five-year repair/new construction history. These costs can change based on current market conditions. The 1.45% multiplier is a conservative number and is in line with the industry.

**Q: Does FGM build pools? Does Aquatic Excellence build pools?**

**A:** No, both companies are involved in design only. These firms provide assistance with bid and permit documents that would be given to qualified pool contractors.

**Q: Will the Park District raise the cost of a pool pass?**

**A:** The Board will be challenged to maintain the cost of a pass especially if there is no wading pool for 2010. A \$5-6 million dollar bond may not cover all costs. The board will approve 2010 prices at the December 14 Regular Board Meeting.

**Q: Would the community be involved in the design decision process?**

**A:** A Planning Team would be recommended to the Board. A Planning Team could look at other pools, create a community wish list, and share the findings at public input meetings.

**Q: Have you (Executive Director Salski) been involved in any other pool design/builds?**

**A:** Yes, Wheeling Park District in 2003-4.

**Q: Does the cost of new pools include all ADA requirements?**

**A:** Yes, a new pool must meet all code and ADA requirements.

**Q: Can a temporary fiberglass pool be used for the summer?**

**A:** No, permits would be needed regardless of pool type.

**Q: Can a new pool be built in one year?**

**A:** Yes, typically a pool is built from the close of the season and opened at the start of the next season.

### **Wading Pool:**

**Q: Can you cut open the wading pool drains?**

**A:** No, the wading pool has a liner, cutting open the liner and concrete shell would mean replacement of the liner in addition to repairing the concrete.

### **Main Pool:**

**Q: Will surge tank repair guarantee opening for 2010?**

**A:** If the surge tank is not repaired and it fails during the 2010 swim season, the pool would immediately be shut down. There are two options for repair: 1) build a concrete surge tank in existing space, or 2) locate the new tank under the pool deck and extend/eliminate some pool piping. A concrete surge tank will last 20-30 years and should not require a permit. No cost estimates are available for these options yet.

There is potential for the liner or other issues to occur; however the surge tank is the most notable repair.

**Q: If we repair based on the above question is the pump sufficient?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: If the surge tank is replaced can it be re-used if a new pool is built?**

**A:** It depends on the size and location of a new pool. The surge tank may be reused. If a new pool is built, it is suggested to move the mechanical room which could also mean relocating the surge tank. The filter system currently in place is excellent and can be reused.

**Q: Can the surge tank be lined?**

**A:** No, the tank was lined previously and is rusting from the inside out.

**Q: What will the repair cost savings if the slides are removed?**

**A:** Approximately \$14,000.

**Q: Are you planning on spending \$50,000 on the surge tank repairs before you consider building a new pool?**

**A:** Yes, staff is looking at all options for the short term or to ensure a 2010 season opening.

**Q: Would you recover the surge tank repair cost in one season?**

**A:** No, the repairs would guarantee a full swim season for 2010 versus a shortened season with limited revenue.

**Q: Is the main pool drain easier to repair than the wading pool?**

**A:** Yes, the wading pool has other significant issues.

**Q: Is the gutter repair major and is the \$200,000-\$250,000 cost to repair included in the \$400,000?**

**A:** The repair is a code violation but not a major priority. The issues arise with usage and bacteria growth. The estimated cost is included in the \$330,000 to 400,000.

**Q: How long will the gutter repair last?**

**A:** Depending on the pool settlement, the repair would not be a permanent solution. Given the unknown water leakage, settlement may occur at a faster rate. Repair only fixes the gutters and does not address the settlement issues.

**Q: Given the excessive water leakage, and the gutter issues; are these costs accurate?**

**A:** The estimates are accurate only as the naked eye can see. A televised look at all piping would give the best answer as to where the water leakage is and then a new repair estimate can be prepared.

**Q: Can the pool be mud-jacked up to make the gutters level?**

**A:** No, mud jacking only works on flat surfaces not on pools.

**Q: Can a new pool have diving boards? Can we re-use the ones we have?**

**A:** Yes, the budget was calculated with similar boards in place. Yes, current boards may be re-used as long as they are compliant with all codes.