



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2015

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration for the Release of \$10,000 from Contingent Reserve Funding for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Programming.

**ISSUE:** Consideration for the release of contingent funding for Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) programming in FY 2016.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council release \$10,000 from FY 2016 contingent reserves funding for RPCA "Power Swim" programming initiative.

**BACKGROUND:** Through the add/delete process of the FY 2016 budget approval process, the City Council set aside \$10,000 in contingent reserves for recreation center programming. The release of these funds requires a written proposal from City staff to City Council on how to most effectively allocate the funding. The contingent reserves plan was the result of budget reductions and the related discussion in regard to reducing operating hours at William Ramsay Recreation Center on Sundays and the four (4) Federal holidays.

**DISCUSSION:** In the Department's most recent Needs Assessment, and in the survey related to the upcoming construction of the new Patrick Henry Recreation Center, results show that aquatic programming is the number one stated need of residents. Swim lessons provided by the department have historically been in high demand. The demand is built upon traditional Saturday morning classes which fill up as quickly as they are advertised; however, other days and times have less registration.

RPCA registration data shows that the Out of School Time Program (OSTP) after-school enrollment on the West End of the City has the highest registration numbers particularly at William Ramsay and Patrick Henry Recreation Centers. However, less than 2% of those children register for formal swim classes. In addition, 85% of students enrolled at William Ramsay Elementary School and 82% of students enrolled at Patrick Henry Elementary School are eligible for free or reduced school meals. The proposed "Power Swim" program will seek to meet a high need (swim lessons and water safety) while providing it during a time that it is convenient

for parents and children with a very low fee meant to encourage commitment to attending all the classes. As with all programs fee assistance is available. The proposed program will have higher student to instructor ratios than a market rate Learn to Swim class but will provide more quality instruction than basic water safety classes.

The “Power Swim” program will be offered as an enhancement to the youth enrolled in the William Ramsay and Patrick Henry Recreation Centers’ Out of School Time Power-On Program. The program will be offered in the spring to provide valuable water safety and swim instruction prior to the summer outdoor pool, swim, and water sports season, because learning to swim significantly reduces the risk of drowning. When children complete swim lessons they are safer around water and have a new life skill providing a fitness benefit. RPCA will transport class participants from the two locations to the Chinguapin Recreation and Aquatics Center and back. Four sessions of classes are planned between March and June. Times are scheduled Monday and Wednesday from 4:00 p.m. to 5:10 p.m.

If this pilot program is successful and meets the needs and objectives stated in this memorandum, there may be opportunities to pursue additional classes for other centers through funding from the USA Swimming Foundation. RPCA should be eligible to apply for funding next calendar year by reporting numbers related to the “Power Swim” program and other outreach swimming activities for the community (i.e. Family Fun Nights, Wahoos Swim Team, Splash with Dash). The USA Swimming Foundation awards grants on an annual basis to Make a Splash Local Partners (RPCA is a partner) who provide services to young people who, otherwise, would not have the opportunity to participate in water safety instructional programs and/or swimming lessons.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The program will use the \$10,000 contingent reserves to provide multiple sessions consisting of eight water safety and swim lessons during the after school program hours. The funding will cover the costs of swim instructors, recreation leaders, and transportation fees. Total cost of the program is forecasted to be \$12,408, offset by revenues of \$2,000 serving approximately 150 students. The class participation fee will be \$19 (fee assistance applies).

**STAFF:**

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