

To: Oregon Legislature's Joint Committee on Ways and Means
From: North Bend City Councilor Susanna Noordhoff 541-756-6060
Date: Thursday April 22, 2021
Re: Testimony on American Rescue Plan Priorities - request for funds

I wish to request matching funds for capital improvements to the North Bend Municipal Pool. In 1955, City residents passed a bond to construct the pool on North Bend School District property after five children drowned in local rivers. Every child should know how to swim. Ownership passed from the School District to the City in 1991. The indoor pool has operated year-round for an average 250 to 300 people daily. Local children take swimming lessons; area high schools and SW Oregon Community College hold practice and swim meets; Coast Guard Station North Bend uses the pool for training, and the entire community can swim laps and use the pool for recreation.

Pool operation has held steady at 5% of the City's budget at around \$400K, but has always operated at a deficit which is now increasing due to the age and unreliability of pool equipment. Pool operation expense was \$485K in 2019-2020. Annual income from user fees has stayed steady at approximately \$200K.

Obsolete equipment replacements are estimated as follows:

- the original 1957 Filtration System, for which filters must be hand-packed, as they are no longer commercially available - \$150K
 - the 35-year old Boiler - \$170K
 - inefficient and outdated Pumps - \$55K
 - the Air Handling System - \$200K
- Total for the above items is \$575K

Other beneficial capital projects:

- Installation of Instantaneous Hot Water System for Showers - \$20K, as the water runs for 45 seconds before any hot water from the distant boiler
- Code Compliancy Upgrades - \$20K

The City's budget cannot provide for the necessary upgrades without assistance. City costs are going up, and as North Bend is surrounded by water to the east, west and north and the City of Coos Bay to the south, our growth potential for an increase in property tax revenue is very limited. The staff analysis also shows that

only 27% of pool users are City residents; the majority of users live in the County or other jurisdictions.

There has been discussion of forming a non-profit to manage the pool with the City providing utilities and maintenance. However, this is unlikely while the major infrastructure components (filter, boiler, pumps) are at the end of their life and unreliable. It is difficult to justify the labor involved in hand-packing of a filter cartridge dating from 1958; the complete filter cartridge is no longer available. Operational costs and headaches are growing exponentially, and yet this valued and useful resource is not one the City will willingly throw away.

If there were matching funds to assist with replacement of the operational components, the City will find funds to replace these items, and consider all options to keep the pool open and operational. Please consider aiding the City in keeping the pool as the year-round resource for Coos County swimming lessons, adult workouts, family recreation, school and college swim meets, and Coast Guard training exercises. Thank you for your consideration!