

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: February 10, 2022
From: City Manager Department
Subject: Lifeguard Services Updates

Recommended Action: 1) Approve Resolution Amending the Hourly and Seasonal Salary Schedule and modifying the City of Capitola Beach Lifeguard/Junior Guard Instructor job description; 2) Authorize the City Manager to execute a side letter to the Lifeguard Services Agreement with the City of Santa Cruz, increasing the amount of the Agreement to \$110,119; and 3) Receive report regarding seasonal staffing plans for summer 2022.

Background: Since 2012 Capitola has partnered with the City of Santa Cruz to provide seasonal summer lifeguards on Capitola Beach. Under the agreement Capitola covers the cost incurred by Santa Cruz for the additional lifeguards necessary to staff Capitola's two towers. In February 2021, the City and Santa Cruz extended the agreement by two-years. That extended agreement will end in September 2022.

The City entered a separate contract in 2019 with Central Fire District (Central Fire) to provide lifeguard training services to Capitola Junior Lifeguard Instructors. As a District with marine emergency response responsibilities, Central Fire has been an excellent partner to provide training services that meet or exceed the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) standards for Open Water Lifesaving. As part of this agreement, the City and Central Fire have discussed plans for Central Fire to provide lifeguard tower services on Capitola Beach (in place of Santa Cruz City Fire Department staff). The target to begin operation was the 2023 season.

During normal operations the Capitola Junior Lifeguard program hires 24 seasonal staff, including: one Coordinator, one Assistant Coordinator and 22 Instructors. The past two summers, the Recreation Division has provided a modified Junior Guard program, due to COVID-19, which utilized half the typical number of seasonal staff. Retention is an important factor for the recruitment of seasonal staff.

The City's hourly and seasonal employees are paid pursuant to the City's adopted Hourly and Seasonal Salary Schedule. Hourly and seasonal positions are not represented by any labor union and are not subject to any existing memorandum of understanding (MOU), therefore the City retains the authority to modify that schedule at any time. The City last adjusted the hourly pay schedule in December 2021, prompted by the increases to minimum wage.

Discussion: The Recreation Division has begun the recruitment process for 2022 seasonal positions using the approved salaries. Since the recruitment started, staff became aware that the Beach Lifeguard/Junior Lifeguard Instructor salaries in neighboring jurisdictions have increased significantly since the beginning of 2022. To ensure a successful recruitment for this year's seasonal employees, Staff recommends adjusting the salaries of the Junior Lifeguard Instructor by approximately 11.9%, the Junior Lifeguard Assistant Coordinator by approximately 6.9% and the salary of the Junior Lifeguard Coordinator by about 1.5% to be more competitive in the recruitment process. This will cost an additional \$20,000 over the entire summer. A resolution accounting for these proposed changes to the salary schedule is included as Attachment 1.

Recently, the City of Santa Cruz requested a \$19,000 increase to their contract for lifeguard services, bringing the total contract amount for the summer of 2022 to \$101,119. The cost increase is due to an approximately \$5 per hour increase in Santa Cruz's hourly employee pay

rates. As the intent of the contract with Santa Cruz is to offset their direct costs to provide lifeguard services in Capitola, staff recommends Council approve the \$19,000 increase.

Also in November 2021, Central Fire District met with City staff to discuss the development of a Central Fire lifeguard program for 2023. Central is currently in the process of developing a strategic plan and therefore cannot identify a timeline to develop a beach lifeguard program in Capitola at this time. However Central has agreed to participate in Santa Cruz’s lifeguard supervisor training this summer to continue to build their internal skills and abilities.

Considering the changes to lifeguard services, staff is proposing to start taking action now to maintain as much flexibility as possible to ensure the City has a successful lifeguard program next summer, whether in partnership with Santa Cruz, Central, or a City-managed program. Therefore, staff proposes several changes to job descriptions and staffing levels.

Job Descriptions

Staff proposes two adjustments to the current Beach Lifeguard/Junior Lifeguard Instructor job description. One change adjusts the age requirement for employment. Currently the position is restricted to individuals 18 years of age or older. The USLA Open Water Lifeguard standards for Seasonal Lifeguards require that an individual be 16 years of age to obtain certification. Staff is proposing to revise the job description to “must be 17 years of age by July 1 of the applying year, or age 16 for Capitola Junior Guards who have received rank of Captain and recommended for hire by Junior Guard Coordinator”. This adjustment is modeled after established lifeguard agencies with influence in California Surf Lifesaving Association (CSLSA). A second change identifies that some personnel would be assigned “to lifeguard coverage {that} will provide continual surveillance of swimmer and other beach patrons from a tower within as assigned beach area”. The current job description only describes duties as providing instruction for Junior Guard program. Again, this is a similar adjustment to other lifeguard agencies whose employees provide both lifeguard tower service and Junior Guard instruction. The updated job descriptions are included as Attachment 2.

Staffing Levels

Staff proposes to increase the number of Capitola lifeguard staff hired this season by four. This would be done for two reasons. First, the additional staff would participate in training provided by the City of Santa Cruz and gain necessary experience as tower lifeguards. This would help the City gain the experience needed to potentially run a lifeguard program in future years, if necessary. Second the additional staff would help ensure the City has a larger pool of returning applicants for lifeguard positions in summer 2023, if the City needed to increase positions to staff the towers. The extra staff will cost approximately \$40,000 more, over the course of the summer.

Fiscal Impact: As the fiscal year ends midsummer, the lifeguard program operates over two budgets. The chart below summarizes cost.

Item	FY 21/22 additional cost	Full FY additional cost
Increase pay rates	\$7,000	\$15,000
Hire four additional seasonal staff	\$20,000	\$40,000
Increase Santa Cruz lifeguard contract	\$0	\$19,000
Total	\$27,000	\$74,000

Staff is not recommending a budget amendment at this time as the adopted budget for the Recreation Division includes necessary resources to cover the increased costs this Fiscal Year. The proposed FY 2022/23 budget will include the additional costs associated with the proposed adjustments.

Attachments:

1. Part-Time Seasonal Salary Schedule Resolution
2. Revised Beach Lifeguard/Junior Lifeguard Instructor Job Description
3. Lifeguard Services Agreement Side Letter

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Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager