



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Committee of the Whole & Common Council

Meeting Date: August 18, 2026

Item Title: Recreation Program Fee Policy

Submitted By: Matt Amundson, City Administrator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

While the Common Council should establish the overall policy framework governing recreation fees, recreation program fees are not well-suited to annual approval through the City's general fee schedule. Recreation programming is dynamic and often requires fee adjustments throughout the year based on actual operating costs, instructor availability, facility costs, participation levels, and market conditions.

Unlike licenses, permits, or utility-related fees that remain relatively stable from year to year, recreation programs are frequently added, modified, or discontinued in response to community demand. New classes, camps, leagues, and special events may be developed between budget cycles, and staff must be able to establish appropriate fees in a timely manner to market programs and open registration.

Requiring Common Council approval for every recreation fee change could delay program implementation, reduce the Department's ability to respond to resident interests, and create unnecessary administrative burdens. For example, changes in contracted instructor rates, tournament entry fees, supply costs, transportation expenses, or facility rental charges may necessitate adjustments to program fees after the annual fee schedule has been adopted.

A Recreation Program Fee Policy provides a more effective governance model by allowing the Common Council to establish the principles, cost recovery expectations, and accountability measures for fee setting while delegating fee administration to staff within those adopted parameters. This approach maintains Council oversight of recreation program philosophy and financial objectives while providing the operational flexibility necessary to manage recreation services efficiently and responsively.

Under this model, staff would continue to report recreation program performance and fee adjustments through the budget process and regular departmental reporting, ensuring transparency and accountability without requiring formal Council action for each individual program fee.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

Draft Recreation Program Fee Policy

Action Requested of Council:

Consider and take action on the Recreation Program Fee Policy