



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Committee of the Whole / Common Council Meetings

Meeting Date: March 17, 2026

Item Title: Adoption of Recreation Program Support Fund

Submitted By: Amy Jo Meyers, Recreation Director

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

The Recreation Department is requesting approval to establish a Recreation Program Support Fund to assist individuals and families who are unable to afford the full cost of participating in recreation programs. The fund would provide financial assistance to ensure equitable access to community recreation opportunities while maintaining fiscal accountability within the department.

Currently, when a participant cannot pay the full program fee, the department only requires payment for direct material costs (such as program shirts), and the remaining program balance is not collected. While this allows residents to participate, it results in lost program revenue and lacks a formal, transparent mechanism for managing fee assistance.

Establishing a dedicated Recreation Program Support Fund would create a sustainable and accountable method to provide scholarships for recreation programs while helping offset lost revenue associated with fee waivers.

Background:

The Recreation Department has historically allowed partial fee payment for participants experiencing financial hardship to maintain accessibility to programs. However, this practice has been informal and unsupported by a designated funding source.

A formal support fund would replace the current practice of absorbing uncollected fees and would allow the department to continue supporting residents in need while maintaining financial transparency and sustainability.

The fund would support the community's commitment to inclusivity, youth engagement, and access to healthy recreational opportunities for all residents.

Available Funding:

The department intends to apply for a CAE grant to provide initial seed funding for the Recreation Program Support Fund. Additional funding sources may include voluntary donations from program participants and the transfer of unused customer account credits after one full calendar year.

Funding Shortfall:

If grant funding is not awarded or if available donations and transfers do not fully support the demand for program scholarships, the fund may experience a funding shortfall. In that case, additional support may be necessary to maintain equitable access to recreation programs.

Council Determination:

Council is asked to determine whether to approve the establishment of the Recreation Program Support Fund and authorize the Recreation Department to administer the program assistance process, including the collection and allocation of donations and transferred credits.

Additional Funding Source:

If grant funding is not approved, the Recreation Department respectfully requests consideration of establishing a dedicated line item in the 2027 municipal budget to provide financial support for the Recreation Program Support Fund.

Strategic Planning Objective(s): #15 Enhance our focus on quality-of-life services.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached: Draft Recreation Program Support Fund.

Action Requested of Council: Approval to adopt the Recreation Program Support Fund.