

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

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SUBJECT

First Reading of Ordinance No. 124, 2024, Appropriating Prior Year Reserves in the General Fund and Authorizing Transfer of Appropriations to the Recreation Fund for the Purchase of a Bus for Use by the Recreation Department’s Childcare Programs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to appropriate funds designated for childcare projects to purchase a full-size bus committed to Recreation Department’s childcare programs.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

In February 2020, a City asset that had historically been used to provide childcare services, located at 906 East Stuart Street in Fort Collins, was sold by Real Estate Services. The sale proceeds of \$269,524 were designated by City leadership at the time to address undefined future childcare issues, and the funds were dedicated to an Assigned reserve titled “childcare needs”.

The Social Sustainability Department (SSD) has maintained the lead role in addressing Council’s priority focused on community-level childcare infrastructure in recent years. In May 2023, recognizing that these funds had not been activated in 3+ years, SSD initiated an internal, interdepartmental review of potential projects that might benefit City-led childcare initiatives and broader childcare interests in Fort Collins. An overview of the process and timeline is attached.

In total, 8 project options from 4 departments were identified and further explored to determine the highest and best use of the childcare funds. Through collaborative discussions, self-vetting, and probing inquiries, 1 project option remains for further funding consideration.

The purchase of a full-size bus committed to the Recreation Department’s childcare programs and related enrichment activities has been identified as a suitable investment using these assigned funds dedicated for childcare purposes.

Programming: The bus will be used primarily for the following program purposes:

- Camp Funquest and other summer youth camps.
- Other school-out day programs.
- Diversified youth recreation programs (ski trips, teen trips to corn mazes, other field trips, etc.), including Adaptive Recreation Opportunities (ARO) youth programs.
- Other City departments with youth-focused programs (when it is not needed by Recreation).
- Expanded childcare programs housed at the future southeast community center (2028).

Thirty-six (36) additional spots could be created for Camp Funquest with the addition of the bus resource. This offers a potential 22% increase in summer childcare spots provided by Recreation. 40% of enrollments in 2023 received reduced-fee tuition for income-qualified households.

The anticipated impacts of this purchase are as follows:

- Adds childcare spots by expanding day-trip participant capacity, which is currently limited by the Recreation Department's van-only fleet.
- Extends the life of Recreation's van fleet.
- Improves safety for children and staff by utilizing professional CDL drivers in a single vehicle.
- Simplifies logistics for childcare programming.

Vehicle Selection: Electric and CNG/RNG vehicle options were considered, however; those models do not have the necessary distance range to transport program participants to non-local destinations (ex: Estes Park and Denver) without re-charge or re-fuel services that are not yet easily accessible for those engine types. A diesel bus option has been identified as a suitable choice given its longer distance range capacity, as well as modern, lower-emission engines that are comparable with CNG/RNG vehicles. The City's Purchasing Department has indicated that vendor sourcing for this bus purchase can be completed following a Cooperative Contract vendor process.

Operations & Maintenance:

Drivers – Recreation Department will work with PSD to hire their CDL-qualified drivers during the out-of-school season. Recreation could also pay to have 2-3 Senior Coordinators (City staff) in youth programming complete their CDL to ensure there are enough qualified drivers to ensure there are a sufficient number of qualified drivers in the event that the PSD driver shortage extends into summer programming.

Storage – The bus will be parked at the fleet services yard when not in operation.

Budget – Recreation has existing O&M budgeted for the bus that was decommissioned, which will be assigned to this new bus.

Service – Repairs and upkeep will follow the recommended fleet maintenance program.

Durability – The anticipated useful life of the bus would be 10-12 years.

Transfort – The bus will remain independent from the Transfort fleet. Recreation is unable to use the Transfort fleet due to federal funding restrictions on those assets.

TBL Scan: A Triple Bottom Line Scan was completed on the purchase of a new diesel engine bus to assess the impacts of acquiring this new asset against environmental, economic, and social health interests. The results are included as an attachment and reflect the following:

- Strong, positive direct impacts for Social interests
- Moderate, positive direct impacts for Economic interests
- Moderate, neutral indirect impacts for Environmental interest

Equity Scan: An Equity Scan was completed by the City’s Equity Office to evaluate the proposed bus purchase against the City’s interests related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The results are included as an attachment and reflect the following:

- Addresses community interest to increase childcare spots.
- Increases inclusion for youth with disabilities.
- Program materials are provided in Spanish. Consider translation/interpretation to Mandarin, as well as general reminder to provide translation/interpretation services for related programming.

Budget History: Prior budget offers for a bus purchase were not funded in the City’s 2020, 2021 and 2022 Budgeting For Outcomes (BFO) cycles. Recreation will evaluate other funding mechanisms to purchase a bus if funding is not secured with these dedicated childcare funds.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

This appropriation will utilize \$169,500 from the Childcare Reserve in the General Fund for transfer to the Recreation Department for the bus purchase, branded wrap and kit. The remaining \$100,024 will be retained for consideration of future eligible projects within the City organization.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

None.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance for Consideration
2. Project Review Process
3. Triple Bottom Line Scan
4. Equity Scan