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(Neb.)-Burbach presents to full house at City Hall

By: Miles Bannan Posted at: 02/12/2013 09:45 PM

Dave Burbach of Burbach Aquatics, Inc. presented details and a set of options to the full Chadron city council and a large attendance of community members Tuesday night. No vote was taken on the project as the special workshop was convened purely to provide further information on the proposal from Burbach Aquatics.

Mayor Karin Fischer corrected statements she had made previously regarding the city's obligation to hold a referendum. The preliminary contract states only that the city would be bound to work with Burbach Aquatics on any pool project undertaken in the next five years. Burbach reiterated that the city could suspend the project at any point in the process and pay only for the services rendered up to that point.

The expense of any proposed project was a concern for several attendees, and Burbach said that a cost estimate would be possible after Burbach Aquatics completes a review of the current facility to determine the cost of any necessary upgrades. Burbach said that from his experience, there are several common areas that require upgrades: "There might be some accessibility issues with the bath house, that's a common item. Sometimes the recirculation system needs upgrading because the health department here in Nebraska is constantly upgrading and modernizing their pool code."

Though he was not able to provide figures at Tuesday evening's workshop, Burbach told the council that it was unlikely the city would have to bear the full cost of the pool, as Burbach Aquatics will work with the pool committee to apply for grants and communities are typically able to do fund raising to cover a portion of the expense.

As for the building itself, Burbach presented several possible options to the council. The first was an enclosure for the existing pool with no added features. The second proposal added a wellness pool for therapy and rehabilitation and included a splash pad for younger children. The third option included the wellness pool and splash pad, as well as a second story above the pool area containing a walking track and fitness equipment.

Burbach said the planning, fund raising, and design portion of the project would take up to 12 months, with construction taking 12 to 14 months after that. Burbach said that in an ideal scenario, the pool would close in August after a normal summer season and remain closed until the following September or October.

On top of the equipment to keep the pool warm and sanitized year-round, Burbach said the facility would also require heating, air conditioning, and de-humidifying equipment to make the environment more comfortable and to decrease wear on the walls of the building. Burbach said green energy solutions such as heat pumps and solar panels can be used to defray the pool's energy costs.

Speaking of the benefits of the proposed pool, Burbach said that his company designs facilities mostly for small, rural communities and that the facilities have a strong track record of positive economic impact. He said that a large portion of the economic benefit comes from attracting new families to the community.

Following the presentation, several community members asked questions and the council members made their closing statements. Council member Bill Barth asked for community members to contact him with their comments and questions, and council member Levi Grant reiterated that sentiment and asked people to seek out information before making up their minds about the project.

Grant also stated that he's heard several misconceptions about the project and closed by saying, "We need to clarify some of this."

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