

Board weighs options for future of pool

Written by Steve Ostermann
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Officials agree that aquatic center should stay open this year, but cost of upgrades raises concern

With the summer pool season just around the corner, Village of Grafton officials are weighing options for the future of the Grafton Family Aquatic Center.

Although trustees agreed last week that budget cuts should not include closing the facility, they are considering long-term alternatives that include building a new pool.

A master list of potential budget changes reviewed at by the Village Board on April 25 includes closing the center, 649 N. Green Bay Rd. — a move Village Administrator Darrell Hofland said would save \$69,945.

If that option was chosen, the village could reimburse residents for the cost of purchasing season passes to other community pools, Hofland said.

However, during a public informational meeting on the budget, a number of residents said they did not want the pool closed. Their opinion was shared by several board members.

“We need to keep the pool open,” Trustee Richard Rieck said.

Officials have also voiced concern about the condition of the pool, which opened in 1992. In addition to ongoing maintenance, the facility has required numerous repairs, including fixing a leak this summer.

A 2010 evaluation of the pool done by Water Technology Inc. of Beaver Dam indicated the center is well-maintained for its age but will require significant improvements in the next five years. Among the recommendations are upgrades to the pumps, motors and bathhouse.

The firm’s study stated that completing the highest-priority items in the next two years will cost \$31,000 to \$48,000.

Completing all recommended upgrades in the next six to 10 years could cost \$1.5 to \$2 million, according to the study.

Rather than undertake extensive repairs, officials have proposed building a new facility. In 2009, the village bought 3.5 acres just south of the center, and earmarked the parcel as a future pool site.

“It is probably better to wait four or five years to close the pool,” Hofland said.

Another option on the list of potential budget changes is closing the center and constructing one or two “splash pads” to provide aquatic recreation, Hofland said.

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The board has taken no action on pool operations for this year. Last week, the budget options were sent to department heads for further review and will be discussed again at an informational meeting in late May.