



Agenda Item No. 8.

Staff Report

Date: October 13, 2022

To: Mayor Kuhl and Council Members

From: Gretchen Castets, Recreation Manager

Subject: Ross Recreation Extended Childcare Pilot Program and Budget Adjustment Recommended as a Result of Town Council Direction

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Town Council review the information provided related to the costs and logistics of resuming the Kid's Club extended care program as a pilot program from January 2023 – June 2023 and provide direction to the Town Manager on how to proceed including the additional appropriation of funds if necessary. If the Town Council directs the establishment of pilot program, then it is recommended that the Town Council amend the current fiscal year budget (account number 6192-95 Recreation Leaders/Instructors) from \$120,000 to \$153,000 to pay for the increased costs associated with running the pilot program.

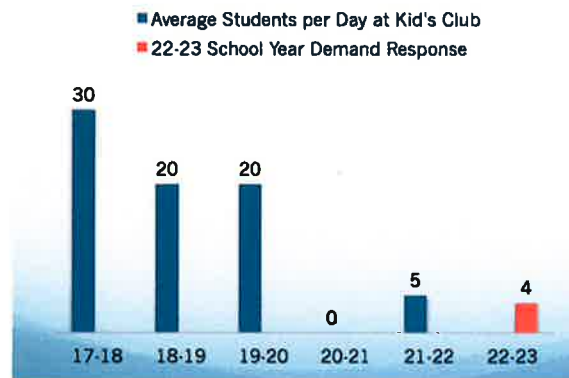
Background:

The Kid's Club program was created by a Ross Recreation staff member in 2013. Prior to 2013, Ross Recreation did not have an extended afterschool care program and instead ran specialized enrichment programs and youth sports. The Kid's Club program initially ran Monday-Friday from the time of school dismissal to 5:30pm and had two part-time employees that staffed the program. Prior to COVID, the Kid's Club program had between 20-30 students enrolled per day and often, additional drop-in participants. When learning went virtual, due to COVID, Kid's Club (along with all recreation in-person programs) was temporarily canceled. The 2021-22 academic school year allowed for in-person learning and programs to return and Kid's Club was offered. There was a dramatic decrease in enrollment and there were only four to five students on average enrolled per day. The demand for extended care in Ross had decreased greatly, and there was a much higher demand for enrichment programs.

Due to the steep decrease in enrollment, Ross Recreation did not offer the Kid's Club program for the 22-23 academic year. The community and school staff were alerted to this change and in response, Ross School Interim Superintendent David Rice shared concerns that the demand may have changed since the previous school year, so he sent out an email to the incoming K-5th families to assess the demand for the Kids Club program. Ross Recreation staff also continued

outreach to Ross School families. The continued outreach did not produce significant additional interest in the program: Only four families expressed interest in the program, and not all of them would enroll their children every day. Based on this information, it was determined that Ross Recreation would not offer Kid's Club due to the low demand.

Kid's Club Enrollment 2017-2022



At the request of Mayor Pro Tem Brekhus, staff provided a presentation during the September 8, 2022 Town Council meeting that included the status of the current Ross Recreation programming and highlights from the department with a focus on the Kid's Club extended care topic. The Town Council stated its interest in exploring the costs and logistics associated with restarting the Kid's Club program and asked that this information be presented at the October 13, 2022 Town Council meeting.

Discussion:

The cost to run the Kid's Club is approximately \$2,500 per week. This amount consists of two part-time staff members, utilities, administrative staff time, supplies, a portion of the lease amount paid to the Ross School under its lease agreement with Ross Recreation, and miscellaneous expenses attributed to the cost of running this type of after school program.

Kid's Club Weekly Expense Breakdown (based on the program running Mon-Fri; 2pm-5:30pm)

Description	Expense	Amount per week	Total
Kid's Club Lead Instructor	\$30/hr + \$6 town employee expense	20 hrs	\$ 720.00
Kid's Club Instructor	\$25/hr + \$5 town employee expense	20hrs	\$ 600.00
Rec Manager Time	\$45/hr	5hrs	\$ 225.00
Rec Specialist	\$36/hr	5hrs	\$ 180.00
Rec specialist	\$31/hr	5hrs	\$ 155.00
Rent	\$150/week		\$ 150.00
Supplies	\$200/week		\$ 200.00
Custodial	\$250/week		\$ 250.00
Training/background/etc	\$20/week		\$ 20.00

Weekly Total Expenses: \$2,500.00

Based on the weekly amount of \$2,500 to run the program, the cost of Kid's Club is estimated to be \$12/hr. There would need to be an equivalent of 13 full-time kinder kids and/or 15 1st-5th graders to break even. The cost to run this program is similar to neighboring towns and the amount charged per hour falls within local industry standards. Please note that a 20% discount is provided to all Ross School staff that enroll their child(ren) in the program.

Some towns subsidize certain types of recreation programming to reflect the needs of the community the recreation department serves. For example, a common area of subsidy is programming for seniors who are often on fixed incomes and who studies have shown benefit greatly from participating in public recreation programming. Other cities may subsidize a certain program in order to reach a goal, for example, swimming lessons for children might be subsidized if the community is located near a body of water and there is a goal increasing children's swimming proficiency. The subsidy is usually made feasible by charging more for adult programming or charging more for facility rentals. The challenge in Ross is that the department does not have facility rentals nor much programming for adults. Nonetheless, if enrollment does not reach the number required to break even, the Town Council may decide to subsidize the program. In this case, staff requests that the Town Council takes action to determine what level of subsidy they are comfortable with in a worst-case scenario of very low enrollment. For example, if only four children are enrolled every day in the Kids Club program, the Town would need to subsidize the program by \$1,650 per week or \$33,00 for the period January through June 2023 (20 academic weeks). Alternatively, the Town Council could identify a smaller subsidy cap that it is willing to provide during the pilot period. There is also the chance that there is a higher demand for the program and less subsidy would be required from the Town, however that will not be able to be determined until staff receives pledges from the families/opens registration for the program.

It is important to note that if Kid's Club resumes, the recreation classroom will no longer be available for enrichment classes at the time of dismissal, as Ross School classrooms are not available to the recreation department until 3:30pm, which is 1.5 hours after kinder dismissal and a half hour after 1-2nd grades dismissal. The revenue that Ross Recreation is generating by utilizing the recreation classroom this fall session is \$20,000 in revenue with a net of \$6,000. The

enrichment programs are run by independent contractors who are required to pay for their own supplies, insurance and a portion of the rent/custodial services. The \$6,000 net provides funding for additional Town expenses such as administrative staff time and marketing efforts. Without the use of the recreation classroom, Ross Recreation will need to either eliminate some of these enrichment courses, work with the school to find alternative locations, try to run them outdoors (which would be limited due to weather conditions), or some combination of these actions.

Options:

1. Town Council direct staff to maintain current status quo programming:
 - a. Enrichment classes with the following goals:
 - i. Classes that are offered at the time of school dismissal so that parents do not need to report to campus at the end of the school day
 - ii. Enrichment classes run for a similar time to what extended care would cover to the best of the department's ability
 - iii. Ross Recreation office staff will assist students to their enrichment classes so that parents are not required to.
2. Town Council to direct staff to re-establish a Kid's Club extended care after school pilot program:
 - a. The pilot program will run from January 2023-June 2023
 - b. Obtain Kid's Club participation pledge from Ross School families and report results to the Town Council on November 10, 2022.
 - i. Interim Superintendent David Rice, will send out an email to K-5th families to obtain pledges, which will help guide Ross Recreation staff as to how many children will be participating in the program. The email will be sent on 10/14/22 if the Town Council chooses to move forward with the pilot program and there will be a deadline of 10/28/22 for families to reply.
 - ii. At the suggestion of Interim Superintendent David Rice, staff will require a \$100 non-refundable deposit per participant to accompany the pledge.
 - c. If the pilot program is approved, Ross Recreation staff will need to begin the hiring process for staff immediately as this can be a very challenging process as currently experienced in other departments and towns.
 - d. Ross Recreation will report back to the Town Council in the spring as to the status of enrollment and the Town subsidy and seek direction on whether or not to continue the pilot program for the Fall 2023 term.

Fiscal impacts:

The fiscal impact of offering the after school extended care pilot program for the period January through end of school in June 2023 is estimated to be a maximum of \$33,000. This is with the assumption that there is a minimum of four children enrolled in Kid's Club per day. If there are more than four children enrolled per day, the amount that would need to be subsidized would decrease with each additional child enrolled.

Pilot Program Timeline if approved:

1. October 14th 2022 – E-mail will be sent to all K-5th Ross School families asking for a pledge and \$100 deposit for each child from those families that will utilize the Kid's Club program.
2. October 14, 2022– Job listing for two part-time recreation instructors will be advertised
3. October 28, 2022 – deadline to receive enrollment pledges from families and enrollment deposits.
4. October 31, 2022 – Registration will open for Kid's Club program and marketing efforts will be put into place through the recreation department and superintendent's office
5. January 4, 2023 – First day of Kid's Club (this is contingent upon the successful hiring of two part-time instructors by this date)