

5/8/2018 – quick notes following 5/7 council meeting posted to Facebook:

It is going to take me some time to prepare the full minutes from last night's council meeting. However, I know people are anxious to hear about the decision made regarding pool repairs. Also, to keep rumors from morphing into misinformation, here is a quick recap.

In order to keep the pool open this summer, the City Council approved pursuing a temporary fix of grouting and caulking cracks in the pool. The council will also begin the process of obtaining bids for a new liner to be installed in the fall or next spring. Grants, fundraisers, and donations will be pursued as well as borrowing money from the O'Dell Fund with a repayment plan set by ordinance.

Here's a bit more detail:

Last summer, the pool leaked a considerable amount of water. This spring, the drain lines were pressure tested and a camera was sent through the line. It appears that there are no leaks in the drain.

The pool has many cracks that have been grouted and caulked over the years. An estimate to have this done again this year came in at \$6,100. This is a temporary fix. It might not fix all of the leaks, but hopefully will slow it down.

A long-term fix is to have a new liner installed. The estimate we received for that was \$70,000. However, the council needs to pass an ordinance to approve the expenditure, utilizing money we will borrow from the O'Dell Fund. The plan is to approve spending up to \$100,000 of the O'Dell Fund and repay \$10,000 a year for 10 years to replenish the funds.

For any expenditures over \$50,000, the city must publish that we are accepting bids, wait for bids to be received, open the bids, and accept the lowest bid that meets specifications. This process can not be completed with enough time for repairs to be done this summer while still keeping the pool open.

Therefore, the decision was made to approve spending the estimated \$6,100 on grouting and caulking the cracks.

A few people at the meeting were angry that this was not addressed in the fall. However, I'd like to ask everyone to consider everything that was going on last summer and fall that made the pool issues be tabled til this spring.

The Daycare had a \$19,000 deficit just for January through July of 2017. The Director resigned in July. In August, Katie Stiefvater and Stephanie Holland took over as Director and Co-Director, respectively. Along with a lot of engagement from the daycare parents, the daycare has shown an immediate, amazing turn around and is seeing modest profits each month.

In August, the Finance Officer resigned. The Council had to go through the process of publishing the job opening and reviewing applications. Once I was hired, I received two days of training on August 28 and 29 on the water billing process before the previous Finance Officer left.

In September, the 2018 Budget was due by the 30th, and it hadn't been started. By holding a few special council meetings, we were able to develop and approve the 2018 Budget on time.

In October, we were focused on the bidding process for garbage service. Our existing contract was expiring at the end of the year.

By November, the weather was too poor to pursue any fixes to the pool so the discussion was tabled til early spring. We've had snow through early April, leaving little time for diagnosing the problem and getting repair estimates.

Now that we've spent time this spring looking into the root cause of the leaks, we are now pursuing a temporary fix to allow the pool to open this summer, and will also begin the process so we can install a new liner as a permanent fix.

While hindsight is 20/20 and it would have been preferable to address this sooner, it is my opinion that the city is making some very positive steps in the right direction in multiple areas, and we are all doing the best we can with the knowledge we have. Citizens are always welcome at City Council meetings to hear about the work that is being done.

Well, that wasn't as short of a recap as I intended when I started, but I hope that gives you the information you'd like to know. As always, questions/comments can be sent to the city at montrose@goldenwest.net.

Stay tuned for full meeting minutes later this week.