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## **Desert Hot Springs leaders urge teens to take concerns to school district**

### **High school swim team upset city has no money to keep pool open so they can practice**



Members of the Desert Hot Springs High School swim team, as well as their supporters, asked City Council Tuesday why the team is not allowed to use the pool at the John Furbee Aquatic Center to practice. / Jay Calderon, The Desert Sun

**DESERT HOT SPRINGS** — Members of the Desert Hot Springs High School swim team, as well as their supporters, asked City Council Tuesday why the team is not allowed to use the pool at the John Furbee Aquatic Center to practice.

“I am just hoping we could come to some sort of agreement and keep it open,” said Judy Shea, longtime Desert Hot Springs resident, adding that she wants her tax money to go toward the pool and other programs that benefit youth.

Constructed in 2012, the aquatic center pool has only been open to the public for three months since its official opening in June 2013. Unused, the pool costs the city about \$6,000 a month to operate. The city would have to pay \$15,000 a month for the swim team to use the pool, said Interim City Manager Bob Adams.

City leaders have had to drastically cut expenses in recent months in an effort to keep the city from the possibility of municipal bankruptcy.

“To open the pool just for the school it is quite expensive,” Adams said Tuesday.

Council told the team to take their concerns to the school district.

The Palm Springs Unified School District “certainly has more funds than we do and we need the school district to step up and say we are going to fund this thing,” said Mayor Pro Tem Russell Betts.

Betts said the school district has spent about \$420 for swimming programs at Desert Hot Springs High School while spending more than \$30,000 in other valley schools.

He added that residents should express their concerns at the next district meeting. That will take place at 6 p.m. Tuesday at district headquarters, 980 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, in Palm Springs.

Councilwoman Jan Pye shared Betts’ view, saying the pool “is not open because the city cannot subsidize a school program.”

“I suggest you take this passion to the next school board meeting,” she told the team’s supporters in the audience.

After some discussion, council appointed Councilman Joe McKee and Councilman Scott Matas to a subcommittee to try to find a solution for the local swim team.

McKee said he would like to see residents of Desert Hot Springs use the John Furbee Aquatic Center but cautioned that the city is still facing major budget problems.

