

Written by

Reza Gostar

The Desert Sun

Feb. 6, 2014 | [1 Comment](#)

Desert Hot Springs, school district strike pool-use deal



The City Council unanimously approved an agreement with the Palm Springs Unified School District on Thursday to allow the Desert Hot Springs High School swim team to use the John Furbee Aquatic Center pool for practice and competition. / Desert Sun file photo

DESERT HOT SPRINGS — The City Council unanimously approved an agreement with the Palm Springs Unified School District on Thursday to allow the Desert Hot Springs High School swim team to use the John Furbee Aquatic Center pool for practice and competition.

“I am very happy and so will be my team,” said Debbie Hadden, the Golden Eagles swim team’s head varsity coach. “We are going to be there until (the end of the swimming season) May 1.”

Interim City Manager Bob Adams said that city staff went back and reevaluated the numbers and came up with a lower number for the maintenance of the pool. The district will pay the city \$10,000 for the three-month swim team season, he added.

Mayor Adam Sanchez said the decision is great news but that the council still has a lot of work to do in order to help fund city services.

Desert Hot Springs spends about \$16.6 million on city services while only collecting \$14.1 million in revenues, according to recent estimates. Public safety spending takes up the largest share of the city’s spending.

Sanchez said the council will make a decision on a proposal to increase parcel taxes on vacant land at council’s next meeting, Feb. 18.

Development Director Rudy Acosta said the pool will be ready for the team to use by Monday.

This past Tuesday, members of the swim team, as well as their supporters, expressed their concerns to council members about not being allowed to use the pool at the John Furbee Aquatic Center to practice.

Constructed in 2012, the aquatic center pool has been open to the public for only three months since its official opening in June 2013.

Desert Hot Springs Finance Director Amy Aguer said, after looking over the numbers, staff discovered that the pool costs about \$16,000 a month to maintain whether it’s used or not.

This way what the school district pays will offset the city’s cost, she added.

Councilman Joe McKee said the school district will pay the same rate it pays other schools plus a bit more because it is saving money on transportation costs.

“McKee and I worked very well together and the district was receptive to our needs,” said Councilman Scott Matas. “We worked out a very good deal.”

The school district had spent only \$420 for swimming programs at Desert Hot Springs High School while spending more than \$30,000 on programs at other valley schools.

“It doesn’t appear we received bills for Desert Hot Springs High School using the Eighth Street pool (where they practiced) for the past few years,” said Joan Boiko, school district spokeswoman, in an email. “I can’t explain why that is the case, but there are no records of charges from them for some reason even though the pool was used for practices.”

Despite the initial confusion, Hadden was very happy with the council’s decision. “We will be hosting meets and bringing in foot traffic. This will be wonderful exposure for the community and what Desert Hot Springs has to offer.”