

Cost could increase for Atchison swimming

(KAIR)--Tuesday marks the first day of spring, and Atchison City Commissioners are looking beyond the new season, to the next, as they consider a proposed price increase for admission to Atchison's municipal swimming pool.

The matter is on the agenda for consideration at Monday's meeting, with admission to the Lion's Pool proposed to increase by one dollar for the upcoming summer.

According to information included with the agenda for Monday's meeting, the current one dollar admission fee was implemented for the 2012 season, with the cost having been \$2.00 for many years prior to the decrease.

The documents indicate that use of the pool doubled from 2011 to 2012 when the decrease was approved, and it's projected that it's likely an increase would eliminate excess capacity at the pool, leading to what the documents call "safer and better experiences for pool users."

The documents cite the need to reduce the number of "unsupervised, older children who routinely pay the dollar to loiter at the facility rather than swim." The document calls that activity "a recipe for behavioral problems including theft and fighting."

It further states that "the operating costs of the Lions Pool have increased significantly over the last three seasons while the revenues relative to expenses are decreasing since 2014."

City Commissioner Shawn Rizza is a past member of the Atchison Park and Forestry Board. In a Facebook post clarifying the proposed increase, he stated "The pool had an operational deficit of \$98,714 last year, and that number doesn't even include any improvements made. Even raising rates by a dollar leaves us as the cheapest pool in the area. The pool will never have a balanced budget. It is a service the city provides for the good of the community, and that comes with a cost, but it seems fiscally responsible to have the pool users carry a share of that cost."

The original proposal to increase the cost was made by the Atchison Park and Forestry Board in 2016 to offset operation expenses, and is again proposed following further review.

The matter will be discussed when the Commission meets Monday afternoon at 4:30 at Atchison City Hall.

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