

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI
**PARKS AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

March 17, 2006

**Committee
Report No.**

_____ 06-40

Honorable Chair and Members
of the County Council
County of Maui
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii

Chair and Members:

Your Parks and Economic Development Committee, having met on November 3, 2005, December 15, 2005, and March 2, 2006, makes reference to County Communication No. 05-316, from Councilmember Jo Anne Johnson, requesting a status report on the County's pool heaters and related pool matters.

Your Committee is in receipt of a copy of correspondence dated October 20, 2005, to the Mayor, from Elliott Krash, requesting funds for the replacement of the pool heater and installation of wind abatement devices at the Upcountry Pool; and a copy of correspondence dated October 28, 2005, to Elliott Krash, from the Mayor, responding that funds are available to replace the heating system for the Upcountry pool.

Your Committee notes that a total of \$300,000 was appropriated in the General Fund for Countywide Park Improvements in the 2006 Fiscal Year (FY) Budget, of which a balance of \$260,000 is available for use.

At its meeting of November 3, 2005, your Committee met with the Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation; and Marvin Buenconsejo, Senior Account Executive, The Gas Company.

Your Committee received oral testimony from Steve Goldstein in support of replacing the pool heaters and filtration systems at the Upcountry Pool. He stated that the heaters have not been adequately maintained for the last nine years, resulting in water that is often too cold to swim in. He further stated that the filtration systems are consistently broken, causing frequent pool closures.

Your Committee received the following documents from Mr. Goldstein: 1) correspondence dated November 3, 2005, expressing support for the replacement of the Upcountry Pool heating and filtration systems; 2) correspondence from Janet Renner, expressing support for the replacement of the Upcountry Pool heating and filtration systems; 3) an article from the October 31, 2005 issue of *The Maui News*, entitled "CHECK IT OUT: Upcountry Pool in need of repair"; and 4) a copy of a petition containing 263 signatures entitled "Fix Our Upcountry Pool Now!".

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The Deputy Director stated that the majority of all County-owned pools have experienced problems with their heating systems at one time or another this year. He further stated that the problems with the heating systems may stem from consultants who are not considering the strength and consistency of the trade winds where the pools are located. As a result, the trade winds are essentially cooling off the heated pool water and causing the pool heaters to work harder than it was designed. Thus, the pool equipment is more prone to breakdown and repair. He informed your Committee that there is only one individual in the County that currently maintains all County-owned pools.

The Deputy Director noted that most of the County-owned pools do not have a back-up heating system. Therefore, when the heating system breaks down, the water will remain cold until the heater is up and running again. He further noted that prior to 1990, none of the County's pools had heating systems.

The Deputy Director stated that his Department would like to work closely with consultants when repairs are being made. He would also like to obtain oversized systems that can carry the heating load of each pool, and obtain a dual system that will continue to operate when one unit goes down. The Deputy Director further stated that The Gas Company has recently been awarded the service contract for the County's pools. The Gas Company also offers on-island technical support and a maintenance program.

The Deputy Director acknowledged that inadequate pool and equipment maintenance may be one reason why the heating and filtration systems have failed to perform efficiently. He would like to develop a preventive maintenance program in order to lengthen the life-span of the systems. He added that it may be cost-effective for the County to enter into a service contract that included a regular maintenance service program.

The Deputy Director provided a status report of each County-owned pool.

He reported that the heating system at the Kokua Pool in Kahului is currently not working. A circulation pump is on order from Honolulu and repairs will be made by The Gas Company as early as next week.

The heating system at Cooke Memorial Pool on Molokai was down for several days, but is now working. The Gas Company suspected a glitch in the system, and is expected to follow up on the problem. There were complaints that the water was too warm; however, readjusting the pool's thermostat remedied the situation.

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The heating system at the Lahaina Aquatic Center pool is currently not working. The problem may be caused by burner problems and a faulty ignition switch. The Department plans to replace approximately 70 burners, replace the ignition module, replace a gas regulator, and address concerns with the wading pool. The approximate cost for repair is \$1,000. The work should begin once the parts have arrived. Another continual problem stems from rats consuming the heater's insulation.

The heating system is now working at the Kihei Aquatic Center pool. A gas regulator will be replaced shortly and should prevent future problems with the system.

As a short-term fix, the Kahului Pool will require the replacement of a faulty ignition module, hi-limit switch, and igniter at an approximate cost of \$859. The replacement parts have been ordered and will take approximately two weeks to arrive. The long-term plan for the pool is to replace the heating system at a cost of approximately \$20,000. According to the Deputy Director, once ordered, it will take approximately six to eight weeks to arrive.

Mr. Buenconsejo added that the heating system uses lock-and-bar boiler heaters that are manufactured in Europe. He noted that The Gas Company is an authorized service representative to repair lock-and-bar boiler heaters.

The Coach Soichi Sakamoto Pool (Sakamoto Pool) in Wailuku has experienced constant problems with its heating system. The short-term plan for the pool is to have the heating system up and running for the winter season. The Department has determined that burners will require replacement, and a minor change in the plumbing must be made to achieve better water flow. The Department has further determined that a hole needs to be cut in the wall of the heater storage room to improve ventilation and allow for better combustion. The approximate cost for these short-term repairs is \$2,825. The Department's long-term plans are to replace the heating unit, tear down the existing heater storage room, remove the existing indoor heater, and replace it with two gas fire outdoor heaters to be enclosed with chain-link fencing for an approximate cost of \$60,000.

The Upcountry Pool has experienced the most problems of any other County pool. The heat pumps are improperly located next to the chemical pumps. As a result, chlorine fumes are attacking the elements of the heating systems for the training and kiddie pools. Of the six heat pumps, only three are operational. The remaining three pumps are beyond repair and need to be replaced. The Department's analysis shows that:

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1) since the heat pumps are less than heavy-duty, they were not designed to last very long; and 2) the heat pumps are improperly located, thus cold air is not vented properly, causing the heat pumps to run less efficiently. Plans for the 50-meter pool are to replace the current heat pumps with two outdoor gas fire heaters at an approximate cost of \$75,000. This will take approximately three months to complete. There are also plans to replace the two smaller heaters when the storage mechanical room is remodeled at an additional cost of \$20,000. These heaters can then be transferred to the Lahaina Aquatic Center pool to complement its heating system. There may also be long-term plans to build a new wall and half roof to redirect the wind to prevent it from prematurely cooling off the pool's water. Additional plans to replace the filtration system (currently a vacuum sand filter which, according to the Department, should never have been installed) by using the existing filter as a surge tank and installing a new high pressure sand filter on a rack above the existing filters would cost approximately \$150,000.

The Deputy Director stated that the Department's top two priorities are: 1) to replace the Upcountry Pool heating system at an approximate cost of \$75,000; and 2) to complete the short-term repairs at the Sakamoto Pool in time for the winter season at an approximate cost of \$2,825. He further stated that future plans to replace the pool filtration systems may require a request for Capital Improvement Project funds in the 2007 FY Budget. According to the Deputy Director, all of the problems with the pools, with the exception of the filtration systems, are expected to be addressed within the next few months.

Your Committee briefly discussed the installation of solar heating to heat the pools, but dismissed the idea due to the high costs involved. The Deputy Director stated that the solar panels alone would cost over \$1 million.

Your Committee inquired about the use of pool coverings to prevent heat loss. The Deputy Director advised against using coverings due to the dangers involved when the trade winds blow the covers off the pool. Your Committee further inquired about the use of retractable pool coverings. The Deputy Director acknowledged that pool coverings are currently used at the Wailuku Pool. For the Upcountry Pool, because a retractable covering would detract from the visual appeal of the area, it was suggested that a structure be built to redirect the wind over the top of the pool as a way to prevent heat loss.

Your Committee deferred the matter pending further discussion.

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By correspondence dated December 14, 2005, the Chair of your Committee transmitted a document entitled "County Pool Matrix as of December 14, 2005", summarizing the current problems with each County pool, the solutions to fix the problems, the approximate costs for repair, and the approximate time frame for the repairs to be completed.

At its meeting of December 15, 2005, your Committee met with the Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation and a Deputy Corporation Counsel.

Your Committee received public testimony from Steve Goldstein, supporting the need to repair the problems with the heater and circulation pump at the Upcountry Pool. Your Committee also received a petition entitled "Fix Our Upcountry Pool Now!" containing 30 signatures from Mr. Goldstein.

The Deputy Director provided a status update on the County's pool repairs. He stated that January 2006 is the anticipated completion for the short-term repairs at the Sakamoto Pool. He also stated that work is still being performed on the Kahului Pool, the Kihei Aquatic Center pool, and the Lahaina Aquatic Center pool. The Deputy Director further stated that the Department is working on establishing a regular maintenance program for all pools through The Gas Company.

Your Committee recommended that the Department address short-term pool repairs with monies available in the General Fund for Countywide Park Improvements. Your Committee further recommended that funds needed for long-term repairs be discussed during the FY 2007 Budget.

Your Committee deferred the matter pending further discussion.

At its meeting of March 2, 2006, your Committee met with the Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation and a Deputy Corporation Counsel.

The Deputy Director provided a status update on the County's pending pool repairs. He stated that heat pumps will likely be installed at the Upcountry pool. He further stated that the Upcountry pool uses a pool covering to ensure that heat loss is minimized.

Your Committee discussed the option of using large retractable pool coverings. The Deputy Director stated that due to the size needed and the costs involved, retractable pool coverings have not been considered.

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Your Committee acknowledged that discussion on the County's pool repairs should continue during the FY 2007 Budget session.

Your Committee voted to recommend filing of the communication.

Your Parks and Economic Development Committee **RECOMMENDS** that County Communication No. 05-316 be FILED.

Adoption of this report is respectfully requested.

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