



June 29, 2023

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Steve Kellock – Director, Recreation Services

SUBJECT : **Aquatic Staffing Update – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Board with an update on the ongoing staffing challenges associated with lifeguards, highlight the approach for summer operations in minimizing staffing availability impacts, and summarize future strategies for improving Aquatics staffing challenges. In summary, in order to prioritize outdoor pool access through the summer, some staff will be shifted out of our indoor facilities which will result in some reduction in indoor pool services hours. Reductions have been focussed in areas of low usage, while being mindful of geographic equities.

Background

As staff transition from the spring to summer schedules for Aquatic operations, Aquatic Services is now fully operational across all beaches, outdoor pools, and indoor pools.

Lifeguard recruitment efforts have been favourable, with 145 new staff (111 indoor, 34 outdoor) hired over the last 12 months. However, the root issue regarding fully staffing our aquatic facilities continues to be staff availability. There has been a notable shift in staff behaviour toward a desire for increased flexibility and reduced commitment to regularly scheduled shifts. Over the past two years, there have been unplanned closures of facilities and beaches due to staff not selecting available shifts.

Current Plan

To mitigate these challenges short-term and improve the consistency of Aquatics operations across the City, staff will implement schedule adjustments for July and August considering these principles:

- Prioritizing Outdoor Aquatics
- Ensuring equity across Aquatic operations
- Minimizing service level impacts at facilities (i.e. adjust operations based on participation data)
- Operational consistency

The following is a summary of the modified summer indoor pool hours:

(Five of the Park Board's nine indoor pools will be adjusting seasonal opening hours on one to two days per week for nine weeks, starting July 8, 2023).

The new summer schedule for the indoor pools is outlined in Appendix A. Below is a summary of the total operational hours impacted this summer:



Facility	Reduced Hours/Week
Hillcrest Pool	4
Kensington Pool	7
Lord Byng Pool	4.25
Vancouver Aquatic Centre	4
Britannia Pool	1
Total	23

This is a 3% reduction in planned service levels. However, overall, we have increased service levels over 2022 (addition of Kensington Pool and full operations for Kitsilano Pool).

Future Strategies

In addition to these immediate mitigation efforts, staff are working on strategies to maintain regular service levels at indoor pools for the fall and reviewing options to improve staffing challenges for 2024 and beyond.

Examples of these strategies include:

- Exploring partnerships with Lifesaving Society Australia to develop an overseas Lifeguard recruitment program.
- Building upon the recently launched vancouver.ca/lifeguard, a web page dedicated to lifeguard training and hiring, in addition to an external marketing campaign leading into the spring and summer sessions.
- Focusing on lifeguard training opportunities which include diversifying and expanding training options.
- Reducing the cost of lifeguard certification, including further reduced costs for Leisure Access Program (LAP) clients.
- Converting lifeguard positions into operationally efficient regular part-time positions.
- Reviewing operational practices such as scheduling processes to align shift options that best suit changing staff preferences and improving hiring timeline efficiency.
- Working with governing bodies (i.e. Provincial and National Lifesaving Society, British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association, and the Canadian Parks & Recreation Association) to address systemic, long-term challenges facing the Aquatic industry.

Next Steps

Staff will issue the notice of modified indoor pool hours to the public shortly. Based on preliminary information, we may have reduced indoor pool service levels due to the staffing challenges outlined above. Staff will continue to communicate any impacts with the public as required.

Key Messages

Staff are maintaining a consistent message with the public regarding the ongoing challenges regarding Aquatic operations. These key messages include:

- Staffing aquatic facilities has been primarily impacted due to staff availability. There has been a notable shift in behaviours toward a desire for increased flexibility and reduced commitment to regularly scheduled shifts.
- Staff are working on creative scheduling solutions and adapting operational practices to adjust to the diverse needs of this workgroup.



- The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation has a large scale of Aquatic operations, including nine indoor pools, four outdoor pools and nine beaches. The large scale of operations may periodically result in reduced service levels while Park Board staff continue implementing strategies to improve the staffing challenges.
- Park Board staff are strategically deploying Lifeguards to meet various priorities across the City, including geographic equity, participation, and consideration of diverse aquatic programming.
- Staff continue working on innovative recruiting solutions, including increasing training opportunities, exploring partnerships with various Aquatic stakeholders, and recently launching Vancouver.ca/lifeguard to promote and centralize lifeguarding career opportunities in the City.
- Lifeguard shortages are a global and systemic issue. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is committed to working with Aquatics governing bodies to develop long-term strategies to improve staffing challenges in the industry.

Staff will continue to work in the short and long-term to improve the staffing challenges faced in the City, which are mirrored across the global Aquatics industry.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Steve Kellock (he/him)
Director, Recreation Services
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/JD, SK, JSL

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
Tony Syskakis, Tanya Donaldson, Andy Teoh
PB Communications



Appendix A – 2023 Summer schedule for indoor pools

Pool	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Britannia	6:30am - 9pm	6:30am - 9pm	6:30am - 9pm	6:30am - 9pm	6:30am - 9pm	11am-7pm	11am-7pm
Hillcrest	6am - 9pm	6am - 9pm	6am - 9pm	6am - 9pm	6am - 9pm	9am-5pm	7am – 7pm
Kensington	10am – 6pm	Noon – 7:00pm	10am - 6pm	Noon – 8pm	10am - 6pm	Closed	9am - 4pm
Kerrisdale	6:30am - 8:30pm	6:30am - 8:30pm	6:30am - 8:30pm	6:30am - 8:30pm	6:30am - 8:30pm	9am - 5pm	9am - 5pm
Killarney	6:15am - 9pm	6:15am - 9pm	6:15am - 9pm	6:15am - 9pm	6:15am - 9pm	8am - 9pm	8am - 9pm
Lord Byng	6am – 8pm	6am – 8pm	6am – 8pm	6am – 8pm	6am – 8pm	9am – 1pm	Closed
Renfrew	6:30am - 9:30pm	6:30am - 9:30pm	6:30am - 9:30pm	6:30am - 9:30pm	6:30am - 9:30pm	9am - 5pm	9am - 5pm
Templeton Park	7am - 9pm	7am - 9pm	7am - 9pm	7am - 9pm	7am - 8pm	1:30pm - 7:30pm	2pm - 7:30pm
Vancouver Aquatic Centre Closed for annual refit Aug 5-Sep 10	6:30am - 9pm	6:30am - 9pm	6:30am - 9pm	6:30am - 9pm	6:30am - 9pm	8:30am – 4pm	8:30am – 4pm