

City of Dunlap Focuses on Many Pool Improvements, Grants Committee Seeks Donations to Wrap Up Projects

The Dunlap Public Pool has seen numerous improvements over the last few years. With many more items to be addressed this Spring.

Recent Improvements

In the Summer of 2022, Gross and Co. painted the interior walls of the bath house as part of their annual community service outing. Grant funding, applied for by Meredith VanHouten, City Clerk and Margo Hansen, Dunlap Grants Committee, allowed for the bathhouse floor to be sanded down and re-textured.

City workers installed diaper changing stations and enclosed message boards. A new refrigerator and freezer were donated by Bonsall TV & Appliance and Brad and Lisa Gross. A new table was donated by Dunlap Lumber, and a new metal cabinet was donated by Bomgaar's. Additionally, a new speaker was purchased using money from many local donors, and volunteers painted a mural on the side of the bathhouse.

Current Improvements

In the Fall of 2023, City Foreman, Tony Warnock; City Clerk, Meredith VanHouten; DCDC Executive Director, Jill Schaben; and representatives of the Pool, Gary and Jenn Neilsen, Jean Melby, and Ann Behrendt met to discuss pool needs. Donna Brasel, community member, initiated the meeting as a frequent visitor of the pool, hoping to address the various needs.

Per this meeting, a long wish list of tangible items and repairs was compiled. The Dunlap Grants Committee reviewed the list and hoped to work in collaboration with the City of Dunlap to help find funding and ensure these improvements were made prior to the 2024 Pool Season.

Needs listed were as follows:

Higher-Cost Needs – NOT YET FUNDED:

- Replace/repair the pool heater
- Paint and caulk the pool floor

Higher-Cost Needs – ALREADY FUNDED:

- Replace/repair the mushroom fountain
- Assemble/install two large shade structures
- Get areas of the concrete repaired

- Order/assemble two new ground-level lifeguard chairs
- Order/install a new base, seat, and umbrella for the remaining lifeguard chair
- Install a basketball hoop that was donated to the pool

Lower-Cost Needs – ALREADY FUNDED:

- Install a bottle filling station
- Replace ten commercial toilet flush valves
- Install a ceiling fan in the bathhouse
- Replace the spigot on the front of the building with a “freezeless” faucet
- Replace all the lounge chairs
- Order/install two new drain covers
- Replace two broken vents on the side of the pool
- Order/install six commercial toilet paper holders

Labor Needs

- Repaint the hazard steps near the shallow end of the pool
- Haul away any derelict benches
- Remove and dispose of an unused lifeguard chair and old umbrella stands
- Paint line around the perimeter of pool to keep kids back during breaks
- Repaint the base of the diving board
- Reinstall the original sponsorship board

The Grants Committee is planning a Park Volunteer Day in April to focus on the “labor needs” listed above, among other tasks, to prepare the pool and park for Summer.

“The Grants Committee applies for projects that we feel best align with the grant funding available,” shared Schaben. “Among the improvements, no doubt the greatest need is to get the pool heater in good shape, but we’ve struggled to find the right grant to address it.”

“It’s been my experience that grant applications for repair and maintenance projects are typically denied,” shared VanHouten. “Until recently, we thought that the heater could be repaired. Unfortunately, we’ve determined that the best long-term solution is to purchase a new heater, and a new heater costs a lot of money.”

“When we walked away from the pool review meeting last Fall, we had a big list of needs,” said Schaben.

The combined determination of the Dunlap Grants Committee and the City of Dunlap has resulted in almost all these needs being addressed ahead of the 2024 Pool Season.

“It has been no small feat,” Schaben continued, “and I’m proud of how the groups have worked together to creatively find funds. I’m also thankful for Tony Warnock and the City workers. Their willingness to install the shade structures and repair the mushroom fountain motor has saved us a lot in installation costs.”

“Even with all the grant money and donations we’ve received thus far, and the City pledging \$20,000 towards all of the pool needs on the list, we are still about \$10,000 short on a heater,” shared VanHouten.

A new pool heater will cost around \$40,000.

“We would love to see the heater replaced by the end of April,” said Schaben, “and we’re hoping to make up the difference in a hurry. Therefore, the Grants Committee is asking community members to consider donating any amount towards the pool.”

In addition to the heater, the pool needs to be painted. Painting a pool requires a 2-part epoxy and must be done by a professional. The City is currently getting quotes to determine the cost.

“We wrote a grant for pool paint, but we have not heard back yet,” said Schaben.

“Whether we get it or not, the pool is in desperate need of a repaint, so we would put any donations received toward that need as well.”

Donations can be sent to the City of Dunlap at 716 Iowa Ave, Dunlap, IA 51529 or dropped off at the Dunlap City Hall. Please write “Pool Improvements” on the memo line of any donation checks.