

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Community Human Services

Childcare, Early Years and Recreation Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Kelly Emery, Director, Childcare, Early Years and Recreation
Date: April 4, 2023
Subject: Municipal Summer Camp Fees

Recommendation.

It is recommended that:

1. An increase to municipal summer camp user fees from \$61.00 to \$75.00 (Stay-N-Play camps) and \$127.00 to \$156.00 (KIDventure camps) to more closely align with current market rates and changing costs to operate municipal summer camps be approved.

Background

Summer day camp programs have been an integral service for many years in the communities of Blenheim, Chatham, Dresden, Ridgetown, Thamesville, Tilbury, Wallaceburg and Wheatley. These programs offer a fun, interactive, and safe environment for children aged 4-12 to continue to be active during the summer months. In 2022, these camp programs provided a childcare option for more than 3,000 children across Chatham-Kent.

Summer camp programs provide the following opportunities:

- Daily swimming and/or water activities;
- Weekly field trips and/or local outings;
- Arts and crafts;
- Organized games;
- Sports and activities;
- Social interaction; and
- Mentoring/coaching.

Currently, there are two streams of municipal summer camp programs offered by Recreation & Community Engagement Services. KIDventure summer camps offer daily swimming, a weekly field trip, an indoor program location with longer hours, and optional extended program hours. Stay-n-Play summer camps offer baseline programming in park spaces and focus on free play, local outings, and quality onsite programming.

In 2022, the cost for KIDventure camp programs was \$127.00 per week whereas the cost for Stay-N-Play camps was \$61.00. Community demand necessitated a need to move more programs to the Stay-n-Play camp model post-pandemic.

The camp program types, by location, are outlined in the chart below:

Camp Program Type by Community Location for 2023

Community Location	Camp Program Type
Blenheim	Stay-N-Play
Chatham	Stay-N-Play
Chatham	KIDventure
Dresden	Stay-N-Play
Ridgetown	Stay-N-Play
Thamesville	Stay-N-Play
Tilbury	Stay-N-Play
Wallaceburg	Stay-N-Play
Wheatley	Stay-N-Play

The COVID-19 pandemic required several cancellations and operational changes to the municipal summer camp model between 2020 and 2022. During the 2022 summer season, a drastic increase in summer camp usage occurred. As part of the COVID-19 recreation recovery strategy, adaptations to the operating models of some of the programs have been required in order to maintain long term sustainability of camp programs. Such changes were based on:

- community demand;
- changes to staff training requirements;
- changes to ministry requirements (such as age of staff and staff-to-child ratios);
- shifts in local market fees for summer camp programs; and
- operating model.

These changes have necessitated the need to review user fee rates in order to achieve sustainability.

Comments

As the community changes and evolves there is a constant need to re-evaluate recreation program opportunities and ever-changing service needs.

Several alternate community partners also offer summer camp programming locally. The chart below outlines fees for several local summer camp providers for one week of summer camp programming:

Community Organization	Weekly Fee
Chatham Sports Camp	Range from \$130.00 - \$140.00
Great Lakes Gymnastics Camp	\$175.00
Gregory Drive Alliance Church Camp	\$110.00
W.I.S.H. Centre Camp	\$159.00*
YMCA Camp	Members - \$165.00 Non-Members - \$180.00

*2022 rate

Additionally, several municipal comparator's fees for one week of municipal summer camp are outlined in the chart below:

Municipality	Weekly Fee (\$)
Brantford	\$150.00
Cambridge	Range from \$167.00 to \$270.00
Guelph	Range from \$208.00 to \$239.00
London	\$142.00
St. Thomas	\$160.00
Sudbury	\$195.00 (includes transportation)

The proposed 23% increase will still cause municipal summer camps to be the most affordable option in Chatham-Kent. This increase would equate to a \$29.00 per week increase for the KIDventure camp program and a \$14.00 per week increase for the Stay-N-Play program. Subsidy programs will also remain available for families who meet eligibility requirements for these programs.

This proposed fee increase will more closely align with summer camp program fees in the community and in similar communities.

Areas of Strategic Focus

The recommendation in this report supports the following areas of strategic focus:

			
Economic Prosperity	Healthy & Safe Community	People & Culture	Environmental Sustainability
	2.3		

Consultation

No consultation was required for this report.

Communication

If approved, this fee increase would be communicated to program users through several departmental marketing initiatives such as the Recreation Services Program Guide, various social media platforms, and the municipal website.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ)

Recognizing that any increase in user fees is difficult for lower income earners in the community, subsidy programs will continue to remain available for community members who meet eligibility requirements. Recreation and Community Engagement Services will continue to act as a resource to connect individuals and families to subsidy programs as appropriate. Some examples of such subsidy programs include A.L.L. for Kids, childcare subsidy and JumpStart.

Financial Implications

The proposed increase to user fees would offset the operating funds required to operate the current summer camp programs in Blenheim, Chatham, Dresden, Ridgetown, Thamesville, Tilbury, Wallaceburg, and Wheatley through increased program revenue.

The proposed increase could result in approximately \$35,000.00 based on 2022 program usage data. This increase in program revenue would enable viability of municipal camp programs and offset current increased operating costs.

Prepared by: Kelly Emery, Director, Childcare, Early Years and Recreation Services

Reviewed by:

April Rietdyk, RN, BScN, MHS, PHD PUBH
General Manager, Community Human Services

Attachments: None