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I. Executive Summary

HARBOR, Inc. was asked by Harbor Springs Public Schools to assess public sentiment regarding a possible alternative source of funding for the pool at the high school. HARBOR, Inc., assigned the task to a working group made up of HARBOR, Inc.'s executive director, two board members, two community volunteers, with one alternate and a staff person from MSU Extension. The working group convened three focus groups and conducted two surveys. The project was conducted on a largely volunteer basis and no school funds were expended.

A random telephone survey of people who had voted in the November 2010 general election indicated the following:

- The pool is very important to the community;
- Half of those contacted support the creation of a recreation authority with the power to levy a millage; another quarter want to know more about the concept;
- 60 percent of respondents said they would vote for a small millage;
- Respondents would prefer that a third party run the recreation authority;
- Respondents said the recreation authority should include other recreation activities in addition to the pool.

Similar (but not identical) results were obtained from a survey of attendees at a high school band concert in December.

The results of the surveys and focus groups are fully disclosed below and elsewhere. HARBOR, Inc. offers its findings in good faith to the Board of Education but does not attempt to represent itself as a market research firm. HARBOR, Inc. offers no guidance as to how the information should be used and makes no recommendation regarding a possible ballot proposal. Readers are cautioned that the survey samples were small in size resulting in relatively large margins of error.

II. Background

In 1985, The Harbor Springs Kiwanis Club asked Harbor Springs area residents to identify needs for the community. An indoor swimming pool was the first choice of those who responded; a bicycle path and a youth center were the second and third choices. In a survey of students, swimming was the number one activity chosen out of 48 alternatives.

In 1986, voters in the Harbor Springs school district approved a \$1.25 million 20-year bond issue to build an Olympic-size pool and related facilities at the high school. The cost of staffing, operating and maintaining the pool was assumed by the school district. At the outset, that cost was approximately \$70,000 annually. Since then, the cost to operate and maintain the pool has gone up significantly. More than \$500,000 has been allocated from school funds in recent years for renovations and repairs. At the same time, funding for public schools in Michigan, including Harbor Springs, has declined significantly. As a result, the district has made cuts in the arts, foreign languages, teachers, athletics, benefits and wages. The cost of operating and maintaining

the pool has become an issue as the administration and Board of Education look for efficiencies in all areas to preserve the core academic mission of the school district.

The board directed the superintendent, with assistance from Harbor, Inc., to provide feedback by January 2012 on potential solutions and options to fund and sustain the pool. More information is available from the Harbor Springs Pool-Frequently Asked Questions sheet provided by the school district. (**Appendix 1**)

In May 2011, HARBOR, Inc. began meeting with a small recreation group including the school district to discuss options for funding the pool. The recreation group met again in June and July. During these meetings, the concept of a Recreation Authority was considered. HARBOR, Inc. has previously pursued the concept of a Recreation Authority under the provisions of the Recreational Authorities Act (PA 321 of 2000), but efforts were derailed when not all jurisdictions were in favor of the concept. The recreation group agreed that if a Recreation Authority were to be pursued, a different law, the Recreation and Playgrounds Act (PA 156 of 1917) (**Appendix 2**) was a better alternative. This law allows school districts and other governmental bodies to request voter approval to create a recreation authority and a millage to fund it. The group agreed that input from the community would be needed in order for the Board of Education to make an informed decision regarding this potential funding solution for the pool.

The superintendent of Harbor Springs Public Schools requested that HARBOR, Inc. gather community input on the pool issue and the recreation authority concept. On August 10, 2011, the HARBOR, Inc. executive committee directed the executive director to facilitate the gathering of community input (**Appendix 3**). The Harbor Springs Board of Education accepted this resolution on August 22, 2011.

III. Methods for Gathering Community Input

a. General Summary

HARBOR, Inc. agreed to do the following:

1. Facilitate formation of a Harbor Area Recreation Advisory Group (HARAG) consisting of the HARBOR, Inc. Executive Director, two HARBOR, Inc. board members, and two members and one alternate from the community.
2. The HARAG would facilitate public discussions throughout the community during the fall of 2011 regarding alternative funding for the Harbor Springs Public Schools pool and possibly other local recreational resources.
3. The HARAG would provide a summary of those discussions to the Harbor Springs Board of Education in December 2011.
4. HARBOR, Inc.'s role in the process would be limited to facilitation. The summary to be prepared by the Advisory Group would not include a recommendation regarding a course of action for the Board of Education.

The HARAG met for the first time on September 29. The group consisted of Rachel Smolinski, HARBOR, Inc. executive director; Charles MacInnis, HARBOR, Inc. board member; Doug Fuller, HARBOR, Inc. board member; Laurie Ford, community member; John Cowing,

community member; and Ward Walstrom Jr., community member. The group initially agreed to conduct targeted focus group meetings of area community groups and random focus group meetings with participants selected from the voter registration rolls. The initial targeted focus group meetings would be utilized to shape a questionnaire to be given at random focus group meetings. HARBOR, Inc. received technical assistance from Michigan State University Extension. As the community input process progressed, the decision was made by HARBOR, Inc. to conduct targeted focus group meetings and launch a community survey given the limited time and resources. Three targeted focus groups, a telephone survey and an event survey were conducted according to the following schedule:

1. Targeted Focus Group #1- **November 16th, 12-1pm**
2. Targeted Focus Group #2- **November 16th, 6-7pm**
3. Phone surveys- **December 18th, 3-5pm** and **December 20th, 7-8pm**
4. Targeted Focus Group #3- **December 19th, 12-1pm**
5. Harbor Springs High School concert survey- **December 21st 7pm**

All collected data was compiled by HARBOR, Inc., MSU Extension, and members of the HARAG. The online survey tool Zoomerang® was utilized to compile survey results and perform data analysis.

b. Targeted Citizen Focus Groups

Various community groups in the area were asked to participate in pool discussions. Each group was asked to provide 6-8 volunteers for the discussion. Each discussion was facilitated by Charles MacInnis, HARBOR, Inc., and included 2-3 recorders. Recorders for the focus group meeting were Rachel Smolinski, John Cowing and Ann Chastain of MSU Extension. The discussions began with a brief summary of the pool issue, and then each participant was asked the following questions in a roundtable format:

1. Tell me your opinion of the Harbor Springs school system.
2. Tell me how you feel about the pool.
3. The school district has a financial problem with the pool. They might close it. Do you care if it closes?
4. What would you tell the school board they should do with the pool?

Discussions during focus groups 1 and 2 were utilized to formulate the final pool survey which was conducted by phone and at the Harbor Springs High School concert in December.

c. Phone surveys

The objective was to complete as many surveys as possible given time and resources. A list of registered voters in the HARBOR Springs School District who had voted in the November 2010 election was provided by the school district. To randomize the phone survey, every 10th voter listed was denoted. If the denoted voter was unavailable or not interested in participating, then the next voter on the list was called until there was a successful completion. The surveyor would then proceed to the next 10th voter as denoted on their list. Phone survey dates and times were as listed above and took place at the Walstrom Marine board room at 500 Bay Street in Harbor

Springs. A brief orientation was provided to each surveyor prior to the launch of the phone surveys. The pool survey is included as **Appendix 4**.

d. Harbor Springs High School Concert surveys

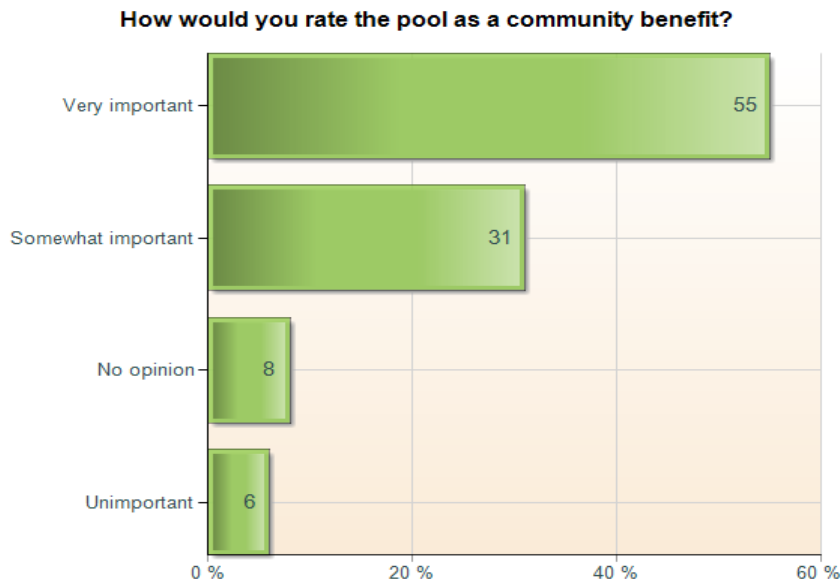
Tables and chairs along with volunteers, signage, and writing utensils were set up at each of two entrances at the Performing Arts Center prior to the concert. Volunteers engaged with concert attendees regarding the survey. Some surveys were completed by attendees at the tables, while some chose to complete the surveys during the concert. Volunteers remained at the tables after the concert to collect remaining surveys and provide the survey to additional attendees. The High School concert survey is the same as the phone survey with the exception of the title identifying the event as the high school concert.

IV. Results

a. Phone Survey Results

The complete results of the phone survey are located in **Appendix 5** in chart format and all data was recorded and available online via the Zoomerang® website. Access to the raw data is available upon request to the Board of Education. A total sample size of 105 surveys is included in the charted results. 69% of respondents voted in a recent Harbor Springs school election.

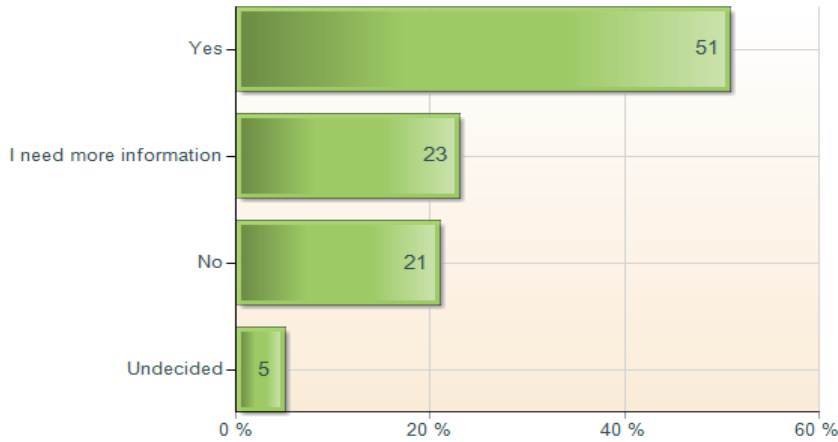
Chart 1



86% of respondents rated the pool as a very important or somewhat important community benefit.

Chart 2

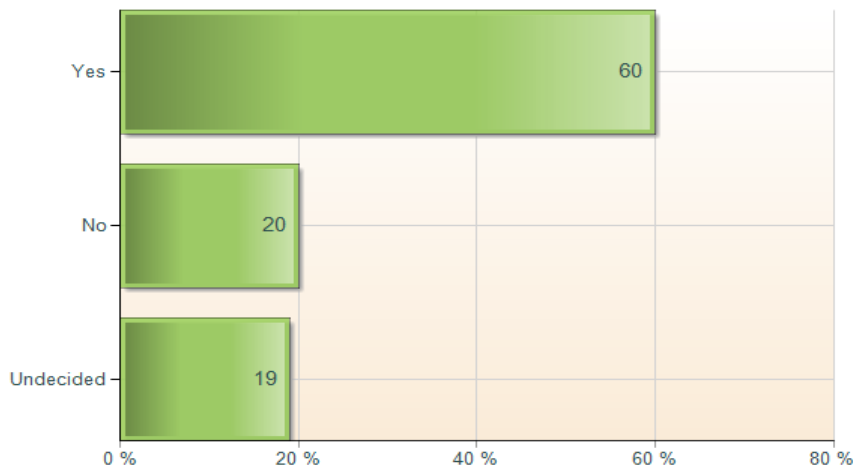
The pool requires as much as \$150,000 of school funds each year. An alternative has been proposed: a Recreation Authority could be created that would levy a small millage to fund the pool. Voters within the Harbor Springs school district would have to approve such an authority. Would you be inclined to support the creation of a Recreation Authority?



51% of respondents would support the creation of a Recreation Authority with 28% undecided or in need of more information on the concept.

Chart 3

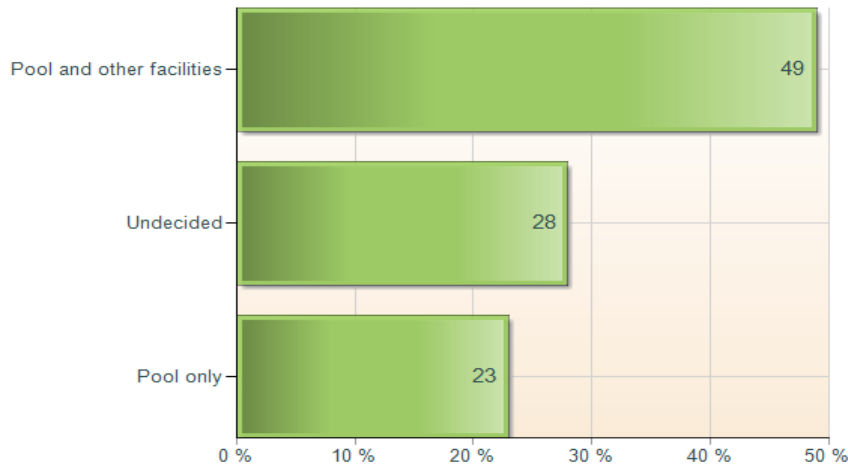
If the Recreation Authority were approved by voters, it would levy a millage on property within the Harbor Springs school district. The new property tax might cost \$10 to \$15 per year for a house with a taxable value (SEV) of \$100,000. Would you be in favor of such a millage?



60% of respondents would be in favor of a millage with 18% undecided.

Chart 4

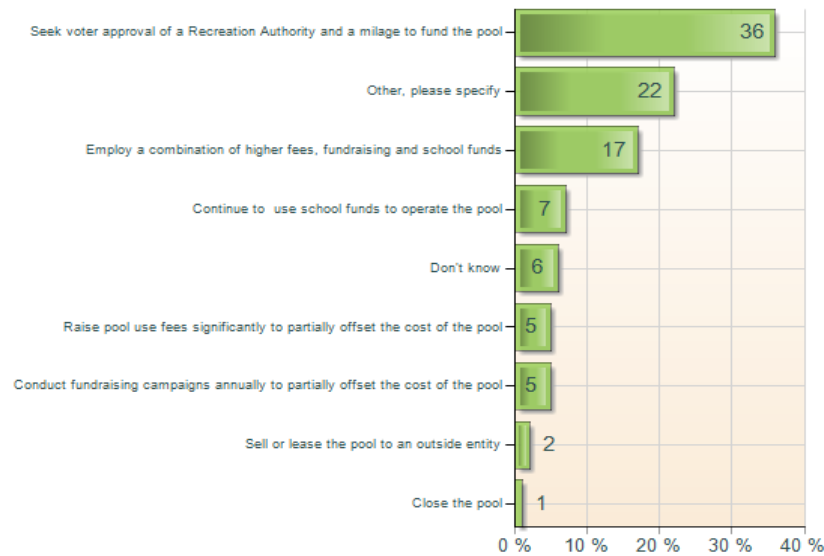
Should a Recreation Authority be limited to the pool, or should its scope and millage include the operation and maintenance of other recreational facilities within the school district area such as baseball, soccer and football fields?



49% of respondents supported the concept of including other facilities in addition to the pool in a Recreation Authority with 28% undecided.

Chart 5

Which do you believe is the best alternative regarding pool expenses?



36% of respondents were in favor of a Recreation Authority and millage as the best alternative regarding pool expenses.

Other comments requested as part of question #16 of the survey are provided in **Appendix 6**.

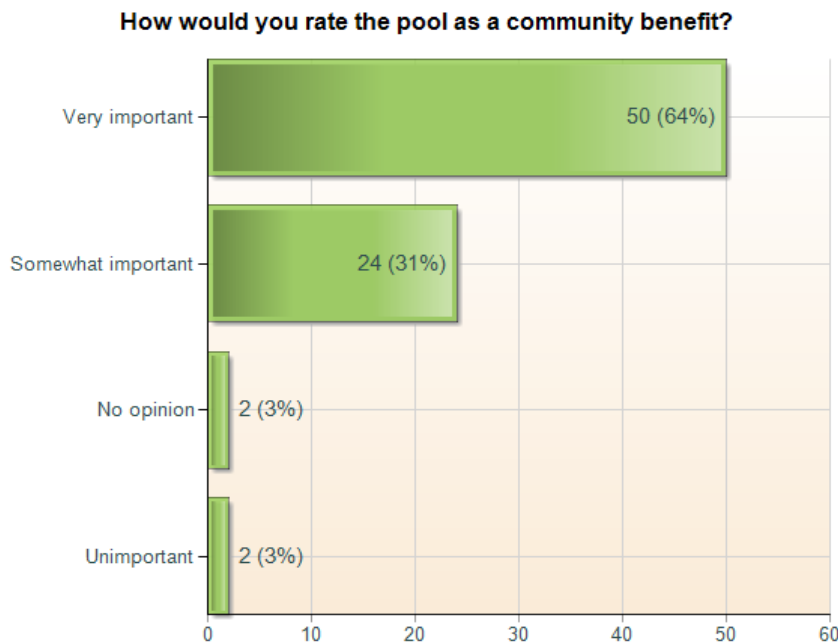
b. Phone Survey Margin of Error and Rationale

Because of the small sample size, the survey has a relatively large margin of error. Our confidence interval (margin of error) is approximately 8 percent at a 90 percent confidence level. What does this mean? In the survey, 60 percent of respondents said they would vote in favor of a millage. We cannot extrapolate from this sample that 60 percent of voters in the Harbor Springs school district are supportive of the millage proposal. Instead, the survey results suggest, at the 90 percent confidence level, support among phone survey respondents may vary from the stated percentage by 8 percent (+/-). A sample size almost twice as large as ours would have been required to produce a 6 percent margin of error at the same confidence level and almost quadruple our number would have been needed to reduce the margin of error to 4 percent. We were unable to field a sufficiently large team of volunteers to produce such large numbers of respondents.

c. Harbor Springs High School Concert Survey Results

The complete results of the concert survey are located in **Appendix 7** in chart format and all data was recorded and available online via the Zoomerang® website. Access to the raw data is available upon request to the Board of Education. A total sample size of 79 surveys is included in the charted results. 81% of respondents voted in a recent Harbor Springs school election.

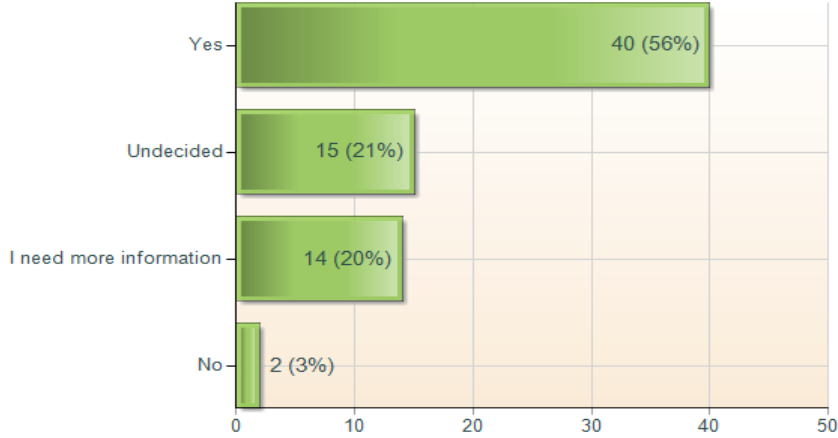
Chart 6



95% of respondents rated the pool as a very important or somewhat important community benefit.

Chart 7

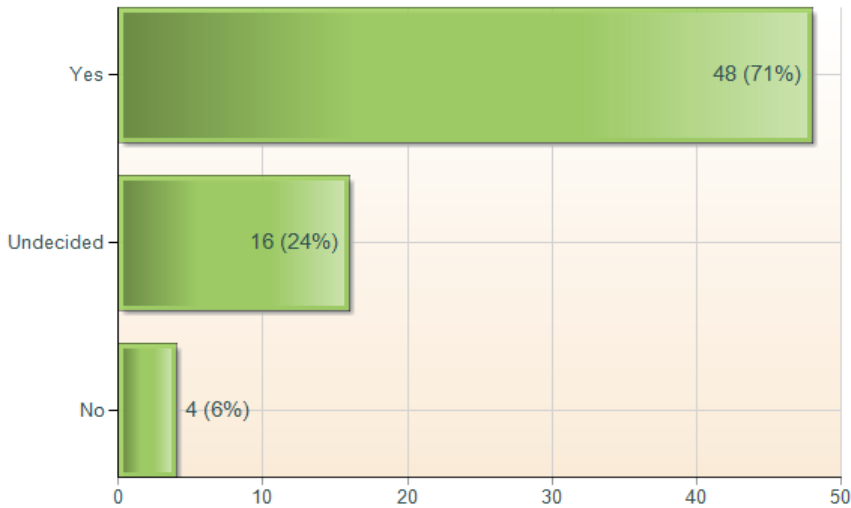
The pool requires as much as \$150,000 of school funds each year. An alternative has been proposed: a Recreation Authority could be created that would levy a small millage to fund the pool. Voters within the Harbor Springs school district would have to approve such an authority. Would you be inclined to support the creation of a Recreation Authority?



56% of respondents would support the creation of a Recreation Authority with 41% undecided or in need of more information on the concept.

Chart 8

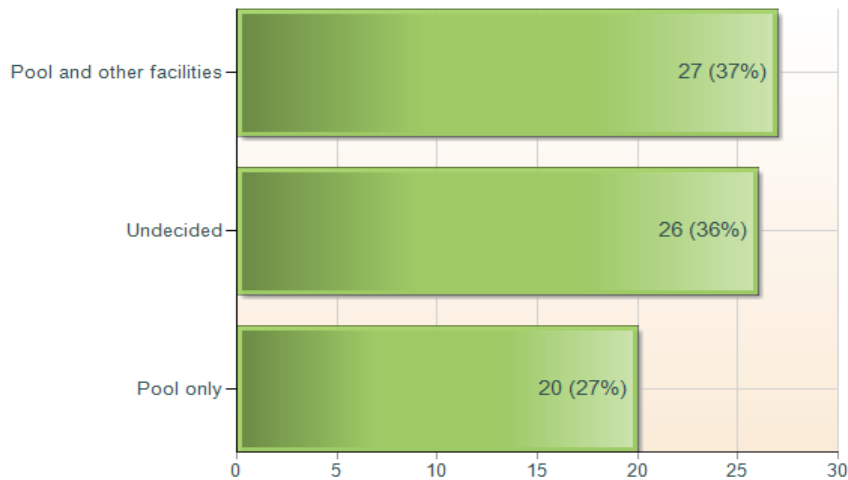
If the Recreation Authority were approved by voters, it would levy a millage on property within the Harbor Springs school district. The new property tax might cost \$10 to \$15 per year for a house with a taxable value (SEV) of \$100,000. Would you be in favor of such a millage?



71% of respondents would be in favor of a millage with 24% undecided.

Chart 9

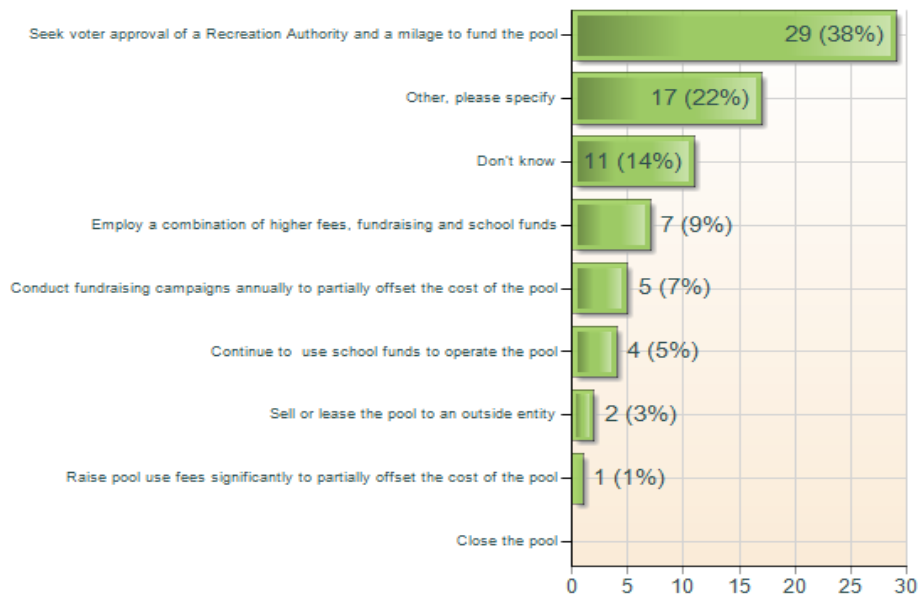
Should a Recreation Authority be limited to the pool, or should its scope and millage include the operation and maintenance of other recreational facilities within the school district area such as baseball, soccer and football fields?



37% of respondents supported the concept of including other facilities in addition to the pool in a Recreation Authority with 36% undecided.

Chart 10

Which do you believe is the best alternative regarding pool expenses?



38% of respondents were in favor of a Recreation Authority and millage as the best alternative regarding pool expenses.

Other comments requested as part of question #16 of the survey are provided in **Appendix 8**.

d. Concert Survey Margin of Error and Rationale

Because of the small sample size, the survey has a relatively large margin of error. Our confidence interval (margin of error) is approximately 9 percent at a 90 percent confidence level. What does this mean? In the survey, 71 percent of respondents said they would vote in favor of a millage. We cannot extrapolate from this sample that 71 percent of voters in the Harbor Springs school district are supportive of the millage proposal. Instead, the survey results suggest, at the 90 percent confidence level, support among band concert attendees may vary by 9 percent (+/-) from the stated percentage. A sample size twice as large as ours would have been required to produce a 6 percent margin of error at the same confidence level and quadruple our number would have been needed to reduce the margin of error to 4 percent. We were unable to field a sufficiently large team of volunteers to produce such large numbers of respondents.

e. Targeted Focus Group #3 Results

The complete results of the Focus Group #3 survey are located in **Appendix 9** in chart format and all data was recorded and available online via the Zoomerang® website. Access to the raw data is available upon request to the Board of Education. A total sample size of 6 surveys is included in the charted results. 83% of respondents voted in a recent Harbor Springs school election. 100% of respondents rated the pool as a very important or somewhat important community benefit. 100% of respondents would support the creation of a Recreation Authority. 67% of respondents were in favor of a millage, while the remaining respondents were undecided. 100% of respondents supported the concept of including other facilities in addition to the pool in a Recreation Authority. 67% of respondents were in favor of a Recreation Authority and millage as the best alternative regarding pool expenses.

Other comments requested as part of question #16 of the survey are provided in **Appendix 10**.

f. Targeted Focus Group #3 Survey Margin of Error and Rationale

Due to the extremely small sample size (n=6), this survey is not considered statistically reliable. The intent of this focus group was to stimulate discussion and obtain opinion from community leaders and businesses.

g. Harbor Springs Pool Citizen Targeted Focus Group Results

Compiled comments and discussion are organized by category and aggregated from all three focus groups in **Appendix 11**. The categories include: Harbor Springs school system, Harbor Springs Board of Education, Understanding of Pool Operating Budget, Pool Funding for Operation and Maintenance, Pool Value to Community, and Pool Marketing.

V. Conclusions and Discussion

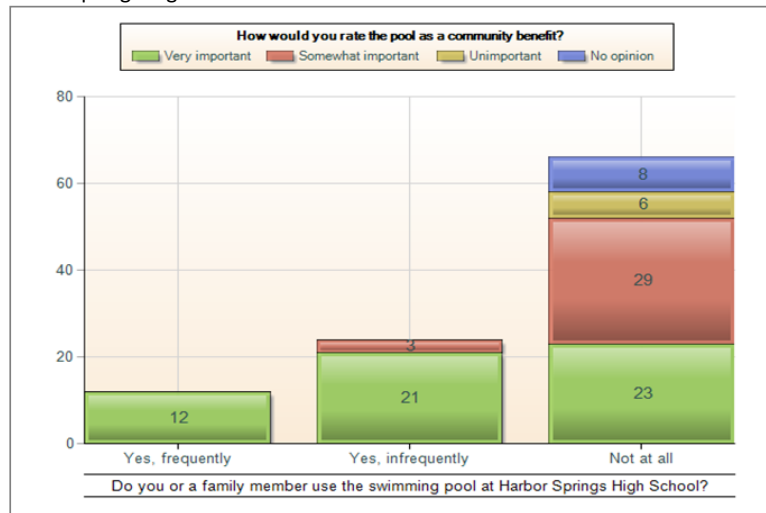
a. Phone surveys-general conclusions

1. The Board of Education is given a passing grade by respondents in the random telephone survey for its handling of school finances.

2. Almost none of the respondents want to see the pool closed
3. There is strong support for the pool even among respondents who said they don't use it: Among respondents who are non-users, 35% said it is a very important community benefit; 44% said it is a somewhat important benefit.

Chart 11

HARBOR INC Pool Survey December 2011 - telephone survey: Do you or a family member use the swimming pool at Harbor Springs High School?



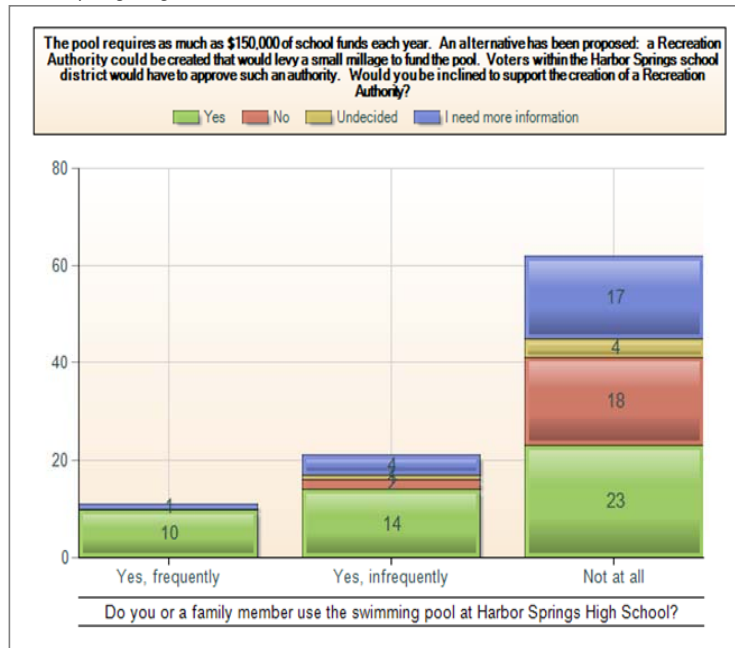
Do you or a family member use the swimming pool at Harbor Springs High School?				
	How would you rate the pool as a community benefit?			
	Very important	Somewhat important	Unimportant	No opinion
Yes, frequently	12 (21 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Yes, infrequently	21 (38 %)	3 (9 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Not at all	23 (41 %)	29 (91 %)	6 (100 %)	8 (100 %)

4. Respondents gave greater support for the millage (60%) than for the concept of a recreation authority (51%). However, 23% of respondents would like more information about an authority.

5. Among non-pool using respondents, 37% of those surveyed were in favor of a recreation authority; 29% were opposed, with the remainder either undecided or needing more information. (The difference between those in favor and against lies within the 8% margin of error.)

Chart 12

HARBOR INC Pool Survey December 2011 - telephone survey: Do you or a family member use the swimming pool at Harbor Springs High School?

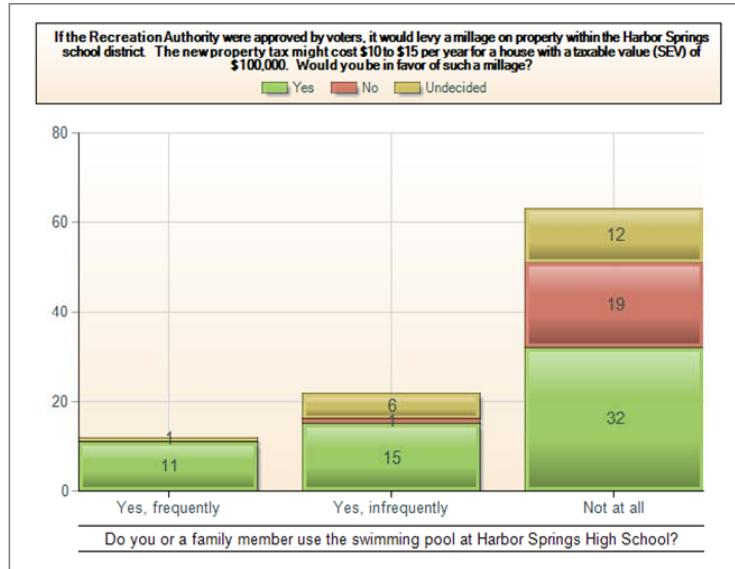


Do you or a family member use the swimming pool at Harbor Springs High School?				
The pool requires as much as \$150,000 of school funds each year. An alternative has been proposed: a Recreation Authority could be created that would levy a small millage to fund the pool. Voters within the Harbor Springs school district would have to approve such an authority. Would you be inclined to support the creation of a Recreation Authority?				
	Yes	No	Undecided	I need more information
Yes, frequently	10 (21 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (5 %)
Yes, infrequently	14 (30 %)	2 (10 %)	1 (20 %)	4 (18 %)
Not at all	23 (49 %)	18 (90 %)	4 (80 %)	17 (77 %)

- 6. Among non-pool using respondents, 51% said they would support the millage; 30% said they were opposed; 19% were undecided

Chart 13

HARBOR INC Pool Survey December 2011 - telephone survey: Do you or a family member use the swimming pool at Harbor Springs High School?



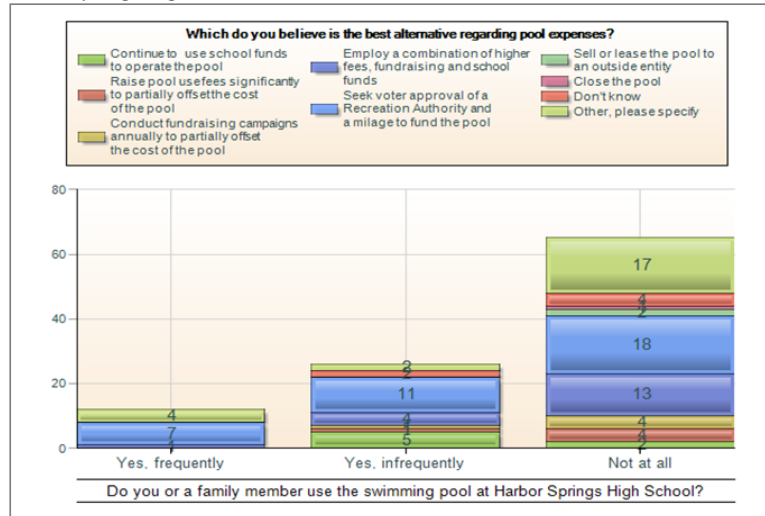
Do you or a family member use the swimming pool at Harbor Springs High School?			
	If the Recreation Authority were approved by voters, it would levy a millage on property within the Harbor Springs school district. The new property tax might cost \$10 to \$15 per year for a house with a taxable value (SEV) of \$100,000. Would you be in favor of such a millage?		
	Yes	No	Undecided
Yes, frequently	11 (19 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (5 %)
Yes, infrequently	15 (26 %)	1 (5 %)	6 (32 %)
Not at all	32 (55 %)	19 (95 %)	12 (63 %)

- 7. By a wide margin, respondents preferred that a third party run the authority.
- 8. Respondents said they would like to see other recreational activities included in the scope of the authority.
- 9. Those who did not view the pool as a community benefit were unlikely to support the creation of a recreation authority or the millage.
- 10. Those who do not have children or grandchildren in the school district were still likely to support the recreation authority and the millage.

- Among non-pool using respondents, 28% said they thought a Recreation Authority and millage are the best alternative; 26% said there was another solution not listed

Chart 14

HARBOR INC Pool Survey December 2011 - telephone survey: Do you or a family member use the swimming pool at Harbor Springs High School?



Do you or a family member use the swimming pool at Harbor Springs High School?									
Which do you believe is the best alternative regarding pool expenses?									
	Continue to use school funds to operate the pool	Raise pool use fees significantly to partially offset the cost of the pool	Conduct fundraising campaigns annually to partially offset the cost of the pool	Employ a combination of higher fees, fundraising and school funds	Seek voter approval of a Recreation Authority and a millage to fund the pool	Sell or lease the pool to an outside entity	Close the pool	Don't know	Other, please specify
Yes, frequently	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	7 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (17%)
Yes, infrequently	5 (71%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	4 (22%)	11 (31%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (33%)	2 (9%)

b. Harbor Springs High School Concert survey-general conclusions

- The Board of Education is given a passing grade by respondents in the Harbor Spring High school survey for its handling of school finances; however, results were more variable than with phone surveys.
- None of the respondents want to see the pool closed.
- 86% of respondents use the pool and the majority of those users consider it a very important or somewhat important community benefit.
- Of those pool users, the majority were supportive of a recreation authority and millage.
- Respondents gave greater support for the millage (71%) than for the concept of a recreation authority (56%). However, 20% of respondents would like more information about an authority.

6. 32% of respondents preferred that a consortium of townships and government operate an authority while 37% were unsure.
7. 37% of respondents said they would like to see other recreational activities included in the scope of the authority, while 36% were undecided
8. The majority of respondents had children or grandchildren in the school district of which 45% would support a Recreation Authority with 39% undecided or in need of more information.
9. 38% of respondents thought a Recreation Authority and millage are the best alternative; 22% said there was another solution not listed.

c. Discussion

The Harbor Springs Public Schools is generally believed by the community to be a sound school system. The community would like to see the district maintain a high level in core subject areas while offering a variety of opportunities such as music, art, languages, and etc. There is distrust in some cases of the Board of Education and the perception of lack of transparency regarding board decisions. In addition, there is a general public lack of understanding regarding school finances.

It is apparent from the community input gathered through this process that the Harbor Springs pool is an important community resource and that the community would like it to remain open to the public. The majority of information gathered indicates that the pool is an underutilized resource that must be marketed to its full potential to become sustainable.

Survey data indicated that there is general support for the concept of a Recreation Authority, with a slightly increased level of support for the idea of a millage. The difference lies in the explanation provided in the question about the millage. Increased education and awareness of this concept may increase community support. If this alternative is pursued by the Board of Education, a thorough examination of demographic and geographic survey results should be conducted to assist in district focus on outreach.

It is also important to note that a key difference between the surveys lie in the results from non-pool users versus pool users. The majority of phone survey respondents were non-pool users and the majority of high school concert survey respondents were pool users, which may indicate a general lack of community awareness of the Harbor Springs pool.

Although the survey reveals that respondents said a recreation authority should include other recreation activities in addition to the pool, it may not reflect a true understanding of the additional millage needed to honor that provision. The respondents view favorably the idea of the creation of a Recreation Authority with the view that in the long run many activities should be brought under its umbrella. The task of bringing so many things under the “umbrella” of a Recreation Authority will be difficult and time-consuming, which should be well understood by the Board and the community at large.

Survey data from both community surveys indicates that the community generally believes that a Recreation Authority and millage could be the best alternative for the pool financial issue;

however, there are other alternatives with strong community support. It is crucial for the Board of Education to examine the comments provided as feedback from the targeted citizen focus groups as well as comments listed under the “other” alternative for the best alternative to the pool funding issue in question #15. Community input indicated that a multifaceted approach including, but not limited to: recreation authority and millage, fundraising, school funding, and increase in user fees may be a more sustainable approach to addressing financial issues of the school district related to the pool.

VI. Acknowledgements

HARBOR, Inc. would like to thank volunteers from the various community groups that participated in pool discussions, members of the Harbor Area Recreation Advisory Group (HARAG), include: John Cowing, Laurie Ford, Doug Fuller, and Ward Walstrom Jr. We would also like to thank Ann Chastain and staff at Michigan State University Extension. We thank the volunteers that assisted us in administering phone surveys.

We extend special thank you to the community for providing their input to the pool survey.

HARBOR, Inc. thanks the Harbor Springs Board of Education and Mark Tompkins, Harbor Springs School Superintendent for providing the opportunity for our organization to engage with the community regarding the pool issue.

Appendix 1

Harbor Springs Pool Frequently Asked Questions

Harbor Springs Community Pool

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Is the pool in danger of being closed?*

Yes – pools are expensive to maintain, service, and staff. For 24 years the Harbor Springs Public Schools has funded the day-to-day operations and repair costs of the pool. In 1987 when the pool opened it cost approximately \$70,000 per year. Today the average operational cost is over \$100,000 per year with more than \$500,000. spent on renovation and repair during this time period.

Since 2009 funding for school operations has been reduced due to the decline in taxable values (our main revenue source) and changes in the economy. This has resulted in district program cutbacks in the arts, foreign language, in the number of teachers, athletics, and reductions in benefits and wages. The administration and Board of Education is looking for efficiencies in all areas in order to preserve the core academic mission of the school district. The Board has directed the Superintendent in conjunction with HARBOR, Inc. to provide feedback by January 2012 on potential solutions and options to funding and sustaining the pool.

2. *What is the history of the HS Community Pool?*

The school board in conjunction with Kiwanis spearheaded a bond campaign to fund the construction of the pool following a 1984 survey which indicated that a pool was a top priority in our community. On June 9, 1986 the voters approved a 20 year bond that raised 1.25 million dollars that was paid off in 2006. The school district, since 1987 has assumed the cost of staffing, operations and maintenance. Considered the finest pool in Northern Michigan, it consists of 6 lanes, 1 meter diving board, hot tub, locker rooms, office area, with windows on the south/east sides offering a magnificent view of the harbor and Little Traverse Bay.

3. *How is the pool used?*

- 450 elementary and middle school students use the pool as part of the physical education program
- Approximately 3000 individuals use the pool each month
- Up to 200 children yearly take swim lessons
- The 100+ member Hammerhead Swim team use the pool for training up to for six months each year
- Other pool activities include: lifeguard classes, recreational swim times, senior citizen water aerobics, morning lap swims, aqua therapy, and rental for special events
- The pool serves people beyond Harbor Springs including: Alanson, Pellston, Indian River, Petoskey, Cheboygan, Charlevoix and Gaylord.

4. *How is it staffed?*

Currently it is staffed by two “Aquatic Specialists” (Dave Behan and Mike Cullip) who oversee the daily operations of the pool. They report to the district athletic director (Dave Iafolla).

Additional lifeguards, custodial services, and maintenance personnel are also assigned to the pool as needed.

5. *What are the fees and hours of operation?*

- Drop in fee is \$4.00
- Single pool passes cost \$40. per month, \$160 for six months, and \$250 for a year
- Family pool passes cost \$90 per month, \$350 for six months, and \$500 for a year
- The pool rents for \$100 per hour
- Swim lessons range from \$55 up to \$140
(all fees listed based on resident status – fees for non-residents slightly higher)
- The pool rarely closes – it opens as early 6:00 am and closes as late at 8:30 pm on many days to meet the needs of the lessons, swim team, rec swim, and lap swim participants

6. *How much does it cost per year to run the pool?*

- Since 2001 the average yearly revenue (from swim lessons, lap swims, pool pass, rentals) is \$82,411 per year.
- During this same time period the average yearly expenses to run the pool was \$208,952.
- This creates an average total cost of \$126,541. per year for the school district (revenues minus expenses)
- Since 1987 this means the school district has spent approximately 3 million dollars

7. *What kind of maintenance/renovations/improvements has been done on the pool in recent years and how much did it cost?*

Since 2008 the district has spent more than \$650,000 on maintenance, renovations and improvements including:

- New roof
- Improved electrical service and plumbing
- New air handler and dehumidification unit
- Interior painting
- New tile work

8. *What future maintenance is required?*

Most structural and mechanical systems in the pool have a life-span of approximately 25 years, which is why such substantial replacement and renovations have taken place recently. Future needs include improved electrical wiring in the pump room, improved exhaust, possible pump replacement and locker room renovation. The cost of locker room renovation is the largest as they need both cosmetic improvements and should meet ADA standards requiring structural and mechanical changes.

9. *What are some ways the pool has become more efficient over the years?*

We consider the HS Community Pool to be one of the best run pools in the state. Together both Mike Cullip and Dave Behan have years of experience in coaching, teaching, pool management and administration. Over the last two years the pool has become more efficient by: changing

pool hours, increasing classes, reducing custodial costs by outsourcing and sharing responsibilities with all staff, elimination of one administrative position, increasing pool passes and fees, and in 2011 instituting an extended summer shut-down.

10. What options are available to fund the pool?

At this point, five options are being discussed:

- a. School District funding (continue with status-quo)
- b. Recreation Millage for pool
- c. Private fundraising and endowment
- d. Purchase of pool by private entity
- e. Close pool

School District Funding

- + Current status, no fundraising or millage required
- District funding crisis, pool should not be the priority when teaching/learning are the focus, "rolling the dice" that the funding and economy will improve

Recreation Millage

- + Sustainable funding source, low taxable impact (.1 millage or \$10. will provide approx. \$100,000); Blackbird bond is coming off the books so will not increase taxes from current levels
- New tax, difficult economy, district should seek alternative funding methods, closure, or continue to fund

Private Fundraising / Endowment

- + HS is blessed with many potential donors; an endowment could serve to sustain the pool long term
- Asking a few to solve a problem for the many is not sustainable; an endowment to support the pool would require about 2 million dollars in fundraising

Purchase Pool by Private Entity

- + Should approach groups like YMCA, Hammerheads as potential purchasers; would take the financial pressure away from district
- How could any group make enough per year to keep the pool going? How would the district and private entity work out custodial, maintenance, energy costs, pass fees, etc.

Close Pool

- + Makes sense financially. Reopen when economy and school funding improve
- Terrible blow to the many residents, students, families who use the pool; we should be able to create a solution that avoids this

Appendix 2

The Recreation and Playgrounds Act (PA 156 of 1917)

RECREATION AND PLAYGROUNDS
Act 156 of 1917

AN ACT authorizing cities, villages, counties, townships and school districts to operate systems of public recreation and playgrounds.

History: 1917, Act 156, Eff. Aug. 10, 1917.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

123.51 Public recreation system; powers of municipality.

Sec. 1. Any city, village, county or township may operate a system of public recreation and playgrounds; acquire, equip and maintain land, buildings or other recreational facilities; employ a superintendent of recreation and assistants; vote and expend funds for the operation of such system.

History: 1917, Act 156, Eff. Aug. 10, 1917;—CL 1929, 2389;—CL 1948, 123.51.

123.52 Public recreation system; powers of school district.

Sec. 2. Any school district may operate a system of public recreation and playgrounds, may vote a tax to provide funds for operating same, and may exercise all other powers enumerated in section 1.

History: 1917, Act 156, Eff. Aug. 10, 1917;—CL 1929, 2390;—CL 1948, 123.52.

123.53 Public recreation system; operation.

Sec. 3. Any city, village, county, township or school district may operate such a system independently or they may cooperate in its conduct in any manner in which they may mutually agree, or they may delegate the operation of the system to a recreation board created by any or all of them, and appropriate money, voted for this purpose, to such board.

History: 1917, Act 156, Eff. Aug. 10, 1917;—CL 1929, 2391;—CL 1948, 123.53.

123.54 Public recreation system; location.

Sec. 4. Any municipal corporation or board given charge of the recreation system is authorized to conduct its activities on (1) property under its custody and management; (2) other public property, under the custody of other municipal corporations or boards, with the consent of such corporations or boards; (3) private property, with the consent of the owners.

History: 1917, Act 156, Eff. Aug. 10, 1917;—CL 1929, 2392;—CL 1948, 123.54.

Appendix 3

HARBOR, Inc. Executive Committee Resolution

HARBOR, Inc. recommendations to the Harbor Springs School Board

At a regular meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Harbor Area Regional Board of Resources, Inc. (HARBOR, Inc.), held in HS City Hall, Harbor Springs, Michigan, on August 10th, 2011, there were:

PRESENT: Kathie Braigman, Al Dika, Fred Crowder, Mary Ellen Hughes, Charlin Mac
ABSENT: Tom McCarroll, Denise Sinner

Justin Bassett, Dan Braison, Kathy Erber

The following resolution was offered by Mary Ellen Hughes, and supported by Al Dika.

WHEREAS, HARBOR, Inc. is a non-profit organization that was formed to act as a community resource for local units of government, property owner associations and others, when issues are considered that affect the greater community; and

WHEREAS, HARBOR, Inc. is comprised of a Board of Directors that represent a broad range of stakeholders in the Greater Harbor Springs Area, including six townships and the City of Harbor Springs; and comprising the Harbor Springs School District; and

WHEREAS, HARBOR, Inc has an Executive Committee comprised of members of the Board of Directors. The members of the Executive Committee shall include the Immediate Past Chair as a non-voting, ex-officio member, the Chair of the Board, the Vice Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer, and three (3) other persons as appointed by the Board of Directors from the members of the Board. All actions by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the Board of Directors at its meeting next succeeding such action and such actions shall be subject to control, revision and alteration by the Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, HARBOR Inc. has acted as the facilitator for discussions regarding Recreation in the Greater Harbor Springs Area and has convened planning meetings with stakeholders;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that HARBOR, Inc. offers the following services to the Harbor Springs Public Schools Board of Education.

1. HARBOR, Inc. shall facilitate formation of a Harbor Area Recreation Advisory Group (HARAG) consisting of the HARBOR, Inc. Executive Director, two HARBOR Inc. Board members, and two members of the community.
2. The HARAG will facilitate public discussions throughout the community during the fall of 2011 regarding alternative funding for the Harbor Springs Public Schools pool and possibly other local recreational resources.
3. The HARAG will provide a summary of those discussions to the Harbor Springs Board of Education in December 2011.

4. HARBOR Inc.'s role in the process will be limited to facilitation. The summary to be prepared by the Advisory Group will not include a recommendation regarding a course of action for the board of education.

AYES 7

NAYS: 0

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Harbor Area Regional Board of Resources, Inc., at a meeting held on August 10, 2011 the original of which is on file in the office of HARBOR, Inc.

DATED: Aug 10, 2011



Charles MacInnis
Chair, HARBOR, Inc.

Appendix 4

Pool Survey

HARBOR, INC.

phone survey date

Pool Questionnaire - December 2011

HARBOR, Inc. Community Input Report for Harbor Springs Pool

28

January 6th, 2012

(Please circle answers)

1. **Have you voted in any recent Harbor Springs school elections?** Yes No
if NO, then terminate call

2. **Where do you live?**

City of Harbor Springs Cross Village Twp. Friendship Twp. Little Traverse Twp.
Pleasantview Twp. Readmond Twp. West Traverse Twp. Other _____

3. **How far is your home from Harbor Springs High School?**

1 mile or less 2-5 miles 6-10 miles 11 miles or more.

4. **Do you have children or grandchildren in the Harbor Springs Public Schools?**

Children Grandchildren No

5. **If you have children or grandchildren in school, which grades are they in? (circle all that apply)**

Elementary Middle School High School

6. **The funding of public schools in Michigan has changed significantly over the years. How closely have you followed the school funding issue?**

Very closely Somewhat closely Not very closely Not at all

7. **The Harbor Springs school district has made significant budget cuts in recent years for a variety of reasons. How closely have you followed this issue?**

Very closely Somewhat closely Not very closely Not at all

8. **The Harbor Springs Board of Education decides how school funds are used. How would you rate the board's performance in deciding how school funds are used?**

Excellent Very good Fair Not very good Poor Undecided

9. **Do you or a family member use the swimming pool at Harbor Springs High School?**

Yes, frequently Yes, infrequently Not at all

10. How would you rate the pool as a community benefit?

Very important Somewhat important Unimportant No opinion

11. The pool requires as much as \$150,000 of school funds each year. An alternative has been proposed:

a Recreation Authority could be created that would levy a small millage to fund the pool. Voters within the Harbor Springs school district would have to approve such an authority. *Would you be inclined to support the creation of a Recreation Authority?*

Yes No Undecided I need more information.

12. If the Recreation Authority were approved by voters, it would levy a millage on property within the Harbor Springs school district. The new property tax might cost \$10 to \$15 per year for a house with a taxable value (SEV) of \$100,000. *Would you be in favor of such a millage?*

Yes No Undecided

13. If a Recreation Authority were created, *who should oversee its operation?*

- a. The Harbor Springs Board of Education
- b. A consortium of city and township governments
- c. Some other entity
- d. I don't know

14. Should a Recreation Authority be limited to the pool - or should its scope and millage include the operation and maintenance of other recreational facilities within the school district area such as baseball, soccer and football fields?

Pool only Pool and other facilities Undecided

**15. Which do you believe is the best alternative regarding pool expenses:
(read all options before accepting response)**

- a. Continue to use school funds to operate the pool
- b. Raise pool use fees significantly to partially offset the cost of the pool

- c. Conduct fundraising campaigns annually to partially offset the cost of the pool
- d. Employ a combination of higher fees, fundraising and school funds
- e. Seek voter approval of a Recreation Authority and a millage to fund the pool
- f. Sell or lease the pool to an outside entity
- g. Close the pool
- h. Other _____
- i. Don't know

16. Any additional comments would you like to provide:

Appendix 5

Phone Survey Results in Chart Format

Appendix 6

Phone Survey Question #16 Results

HARBOR INC Pool Survey December 2011 - telephone survey



Results Overview

Date: 1/2/2012 1:49 PM PST
Responses: Completes
Filter: No filter applied

#	Response
16.	Any additional comments you would like to provide
1	People that use the pool should pay for it.
2	We paid for the pool once.
3	keep it if at all possible
4	hates thought of jacking prices
5	not in favor of creating new boards - pool is there - operation should continue
6	ice skate
7	need funds for park and pool from millage
8	pool i great for harbor Springs, we live on water, need to learn to swim
9	13. marked A and B
10	good amenity to have in community
11	spring break school is closed - should be open
12	need to keep pool!!!
13	Grandson was in hammer heads became a Coast Guard rescue swimmer.
14	it is community pool still need to be operated by an authority
15	Taxation w/o representation. Many property owners outside can't vote.
16	raise fees for out of district
17	need more information, should joint oversight w/full comunity input users should fund pool
18	alot of opportunities for fundraising
19	imoprtant that school have pool for students. Should use school funds and fundraisinf and fees.Pool is very important. Rec authority should be separate from school board, to support the pool
20	Pool funding should be separate.
21	Fallback ifrec authority fails is d for #15.
22	not enough school use to justify the school alone funding the pool
23	Doesn't think a rec authority proposal would pass
24	daughter was leader at Harbor(recently retired) School has served community purposes very well. Pool is beautiful facility.
25	School board need more well educated board members. School board should spend \$ more efficiently. The school boar "blew the Middle School Project"
26	Superintendent screwed up with the elementry School princiupal issue.
27	Expect the BOE to contribute some funding based upon thier usage, only fair, users should pay.
28	need Rec Authority to fund the pool. BOEdoes not have funding. Do not support raising pool usage fees.
29	Nonw, pool ia vital to community, ace in our pocket, important!
30	pol i a great thing to have. should be call the Harbor Springs Community Pool. School shoild pay a share of pool based upon thier usage.
31	pool is not on radar screen much

http://app.zoomerang.com/Report/PrintOpenEndedResponsesPage.aspx?print_all=

1/2/2012

32	not a good survey, need more information.Pool hours should be expanded public vs school use. If you want to make public, then need hours for working people.
33	don't want to raise fees
34	user fees are too low
35	spectacular facility more valuable saves one life worth it.
36	didn't know pool was open to everyone in district
37	did not realixe pool was open to everyone
38	need pool to teach kids to swim
39	keep it open and operating
40	over built Grade & Middle school. no more millage
41	We need to do it right or not at all.
42	it's nice to have pool but cuts need to be made
43	i know it is important to many- I knew hammerhead swimmers- if wi took away the gym or foot ball field it would be the same for those athletes.
44	All for raising school millage to cover pool, fields, science, bond etc. Don't want outside entity involved in school facilities issues, etc.
45	Saddled school districks with so much!!! Experienced this downstate - YMCA came in and took over.
46	very much needed benefit
47	users can pay more
48	good for the economy- draws non-school people to use the pool
49	DUI- School tem(working a sec) paying principal salary. take her money and use it for the pool
50	shared community effort needed
51	Want the pool to remain open for the public so they need to do something to make that happen.
52	Important to this community- not an extravagance. My kids are gone but will be back and will have kids. I want it to be available.
53	I'm sorry Im so vauge- it's just that I'm out of the loop with no kids in school etc. I guess I need to read more

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Appendix 7

Harbor Springs High School Concert Survey Results in Chart Format

Appendix 8

Concert Survey Question #16 Results

**HARBOR INC Pool Survey
December 2011 - High School
Concert 12/21/2011**
Results Overview



Date: 1/2/2012 1:53 PM PST
Responses: Completes
Filter: No filter applied

#	Response
16.	Any additional comments you would like to provide
1	The school pool was established with a popular vote and closure should be by a similar vote.
2	A lot of time & \$ etc, was used and still is to fund the pool. It shoul never be colsed at nay cost!!!
3	I've been to other high school pools tat are very busy during rec. swim time and collect a giid amount of \$\$\$.
4	The pool is a very important tool- for senior citizens down to infants. THank you for doing this.
5	The pool is truely a valuable part of the activities HS offers in the sall/winter/spring.
6	Losing the pool whould habe a negative affect on the community/
7	A lot of people worked hard for that pool as a community benefit. Do not give it up Call me Dick Babcock 242-0154
8	I consider the pool of great impotence- please do whatever it takes to keep it going!!!
9	Do not close.
10	MARKETING
11	I bilieve we should get a new school super as I believe our current is most of the problem.
12	make it clear homsted vs non homsted all rec facilities -pool tennis courts, beaches etc.
13	Under NO circumstance should the pool be run by and OUTSIDE Authority.
14	Water safety is a huge part of our lives in NM. Swimming skills are very important and will safe lives.
15	Whatever you do, don't let school board/superintendent decide authority over pool.
16	even though my family uses the pool infrequently my children enjoy useage during school hours. I have plans to utilize the pool in near future if still available.
17	The pool is a valuable asset to our community and would be a shame to have it closed.
18	A rec authority board of directors should over see the rec auth. -Pool. in a few years perhaps incoperated other rec facilities.

Appendix 9

Focus Group #3 Survey Results in Chart Format

Appendix 10

Focus Group #3 Survey Question #16 Results

HARBOR INC Pool Survey December 2011 - Focus Group (#3)



Results Overview

Date: 1/2/2012 1:54 PM PST
Responses: Completes
Filter: No filter applied

16. Any additional comments you would like to provide

#	Response
1	Need a long-term road map on long term uses and sustainability.
2	Will use the pool in the future. Important resource and Petoskey does not have a pool. Do additional fundraising especially with summer residents.

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Appendix 11

Harbor Springs Pool Citizen Targeted Focus Group Results

Harbor Springs Pool Citizen Targeted Focus Groups

Grouped Discussion Responses by General Topics

Harbor Springs School System

- excellent school system, outstanding teachers – very positive comments in every focus group
- must have fabulous school system to attract families – including music, art, languages
- must maintain variety of strong core subjects
- school system basic curriculum needs should not be compromised by pool expenses
- the pool cannot continue to be a financial burden to the school system

Harbor Springs Board of Education

- lack of public voice in decision-making process
- lack of transparency in board decisions results in general frustration, public distrust and suspicion of fairness
- lack of communication to public, no public notification of issues to be discussed
- inadequate information shared with general public
- inconsistent messages by board members, perception of being nonprofessional
- perception of lack of creativity by board members
- there is a lack of general public understanding of overall school funding issues
- perception that School Superintendent “drives” the Board in decision-making
- Board of Education “should not” control the Recreation Authority to manage the pool
- Recreation Authority should make recommendations to the Board of Education

Understanding of Pool Operating Budget

- perception that pool is used as a scapegoat for financial shortcomings in other areas
- curriculum needs are primary, school budget cannot be used to fund pool needs – there is no choice between funding for languages/arts/music/sciences and pool expenses
- public has incomplete picture of total budget, reports are difficult to understand
- questions of mismanagement of funds / mismanagement of basic business of pool operations
- provide data on user numbers / fees generated / costs incurred and anticipated expenses
- imperative to provide “solid facts and figures” to support favorable vote for the Recreation Authority / additional millage – need dynamic presentation to public

Pool Funding for Operation and Maintenance

- must include vision for “shared funding” to cover costs
- Harbor Springs school district pays for the pool but everyone can use it – not fair
- innovative funding ideas are essential – must show revenue sources

- pool must be operated as a business with goal to make profit – not acceptable to “break even”
- if use fees are raised, don’t make them unaffordable for local residents
- make sure there is a “plan” (combination of solutions) to supplement a proposed millage
- voters must be educated on all specifics of the Recreation Authority, millage funds raised, other potential funding sources
- create public/private partnerships with local community foundations to establish an endowment fund for ongoing pool expenses
- look for local “deep pocket” “Angels” to support operating costs / establish endowment

Pool Value to Community

- essential resource to community
- health of community (youth, adults and seniors) depends on the pool
- the community pool is a factor in family decisions to live in Harbor Springs
- if the pool closes, some families will move from the area in search of a community pool
- important part of current placemaking efforts throughout Harbor Springs
- make the pool a true “community resource”
- should not consider closing the pool at any time including summer

Pool Marketing

- increase BOTH the variety and number of programs offered at the pool – consider scuba certification, kayak skill development, others
- PROMOTE the pool to increase user numbers (and fees), both locally and regionally (Emmet/Charlevoix/Cheboygan Counties)
- review fee structure to include possible scholarships based on select criteria – include in marketing plan
- offer “free swim” events (with summer picnic) to encourage “first time” participation
- develop / promote extensive volunteer network base to help with pool staffing needs

Harbor Springs Community Pool Citizen Focus Groups

Participating in Focus Group Discussions:

HARBOR, Inc. Board Members

Hammerheads Swim Group supporters

Harbor Springs Chamber of Commerce Business Committee

Harbor Springs Kiwanis members

Grouped Discussion Responses by General Topics provided by:

Ann Chastain

MSU Extension Educator

Greening Michigan Institute

Community Engagement & Leadership Development

Business & Entrepreneurial Development

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