

To: Board of Directors, Shelton School District
From: Dr. Art Jarvis, Interim Superintendent
Re: Shelton School District Swimming Pool

It is my intention to set the stage for a discussion and decision regarding the future of the Shelton Pool.

As I spent my day this Saturday sitting in the stands at the pool at Evergreen College watching two of my grandchildren compete in a regional swim event, I had additional time to reflect about the Shelton Pool and the situation facing the Shelton School District. Some of the Shelton patrons and parents were there, sitting for hours to watch children compete for a few seconds or a few minutes. A few said hello but the majority just did their thing as spectators, parents and sponsors. I suspect some may even have occasionally looked over at me to see if there was any hint of my thoughts about the swimming pool dilemma in Shelton.

In my short time as Interim Superintendent in Shelton, I have learned a great deal about this community. While I have seen the face of poverty and economic challenge here, there is much evidence of a proud community with a long history of leadership. It has been fun to experience the number and variety of people who come up to me to tell me they grew up in Shelton or they graduated from Shelton -- they always seem to say it with great pride.

As the only incorporated city in Mason County, Shelton exudes a sense of responsibility. There is responsibility for the residents, responsibility for the land, and responsible care and governance – including thoughtful, responsible, decision-making. The schools have outstanding programs and staff and the children are receiving a quality education.

Equally noticeable and standing alongside all of the goodness, are immense challenges: The poverty level of this community is staggering. Our schools average almost seventy per cent poverty and that rises as high as 93% in places. Economic downturn has rocked this area and home values are just beginning to appreciate for the first time in years. Agencies suffer with higher tax rates to collect reduced income and try to meet steep increases in service needs. They strive to meet social challenges of poverty, hunger, mental health and shelter. Challenges include services to some who have turned to alcohol and drugs; and challenges exist in schools struggling to meet academic needs of children for whom basic human needs may be falling short.

A challenge exists in our community in the form of rapidly changing demographics. We see a wider spread between our wealthier citizens and our poorer families. We find growing disparities between cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and languages. I believe we see widening gaps between our community elements. In turn, those widening gaps exacerbate tensions rather than bringing together or homogenizing.

Lastly, however, I see citizens, agencies, staff, and leaders who set out daily to try to find ways to help. As I stated to begin, the evidence of their work is impressive.

Where does all of this fit in the analysis of the swimming pool issue? It is everything. It is at the very heart of the issue. Let's take a quick look at the use of the pool. Predictably, we see school students using the pool – PE classes and swim lessons for small children. We see the extracurricular use like swim teams and we see those training to be lifeguards. ***(Chart A – Pool Usage)***

Chart A**2013-14 Pool Usage – Public Programs Before/After School**

	9/2013	10/2013	11/2013	12/2013	1/2014	2/2014	3/2014	4/2014	5/2014	6/2014
AM Laps	60	56	54	30	74	76	79	82	85	94
Aerobics	268	271	264	140	286	293	303	312	324	365
Noon Laps	180	175	172	88	102	106	110	116	123	133
Club Swim	220	214	212	175	230	235	245	250	255	282
PM Laps	60	58	54	28	62	67	72	78	81	93
Swim Lessons	408	414	410	205	460	468	475	480	488	507
Open Swim	160	156	152	82	98	108	116	125	131	165
Fri. Rentals	75	100	125	50	150	125	150	125	175	200
Sat. Laps	45	50	54	32	64	73	79	82	87	94
Sat. Open Swim	80	84	86	43	95	103	122	145	156	194
Sat. Rentals	125	175	150	50	225	175	200	175	200	250

Moving beyond the schools, but staying with children for a minute, we note the use of the pool with infants and toddlers. Families find recreation in free swims, parties and community swim clubs. We observe data about the number of children learning water safety and we see favorable data showing results for years of drown-proofing children.

Additionally, data reflects use of the pool by a much broader part of the community than just our children. Citizens fulfilling their physical fitness needs and physical therapy demands regularly patronize our pool. In our climate are those hearty souls who go out and run daily, but for many others an indoor facility such as the pool is required. Their financial circumstances do not allow participation in a private health club and the pool fills that need. A recent social media survey reflects the passionate feelings and beliefs of many people who see the pool as a mainstay for them in this regard. In short, the pool is a treasured asset in the broad community of Shelton and Mason County.

Why then is there an issue? Why do staff members groan when the subject arises? Why do elected officials and Board members hang their heads when they contemplate the tasks that lie ahead? Why have I seen citizens verbally lash out at Board members and berate them? Why do I, as a superintendent contemplating the long-range needs of a school district, find myself agonizing over this issue?

The answer of course circles back to the very things I was noting in my opening words:

- **Economics** – costs, poverty; “economic opportunity;” taxes and budgets.
- **Responsibility** – educational accountability; “failing schools;” required “school improvement plans; improving

- graduation rates for all children; raising the graduation standards.
- ***Educational equity*** –steadily increasing numbers of children who need new and increased educational services; feeding and transportation needs; costly special services highly correlated to poverty.

As an educator and school superintendent I have served schools for five decades and I have seldom seen issues so sharply reflecting the challenges facing us. Let me translate some of those:

- *Accountability* – Virtually all of our schools must file plans to meet academic goals or face sanctions and penalties, including the replacement and removal of leaders like school principals.
- *Increased graduation requirements* – raise the requirements while insuring increases in numbers of children graduating.
- *Civil rights issues* – Equity and access are bywords of today's educational system. We must find improved ways to meet the educational needs of children who speak another language. We cannot ignore the academic failures of groups of children who have different skin colors or economic conditions.
- *Funding System: State* – Washington State is under court order to increase the funding because school districts do not have the resources to meet the mandates of the constitution. State monies are narrowly purposed and are directed at academic success and standards. The Courts have demanded that the state resolve the reliance on local levies and that will restrict the use of levy dollars more than ever.
- *Funding system: Local levies* – Local school levies have increased sharply over the past decades as schools have attempted to pay for services and programs unfunded and underfunded by the state. The recent recession caused an unprecedented loss in local valuations and steep tax rate increases for schools and local municipalities. Lastly, levy lids prevent districts from increasing levies to generate more money for locally sought improvements.
- *Recession impact* -- One of the impacts has been that school districts (including Shelton) predictably were unable to pass bonds and capital efforts to provide money to meet capital needs.

Deferred maintenance and unmet capital funding issues will cause major heartache for schools at the very time they attempt to meet the academic demands and accountability issues.

Together, these elements combine to constitute a formidable challenge. I have joked about the balance in our capital fund - \$13.64, but obviously that is gallows humor. We have been identifying capital needs that must be met in immediately and certainly within the next five years. Beyond renewing requests for operation funds, we will need to go to the community with tax requests for buses and buildings. The needs will absolutely outrun the capacity. Priorities and difficult choices are guaranteed in our near future.

In that vein lies the essence of the pool issue. (***Chart B -- Operating Costs***). Given the level of services being provided, the operating costs of the pool are not unreasonable. "Opportunity cost" concepts still dictate, however, that such expenditure be examined with an eye to the other possible uses of those resources. What else could be done with those dollars as we look at the burgeoning budget requests?

Chart B

Pool Operating Costs

	<u>2013-14</u>	<u>2012-13</u>	<u>2011-12</u>	<u>2010-11</u>	<u>2009-10</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
Wages & Benefits						
Pool Manager	\$ 47,178.45	\$ 46,764.61	\$ 46,764.61	\$ 46,971.90	\$ 46,971.90	\$ 47,178.45
Lifeguards/Instructors	\$ 78,720.07	\$ 67,869.52	\$ 57,922.09	\$ 56,842.05	\$ 55,154.61	\$ 67,114.81
	\$ 125,898.52	\$ 114,634.13	\$ 104,686.70	\$ 103,813.95	\$ 102,126.51	\$ 114,293.26
Pool Supplies & Chemicals	\$ 6,157.92	\$ 5,783.01	\$ 9,935.56	\$ 8,187.57	\$ 5,111.76	\$ 22,663.79
			Swim lesson equip- \$1,391.48;	Pool vacuum - \$3,252.00		Pool cover - \$13,388.47
			Lane ropes - \$2,067.10;			
			Pool signs - \$463.96			
Utilities (estimate)	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 70,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 172,056.44	\$ 160,417.14	\$ 153,622.26	\$ 167,001.52	\$ 167,238.27	\$ 206,957.05
REVENUE	\$ 53,367.01	\$ 57,786.40	\$ 51,378.75	\$ 44,393.35	\$ 55,248.36	\$ 44,903.35
COST TO LOCAL LEVY	\$ 118,689.43	\$ 102,630.74	\$ 102,243.51	\$ 122,608.17	\$ 111,989.91	\$ 162,053.70

Even there, however, the central issue is not operating costs, it is about the capital expenditures required by the pool. It is no secret that any swimming pool will “eat itself” because of the corrosive, damp, nature of the facility. (***Chart C -- Capital Costs 2005-2010***) In our case, additional significant facility issues exist in providing access for disabled citizens. Collectively these issues place significant maintenance and capital costs on the owner.

Chart C

Pool Expenses 2005-2013

2005-06

- Energy grant for 2 new boilers and new HVAC \$1,326,782

2006-07

- Pool exterior wall replacement \$239,775

2007-08

- Pool roof replaced and wood dry rot repair \$251,600

2009-10

- New insulating pool covers \$13,388

2012-13

- Scaffolding support for cement pit lid \$12,890

Total spent in 2005-2013

\$1,844,435

As all know, our pool is overdue for major work and there is no capital funding to meet present costs. (***Chart D – ORB Study***)

Chart D

ORB STUDY - Pool

Short Term Cost Items

Total estimate cost for all Short Term Cost Items **\$ 406,724**

Long Term Cost Items

Total estimate cost for all Long Term Cost Items **\$1,998,740**

Total Cost Estimate For All Work Items \$2,405,464

Even more ominous, there is little prospect to meet additional costs compounding over the next five years. (***Chart E - ORB Detail***)

Chart E**ORB Study Cost Detail - Pool**

	Short Term Totals	Long Term Totals
<u>STRUCTURAL</u>		
<i>Short Term Scope Items:</i>		
Replace Filter Room Structural Slab & Repair Walls	\$55,357	
<u>ARCHITECTURAL</u>		
<i>Short Term Scope Items:</i>		
Pool Tile & Plaster Repairs	\$6,922	
Replace Damaged Step at Diving Pool	\$539	
Modify Chemical Storage Room	\$11,793	
Vapor Control Cover Over Filter Pit	\$7,090	
Refinish Dressing Room Benches	\$1,982	
Caulked Cove Base at Dressing Rooms	\$1,414	
Diaper Changing Stations	\$1,077	
ADA Door Operators	\$50,260	
ADA Toilets, Showers & Dressing Facilities	\$205,465	

Chart E**ORB Study Cost Detail – Pool (con't)**

	Short Term Totals	Long Term Totals
<u>ARCHITECTURAL (con't)</u>		
<i>Short Term Scope Items:</i>		
ADA Lockers	\$9,478	
ADA Lifter at Lap Pool	\$19,036	
ADA Signage at Dressing & Natatorium	\$808	
Repair West Canopy & Damaged Interior Wall Finish	\$12,709	
<i>Long Term Scope Items:</i>		
Replace Pool Deck Slabs to Improve Drainage		\$269,860
Re-Plaster Pools		\$133,710
Replace Dressing Room Slabs to Add Drainage		\$40,208
EFIS Insulation Over Brick Walls		\$150,137
Insulation at Metal Walls		\$112,344
Finish Exposed Clerestory Infill at Upper West Wall		\$3,231
Finish Exposed Wood at Patched Ceiling		\$1,616
Replace Casework at Lifeguard Space		\$9,765

Chart E**ORB Study Cost Detail – Pool (con't)**

	Short Term Totals	Long Term Totals
<i>MECHANICAL</i>		
<i>Short Term Scope Items:</i>		
VGB Upgrades for Lap Pool	\$6,642	
VGB Upgrades for Diving Pool	\$3,411	
Replace Deck Drain Covers	\$1,885	
<i>Long Term Scope Items:</i>		
Replace Flowmeter		\$19,431
Add Airgap to Makeup Water & Fill		\$1,885
Add Standpipe Drain		\$6,642
Remove Flow Control Valves & Add VFD		\$28,271
Replace Pool Circulation Piping in Mechanical Room		\$93,789
Replace Chemistry Control System		\$20,822
Add UV Water Treatment		\$86,025
Add Agitator Water Jet to Dive Pool		\$6,489

Chart E**ORB Study Cost Detail – Pool (con't)**

	Short Term Totals	Long Term Totals
<i>MECHANICAL (con't)</i>		
<i>Long Term Scope Items:</i>		
Relocate Pool Circulation Pump		\$211,182
Replace Hose Bibbs at Pool Deck		\$46,491
Replace Showers		\$194,111
Replace Domestic Water Piping		\$261,891
Add Backflow Preventer on Domestic Water Entry		\$48,465
Add Backwater Valve on Filter Pit Overflow		\$4,488
Modify Natatorium Ductwork		\$29,618
Add Fire Sprinkler System		\$165,140

Chart E

ORB Study Cost Detail – Pool (con't)

	Short Term Totals	Long Term Totals
<i>ELECTRICAL</i>		
<i>Short Term Scope Items:</i>		
Upgrade natatorium lighting to minimum code levels or better by adding fixtures over the pool	\$10,860	
<i>Long Term Scope Items:</i>		
Upgrade/Replace Natatorium Lighting with LED Lighting		\$53,132
TOTAL ESTIAMTED CONSTRUCTION COSTS	\$406,724	\$1,998,740

Thus the dilemma: The pool is great community asset, but the financial responsibility for the pool is in the wrong place. The Shelton School District is facing a horrendous choice: Take millions of dollars out of operations for the school programs, or cease to operate the pool. In recent months I have noted the great significance of the pool to the community, and I have also highlighted the immense need for additional resources to meet the academic mission of the schools.

In the face of this dilemma, and as superintendent of schools, I believe the evidence is clear and I can make only one recommendation. I do not believe we should divert operation funding to capital needs for the pool. In spite of the difficulty of this choice, it would be wrong to subjugate present and future academic needs of the schools and children to the capital needs of the swimming pool. Therefore, I recommend that we suspend operation of the pool if there is no other revenue source to support it.

I truly believe the swimming pool is a community issue and a community obligation. Yes, the schools can and should be a party to joint use of a community pool, but they should not be the owners trying desperately to stretch a severely limited funding system.

To effect this determination, I would recommend that the Board of Directors schedule the Shelton School District Pool for closure as of July 1, 2015. This will also necessitate that a plan for repurposing the structure be authorized as quickly as possible.