

ATTACHMENT B

EXCERPT FROM EMAILS IN MARCH 2021 WITH NANAIMO CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Hello Lynn,

I hope this email finds you well. It must be an ongoing challenge to provide city services in this environment. Thank you for everything you and the city staff have done to continue to provide recreation services in a safe way.

I don't know how much you know about our organization but among other things we provide therapy for very young children that have disabilities and extra support needs. We have a team of Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists that work with parents and young children to support their development.

I am writing to request a quick phone call or virtual meeting to discuss the possibility of creating an accessible way for parents and young children with disabilities to attend the swimming pool. The current system in place for reserving a time is difficult for parents to access. We understand the reasons the current system is place and we are wondering if it could be made more accessible in any way. We have a couple of ideas we would like to discuss. Or maybe if we can explain the difficulty, you and/or the parks and recreation staff can find a way to help.

The children we support go to the pool as part of a health plan so it would be great if we could help them access the pool. Whenever you are available one of our occupational therapists and I could explain the challenges parents are having.

Here is a description of some of the challenges and questions/suggestions/requests we have.

1. Because of the limited spots and the speed at which the spots get scooped up 72 hours in advance, it is extremely challenging for people in general to schedule a time to go to the pool, let alone people with special needs whose therapy relies on being able to access the pool. This is why it would be great if there was a designated timeslot or 2 per week (maybe one during the weekday and one on the weekend?) where people with special needs would have priority access to attend a swim.
2. Similar to the above booking challenge, it is now basically impossible for therapists to schedule times to go with clients to the pool right now. We have clients who would immensely benefit from having pool sessions with a therapist but it is virtually impossible to schedule with only 72 hours notice and the high likelihood that no spots will be available upon booking.
3. Another issue related to accessing the pool for therapy sessions would be that previously, therapists were able to attend as the client's care aid so that the parents would not have to pay for us to attend the pool session with the child. With the current pre-pay booking system and no option that I can see to select a person as a care aid, this presents a challenge as I know that there are number caps for people in the pool at one time. I don't even know how parents would schedule us in with the child since it is all linked to personal profile accounts- I'm assuming they would have to call in? Which would likely take longer than the internet option making it even less likely that spots will be available by the time they are able to speak with someone on the phone.
4. It is challenging for people who have physical needs to adhere to the quick change room time turnaround without it significantly impacting their swim time- currently one is allowed 10 minutes to change following a swim which is not realistic for people who need to use the mechanical lift in the change room. If people have to leave early from the swim in

order to change, this significantly limits their swim time since the slots are only 1 hour to begin with. Many of the people requiring extra time to change are not able to just simply wrap a towel around them and head out due to health risks etc. Would it be possible to extend these swim times to 1.5 hours with extra for changing if needed?

5. If there was a swim time available for people with special needs, the best pool space at the NAC would be to have the large wave pool available since the temperature tends to be warm and there is the beach entry for easier access.
6. In relation to everyone with unique needs, it would be beneficial to use the hot tub if it could be made available for booking. There are many adults with physical needs in the community who benefit from having the hot temperatures for stretching and relieving spasticity and muscle tension. Is it at all possible to have this available for a very limited number of people?

Thank you!

Dominic Rockall
Executive Director
Nanaimo Child Development Centre