

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF RECREATION GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

Saratoga Springs has submitted to the voters the question of whether to issue General Obligation Bonds to finance recreational facilities in Saratoga Springs. A vote in favor of the issuance of up to but not exceeding \$70,000,000 in recreational general obligation bonds at the November 8th election is a vote to build recreational facilities, which will include a recreation center and swimming facility. The recreation center may have amenities such as indoor sports courts, family leisure pool, lap pool, exercise equipment, running track, fitness rooms, multipurpose rooms, senior programs and outdoor natural hot spring soaking pools. The project includes researching geothermal energy as a sustainable long term heat source for this facility and the swimming amenities.

The City recognizes recreational facilities, including a possible recreation center, is an important project to some residents of Saratoga Springs; in order for the City to fund the project it must issue a bond, secured by a property tax levy. Therefore, the City is submitting this question to the residents of Saratoga Springs at the November 8th election.

City Council of Saratoga Springs, Utah

The City shall conduct a public meeting on October 4, 2022, beginning at the hour of 6:00 p.m. at 1307 North Commerce Drive, Saratoga Springs, Utah. The purpose of the meeting is to hear arguments for and against the issuance of the Bonds.

ARGUMENT AGAINST RECREATION BOND

Recreation Centers are fun. No one is disputing that fact. The question then, is how much can we afford as taxpayers to spend on fun, and who will ultimately benefit from a new recreation center?

The \$70,000,000.00 proposed in this bond is more than 240% of the cost of the new Orem Recreation Center built just last year and 180% of the cost of the Provo Recreation Center built a few years before that. If approved, the Saratoga Springs Recreation Center will be the most expensive public recreation facility ever built in Utah County, and perhaps the entire state. If the bond passes, each and every homeowner in Saratoga Springs will see their property tax bill double in size. That means you will be paying as much for the recreation center as you currently do for police, fire, roads, utilities, and all the other services the city provides. This is only to build the building. To use the facility, citizens will have to pay additional fees up to \$475/year (or more) to access the amenities inside. According to the city's feasibility study, it is anticipated that 5,100 resident memberships (daily, monthly, or annual) will be purchased. In a city of almost 50,000 residents, where does that leave everyone else? It leaves them paying for a facility that either they don't use, can't afford, or duplicates the gym and pool facilities they already pay for through their HOA.

While the feasibility study anticipates that the membership fees will cover the costs of operation by year 3, what happens if they don't? That money must then come from the city's General Fund, money which is used to fund public safety, transportation projects, the city library, city

parks, city events, and recreation opportunities that are available to ALL residents. Are we ready to see funding for services that benefit the entire city cut, to fund a facility that benefits only a few?

Our city is growing fast. As our city continues to grow we will have increased funding needs for our Police and Fire Departments, we have infrastructure needs, and we have well-known needs regarding roads. Shouldn't these needs be our priority?

Finally, the current economic outlook is not good. Many in our community are facing uncertainty at work, and those living on a fixed income are struggling to keep up with rampant inflation. Once approved, this burden will not go away. It will cost Saratoga Springs taxpayers \$319.59 in taxes every year to maintain the recreation center on a house with the value of \$528,000, and even more for homes worth more than that. The beginning of a recession is not the best time to spend \$70 million on a brand new recreation facility.

We urge you to vote AGAINST the issuance of a bond.

Heidi Balderree