



**STAFF REPORT**

**City Council**

**Meeting Date:**

**1/27/2026**

**Staff Report Number:**

**26-013-CC**

**Informational Item:**

**Update on the Belle Haven Pool hybrid model community task force**

**Recommendation**

This is an informational item that does not require City Council action. City staff recommends that City Council receive this update on the Belle Haven Pool hybrid model community task force in preparation for an upcoming study session.

**Policy Issues**

City Council provides policy direction to the city manager regarding services to the community; allocates resources to support City services; sets prioritization for the use of City resources to serve the community; and authorizes the city manager to execute and amend agreements.

**Background**

On Sept. 9, 2025, the City Council reviewed conceptual options for sustaining and restoring operating hours at City-owned swim centers (Attachment A).

Among other actions taken, the City Council directed staff to further develop the concept of a potential future Belle Haven Pool “hybrid” operating model. Under the hybrid operating model, Menlo Swim and Sport staff would provide lifeguards and a certified pool operator (at a cost to the City), and the City would provide programming and program staff.

At the Sept. 23, 2025, aquatics working group meeting, City staff proposed a spin-off of the aquatics working group: a “Belle Haven Pool hybrid model task force” that would be comprised of Belle Haven neighborhood residents and stakeholders.

The Belle Haven Pool hybrid model task force (Task Force) met on Oct. 14, 2025, Oct. 28, 2025, and Dec. 8, 2025. In November 2025, staff had individual conversations with Task Force members to confirm and refine desired pool programming that could be offered under the hybrid model.

Notes from the Task Force meetings and previous meetings are available on the Aquatics webpage (Attachment B).

## Analysis

The purpose of the Task Force is to gather neighborhood-oriented feedback to help develop a potential hybrid operating model at the Belle Haven Pool.

Under the hybrid model concept, the Belle Haven Pool would be operated jointly by the City of Menlo Park and Menlo Swim and Sport.

- Menlo Swim and Sport (Operator) would provide:
  - Safety services – certified lifeguards, lifeguard training and supervision
  - Certified Pool Operator (CPO) – maintaining pool chemistry, managing pool equipment, and following public health codes
- The City of Menlo Park would provide, whether via City staff and/or contractors:
  - Aquatic programs – open swim, lap swim, swim lessons, aquafit, etc.
  - Customer service – assisting residents with signing up for classes, staffing the front entrance, etc.
  - Schedule of pool hours and programs.
- Financial details
  - The City would collect and retain all revenue from user fees
  - The City would compensate the Operator \$199 per hour for two certified lifeguards, one lifeguard manager and overhead costs, and \$600 per week for CPO support.

The table below shows the programs desired by Task Force members as developed during the three Task Force meetings. Additional suggestions for programming gathered during individual meetings with Task Force members are marked with an \*. All programming suggestions were reviewed and confirmed by Task Force members at the Dec. 8, 2025, meeting.

Table 1: Desired programs at Belle Haven Pool – Dec. 08, 2025		
Item	Type	Total
Open swim	All ages	Unstructured swimming time
Lap swim	All ages	
Aqua fit	18 and up	Water exercise – often for seniors but not exclusively so
Group swim lessons – youth	3 and up	
Group swim lessons – adult	18 and up	
Individual swim lessons	All ages	One student and one swim instructor
Camps	6 to 14	Summer camps and shorter camps during school breaks
Swim teams - youth	6 to 18	
Masters	18 and up	Skill building and group/team swim for all skill levels
Youth triathlon team	6 to 18	
Bridge swim	6 to 18	Skill building to prepare for swim team
Events	All ages	Family and community parties and celebrations
*Water safety classes	All ages	
*Artistic swimming	6 to 18	Synchronized swimming
*Splashball	6 to 18	Intro to water polo

In addition to the programmatic elements above, the Task Force encouraged greater connections to neighborhood schools and organizations. They also suggested that an emphasis be placed on services to youth and to seniors, and that low-cost or no-cost swimming lessons be offered for all ages to introduce residents to the pool and encourage pool use.

Many of the programs above are currently being offered by Menlo Swim and Sport, but the Task Force stressed that the frequency, timing, and cost of the current offerings were a barrier to neighborhood use of the pool.

While not in the scope of work defined by the City Council in September, the Task Force participants did offer comments and criticisms of the current pool operations. These included comments on the hours of operation and the number of staff present at the pool; the cost, frequency and scheduling of swim lessons; suggestions for improving marketing of pool offerings to the community and suggestions to increase neighborhood engagement with the pool.

At the request of task force members, staff solicited written feedback from individual task force members for this agenda item. Comments received as of Jan. 21 staff report are included as Attachment C.

### Next steps

Staff are preparing for a future City Council study session on the proposed hybrid model. Staff is also compiling a list of pool closures over the last several years that will be presented as part of the annual/report review process for the aquatics operator.

### **Impact on City Resources**

There are no impacts on City resources from this report. Should the City Council direct staff to implement the hybrid model, there would be staff, contract services and materials costs for providing aquatics programming.

### **Environmental Review**

This action is not a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §§15378 and 15061(b)(3) as it will not result in any direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

### **Public Notice**

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

### **Attachments**

- A. Hyperlink – Sept. 9, 2025, Staff Report #25-134-CC:  
[www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2025-meetings/20250909/j1-20250909-cc-aquatics-operations-direction.pdf](http://www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2025-meetings/20250909/j1-20250909-cc-aquatics-operations-direction.pdf)
- B. Hyperlink – Aquatics webpage. [www.menlopark.gov/aquatics](http://www.menlopark.gov/aquatics)
- C. Email responses received from task force members as of Jan. 21

Report prepared by:

Nick Szegda, Assistant Library and Community Services Director

Tricia Mullen, Library and Community Services Supervisor



Jan 18, 2026

Email

[All Emails](#)**Belle Haven Pool Task Force**Eduardo Lopez  
17 Jan 2026

Dear City Council Members and Mayor Nash,

As the City prepares to review the forthcoming staff report related to the Belle Haven Pool and the Belle Haven Pool Task Force, I submit the following guidance for the record to help ensure that past mistakes are not repeated and that clear accountability is established moving forward.

While the City has indicated that community comments will be considered, it is essential that this review result in substantive change rather than a continuation of approaches that have previously failed Belle Haven residents. Prior shortcomings were not the result of insufficient public engagement, but of inadequate leadership, planning, and accountability within City staff.

During the City Council meeting on September 9, 2025, Vice Mayor Nash asked Library and Community Services Director Sean Reinhart, since Team Shepperd had been trying to end the contract, what Plan B was. Director Reinhart responded by defending the current approach, but Vice Mayor Nash noted that there was no contingency plan in place (see meeting video timestamp 4:13:54 to 4:16:58). Although Director Reinhart had been working on pool issues for several months, the absence of an alternative strategy demonstrated a lack of foresight. This left the City in a reactive position and allowed Team Shepperd to retain negotiating leverage, rather than ensuring outcomes that were equitable and protective of City interests.

For the record, it is essential that City Directors anticipate risks, develop contingency plans, and present multiple strategic alternatives for Council consideration. Directors play a critical role in equipping the Council with the information necessary for informed decision-making. When contingency planning is absent, the City's

negotiating position is weakened and public trust is diminished.

It must also be stated clearly that Director-level failures are, by definition, City Manager-level failures. As City Manager, Justin Murphy is responsible for ensuring that Directors meet expectations for proactive leadership, risk management, and strategic preparedness. Accountability for these shortcomings therefore rests not only with the department, but with executive management as a whole.

As the Council reviews the staff report, I urge careful evaluation of whether it reflects lessons learned, proactive problem solving, and equitable outcomes for Belle Haven residents. The report should include realistic contingency plans and establish clear expectations for staff leadership and accountability moving forward.

Belle Haven residents have consistently participated in good faith and invested significant time and energy in this process. The community expects the same level of seriousness, preparation, and leadership from City staff and executive management.

As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now." Let us ensure that our City leadership reflects that shared responsibility and commitment to equity.

Thank you for allowing this guidance to be entered into the record.

Sincerely,

Eduardo L. Hernandez  
Belle Haven Resident for more than twenty five years  
Belle Haven Pool Task Force Member



Public Works and utilities



Emergency management



Public Safety



City budget



Jan 20, 2026  
Email

[All Emails](#)



## Belle Haven Pool Task Force



James Rohr  
19 Jan 2026

Hello,

The city council needs to be made aware that the task force was not helpful to the residents of Belle Haven.

We made simple requests for the meetings to have an actual effect on how the city would manage its pool at the BHCC campus.

The task force meetings would be a great idea if we were able to effectuate change with the program or to at least have the option for another operator to use the 33 hours that were being cut ( rather than just paying the current operator more money \$133/hr).

We were told that the city staff has no ability to make any changes to the pool, as in one staff member's exact comments: "We don't manage the pool. You have to ask the pool operator."

How is this a proper answer when we are complaining about the pool operator himself?

This is a city pool being run by a private operator, so who do we go to if we witness that operator violating the contract with the city?

The city has continuously said it is helpless when faced with extortion by the pool operator. Every time the operator says they will be forced to leave the city without a running pool, then gets more money from the city.

And I want to be very clear that Tim Sheeper’s Menlo Swim and Sport is violating the contract they have with the city. This is already known by the city when Tim Sheeper shut down the pool and changed hours without city approval.

His company is also not continuously providing the five people that are listed in the new amended contract with the city for the Belle Haven Pool. This was pointed out to the aquatics staff member before an aquatics meeting.

The city needs to perform spot checks to be sure that the contract is being followed, as not having the proper lifeguards on deck is a safety concern.

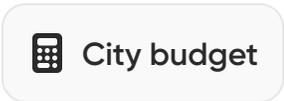
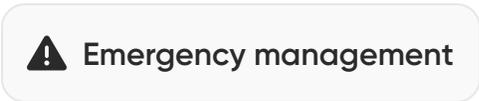
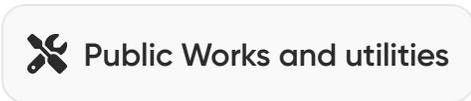
There needs to be a third-party financial audit, as the last audit was performed by a former city staff member. Along with the constant increase in city funds for the pool operator, this reeks of an improper relationship with the pool operator that borders on public corruption.

I say this as my petition was to have the city perform an audit, it was distributed in an unredacted form by the city and given to the pool operator before the city council meeting. I have requested all information about this from the city, and I am being stonewalled because the city is saying those communications are being withheld due to attorney-client privilege. So I want to know why the city thinks it can limit the disclosure of that communication? And by which California law are you withholding these communications? As this was my petition, the city was the only one to have a digital copy. I want to know who in the city released that unredacted petition to the pool operator.

This is a city pool that needs to cater to the local residents of the city first, not to any financial issues created by the private operator.

Please begin searching for a replacement operator, as this current one will create an issue and be extorting the city again in September if not sooner.

Thank you,  
James Rohr







Jan 21, 2026  
Email

[All Emails](#)



## Belle Haven Pool



Nina Wouk  
21 Jan 2026

Hi, Council

As the powerless Belle Haven Pool hybrid model community task force has made obvious, the current governance structure for the pool is useless because the pool operator has total control over all operations and is doing a miserable job. Assuming city council has any interest in making use of the facility it built and pays to maintain, it needs to make some changes, specifically a dedicated, transparent budget and a community-led governing body with power to make and carry out decisions. A 'hybrid model' will not work as long as the pool operator has control over what actually happens. It will just give the operator an excuse to do even less.

I know that a lot of regular users of the Burgess pool want to keep Tim Sheeper but the city pool operator is responsible for Belle Haven as well. You bought some time at the cost of handing Belle Haven Pool over to someone who doesn't care about it at all. Use that time to find another operator. Otherwise our pool is doomed to remain underused by design.

Details are in Meredith Rohr's Aqauatic Task Force report.

All the best

Nina Wouk



Public Works and utilities



Rental housing



Local businesses



City budget



Jan 21, 2026  
Email

[All Emails](#)



## Belle Haven Pool Task Force



Jacqui Cebrian  
21 Jan 2026

Dear City Council-

Im sharing a small amount of feedback for the small amount of time Ive actually been able to make the task force meetings. I would like to first echo Meredith Rohrs comments about the process. It is interesting that only the Belle Haven pool is being put under the hybrid umbrella and the burden is placed on local citizens to craft a schedule that matches our needs. I have noticed since moving to Belle Haven in 2007 that every time I want some sort of city service or benefit, I have to show up, or join and committee, or write to city council to sustain it or make it more fair or help it to match the needs of the residents. Belle Haven has a smaller population than the city as a whole, but, because of past infrastructure choices, is isolated from the rest of our city. The burden of accessing centrally located city services is greater for Belle Haven than the rest of the city and yet every time I find a new hobby or interest, it seems to need an advocacy group to have it continue. Its exhausting. But that seems to be the pattern, so here I am advocating again. The burden on residents to show up and tell you what we want again and again and again is something the city really needs to think about. Why is it so challenging to reflect the needs of a whole neighborhood that has been surveyed and surveyed and surveyed without also asking us to create our own pool program as well.

I only recently decided to take up swimming as I wanted a low impact exercise that I could continue into my old age - and we have that lovely new pool facility. I dont know what needs our aquatic center has or should have because I am a casual swimmer. And I dont know the full story

behind it all, but as an observer, it is clear there is some tension between city council and the private company managing the pool. Again, Im unsure why that is, but its pretty obvious and perhaps that is part of the issue.

What I hope you take away from this ramble is that I want the city to do a better job of putting good choices in front of people who may not even know what to be asking for, I want a better system for keeping those wishing to attend task force meetings in the loop about them, and I want the city to figure out why they dont need to survey folks on the other side of 101 about what services they want, but its been a steady stream of surveys and neighborhood committees for the 17 years Ive lived in Belle Haven.

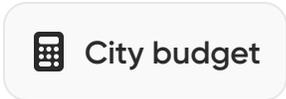
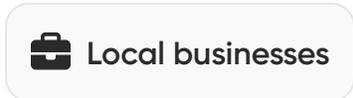
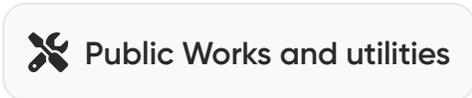
Thank you for your time and effort trying to ensure that all Menlo Park residents have access to the same quality programming, no matter which neighborhood they live in.

Jacqui Cebrian  
Resident of Belle Haven  
Member of the Complete Streets Commission (though speaking for myself)  
Past member of the Library Commission and Transportation Management Plan Committee.

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What Im reading/just finished (audio/print/ebook):

[image: Lula Deans Little Library of Banned Books: A Novel By Kirsten Miller Cover Image]. [image: Pocket Bear By Katherine Applegate Cover Image]  
[image: Troubling Tonsils! (Jasper Rabbits Creepy Tales!) By Aaron Reynolds, Peter Brown (Illustrator) Cover Image]

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Jan 21, 2026  
Email

[All Emails](#)



## Belle Haven Pool "hybrid model" Task Force



Meredith  
Rohr  
21 Jan 2026

Hello City Council and City Staff,

Thank you for this opportunity for Task Force attendees to share their perspectives about this Task Force.

I am attaching my Report in PDF format with the expectation that it will be included as an Attachment/Exhibit to the Staff Report.

We were notified about this on Friday afternoon of a holiday weekend which gave us only one full business day to prepare this material. Because I am making the deadline, I insist that this Report be included in the Staff Report as an Attachment/Exhibit.

Despite the tight timeline, a number of Task Force participants have reviewed this document, and I am aware that some are referencing my report in their feedback.

Please let me know about the outcome of this submission and whether it will be included in the Staff Report. Otherwise, I will re-send with different formatting so it can be readable on the public website.

Best,

Meredith Rohr  
Belle Haven Resident  
Head Coach of Race Swami Belle Haven

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Tricia Mullan

Date: Fri, Jan 16, 2026 at 11:35 AM

Subject: City Council to receive informational report on Belle Haven Pool  
"Hybrid Model" Community Task Force's work to date

To:

Dear Task Force participants (via bcc),

Thank you again for participating in the Belle Haven Pool "Hybrid Model" Community Task Force. Your positive effort and contributions to the Task Force are greatly appreciated.

\*City Council informational update\*

City staff are preparing an informational update on the Task Force's work for City Council to receive in its January 27 agenda packet.

The informational update will provide copies of all the past Task Force meeting agendas and notes for the City Council and public to review, along with a brief report summarizing them.

As a reminder, the agendas and notes from past group Task Force meetings are posted to the City's Aquatics web page

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\*Belle Haven Pool "hybrid model" task force\*

In addition to the aquatics working group, Belle Haven neighborhood residents and stakeholders participate in the Belle Haven Pool "hybrid model" task force. The purpose of the task force is to help develop a potential "hybrid" operating model at the pool for future consideration by City Council.

- October 14, 2025 - Belle Haven Pool "hybrid model" community task force meeting notes(PDF, 6MB)

- October 28, 2025 - Belle Haven Pool "hybrid model" community task force meeting notes(PDF, 5MB)

- December 8, 2025 - Belle Haven Pool "hybrid model" community task force meeting notes(PDF, 133KB)

\*Share your thoughts with City Council\*

Task Force participants are invited to review the past meeting agendas and notes, then share your thoughts about Belle Haven Pool and the Task Force to the City Council email list ([city.council@menlopark.gov](mailto:city.council@menlopark.gov)).

Please use the subject heading, "Belle Haven Pool Task Force."

Emails from Task Force participants that are received by \*Wednesday, January 21\* will be attached to the informational report. Emails received after January 21 will still be received and reviewed by the City Council and staff.

We greatly appreciate your time.

Kind regards,

\* Tricia Mullan, CPRP\*  
Library and Community Services Supervisor  
Arrillaga Family Recreation Center  
700 Alma St.  
tel 650-330-2225  
menlopark.gov

 [Volunteering](#)

 [Public Works and utilities](#)

 [Offices](#)

 [City budget](#)

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 [Hybrid Task Force - ...](#)  
[View](#) 96.5 KB

## HYBRID TASK FORCE REPORT FOR CITY STAFF

**We members of the task force feel that it is a symbolic exercise, a ‘check the box’ initiative with minimal tangible impact.**

City Staff has consistently told us that the Task Force lacks defined milestones, formal oversight mechanisms, or any authority. At most, we can offer suggestions to the Operator who, at his sole discretion, may accept or reject our proposals.

To date, the Operator has either rejected our requests or implemented them in ways not set up for success, as further detailed below.

**1) City Staff initially acted unilaterally in determining the future of our facility, making decisions without resident input based on the Operator’s proposed vision for the pool under the Hybrid Model. The Operator has since refused to accommodate our requests regarding operational hours, program offerings, and established communication protocols.**

At the first Task Force meeting, City Staff informed us that it plans to increase the Pool Operator’s hourly rate from \$133/hr for 5 resources (2 lifeguards, CPO, Reception and Manager) to \$284.71/hour (\$199/hr for 2 lifeguards and 1 Manager + \$600/week for CPO). This rate increase corresponds to our receiving fewer resources and services. No justification was provided for this significant cost increase, which residents found alarming. Equally significant, the number of staff at Belle Haven is typically three (3), not the (5) resources required under the contract, and the number of lifeguards on deck is typically one (1), even when both pools are occupied. Where is the money going?

Our inquiries about finances have been shut down because “finances are outside of the scope of the Task Force”; however, the City brought up this issue as an agenda item at the first Task Force meeting. Under the Public Records Act citizens are entitled to details regarding City expenditures and City Staff are fiduciaries when it comes to the use of Menlo Park tax dollars. We have the legal right to ask questions and receive meaningful responses.

We have been told that the 33 hours are “ours” to determine; however, the timing of hours and availability of programs are at the Operator’s sole discretion. In practice, the pool hours and programs have been provided at the hours selected by the Operator, not the hours requested by Belle Haven residents. The Pool Operator has further restricted Belle Haven’s access to the same programs and services that are available at Burgess. The Operator has declined to offer an Adult Swim Program (Masters Swimming), Aqua Fit or Water Polo at Belle Haven. Swim Lessons are only available at hours the Operator deems appropriate—again, not the hours requested by the residents.

In an additional insult to our multilingual community, communication about these programs is limited to the Menlo Swim & Sport (MSS) email list or website, which are English-only, despite Belle Haven’s significant Spanish-speaking population. The MSS website is difficult to navigate and it is challenging to find details on available programs and schedules. These problems have significantly hindered residents’ ability to access information or register for programs.

While repeated discussions with the Operator and City have highlighted these concerns, both parties have maintained that the Operator retains sole discretion over communication strategies. Consequently, no modifications to accommodate residents’ language needs or improve accessibility have been implemented.

**2) The City and Operator have refused to include finances in the Task Force discussions.**

Belle Haven Pool will bear more financial obligations than Burgess, including funding our own programs, and covering the Operator pool rent. All of the hours for any programs must be approved by the Operator before we can proceed. Since the Operator has control over our money, the Task Force should have the right of financial oversight, including the right to request an independent, comprehensive audit of the Operator's finances. This would justify the increase of costs for everyday operations and make planning possible by clarifying the costs of our own programs.

**3) The City and Operator have asked Belle Haven residents to propose programs without providing any information about the sport of swimming and pool activities. This is like asking Belle Haven residents to "talk underwater."**

Belle Haven residents do not have their own residential swimming pools and have historically only had 8 weeks of access to the BHCC pool per year, leaving this community without swimming knowledge, experience, or expertise. Now, Belle Haven residents have been tasked with advising the City on pool operations through this Task Force. The City has not provided any guidance or information about pool programs or operations, which is much-needed for future Task Force meetings.

Furthermore, despite the significant Spanish-speaking population in Belle Haven, interpretation services were not provided until we asked. This is a multilingual neighborhood. Providing access to Spanish speakers is the City's responsibility. Language barriers hinder meaningful participation, and the absence of interpreters undermines the community's ability to engage effectively. We have had one meeting with a translator, which was a good start. We hope and expect to have a translator available at all future meetings.

**4) It has been extremely and unnecessarily difficult for people to sign up for Task Force meetings**

Despite this, attendance and participation by Belle Haven residents has been consistent.

The Task Force is requesting the City include a link to sign-up for future Task Force meetings on the Aquatic page.

Currently, details on future Task Force meetings are not on the Aquatics web page, but in the Library section of the government website. It is unreasonable to expect us to go to a Library website to sign up for a Task Force about swimming pools.

There has been inconsistent email distribution, including the City's most recent request for Task Force members to contact City Council. This has been a constant issue that has caused key stakeholders to miss Task Force meetings, despite their intent to attend, and we have raised this issue to City Staff and the City Manager.

Despite these challenges, Belle Haven residents have consistently demonstrated strong engagement with the Task Force. Attendance at meetings has exceeded 10 participants per session, with recent meetings drawing up to 15 Belle Haven residents. This sustained interest underscores the community's active participation and commitment to addressing issues related to swimming pools and recreational programs. Belle Haven residents are activated about this issue.

**5) We acknowledge the City's efforts to improve the Task Force/BHCC Pool.**

City Staff have scheduled 1-1 meetings with attendees; brought in a BHCC front desk employee to act as interpreter to our last meeting; and purchased fins for BHCC. I believe the City is responding to our request to have a section in the Staff Report via this email process. We appreciate this opportunity to formally express our experience with the Task Force.

**6) Recommendations for the "Aquatic Task Force"**

The work for this Aquatic Task Force is far from being done. The Task Force should be elevated to an Aquatic sub-committee or commission, like the Complete Streets Commission which is able to submit their own package of recommendations to the City Council and collaborate with city staff. This constitutes a meaningful way to achieve change.

More granular discussions with respect to program costs, feasibility, scheduling and how each program would operate are needed.

Task Force work needs to continue with a focus on:

- a. Education about pools and the sports of competitive swimming, water polo, water aerobics, and games;
- b. City researching and presenting what other city pools are doing operationally;
- c. Establishing an escalation path to the City for current pool Operator issues;
- d. Creation of an adult competitive swimming program/Bridge Program;
- e. Education on social events that can be hosted at the pool such as movies at the pool, music activities, floating meditation, and other ideas proposed by Task Force attendees;
- f. Making lifeguard, CPO training and jobs available to Belle Haven residents;
- g. Exploring the ideas proposed by Task Force attendees such as local events involving food, summer swim team, etc.;
- h. Financial aspects of operating a public pool and programs;
- i. Alternatives to the current operator - pros and cons.



Jan 23, 2026  
Email

[All Emails](#)



## Re: Belle Haven Pool Task Force



arlene lopez  
22 Jan 2026

Dear City Council Members and Mayor Nash,  
I am writing to express my strong agreement with the concerns raised by Eduardo regarding the management of the Belle Haven Pool. As the City prepares to review the forthcoming staff report related to the Belle Haven Pool and the Belle Haven Pool Task Force, I also would like to show support for the findings and recommendations outlined in the Hybrid Task Force Report For City Staff regarding the Belle Haven Community Campus pool submitted by Meredith Rohr.

As the report highlights, the current Task Force structure is functioning as a "check the box" exercise rather than a meaningful venue for community oversight. I am deeply concerned by the lack of transparency and operational hurdles residents are facing, specifically: financial accountability, operational disparity, language and accessibility, and barriers to participation.

I strongly urge the City Council to adopt the Task Forces recommendations of elevating the task force, ensuring education and guidance and establishing oversight.

The residents of Belle Haven have demonstrated a high level of commitment and engagement despite these obstacles. It is time for the City to match that commitment with tangible structural changes and true transparency.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to equity for the Belle Haven Community.

Sincerely, Arlene Navarro  
Belle Haven Resident 25 plus years Belle Haven Pool Task Force Member

On Saturday, January 17, 2026 at 09:17:34 PM PST, Eduardo Lopez Hernandez wrote:

Dear City Council Members and Mayor Nash, As the City prepares to review the

forthcoming staff report related to the Belle Haven Pool and the Belle Haven Pool Task Force, I submit the following guidance for the record to help ensure that past mistakes are not repeated and that clear accountability is established moving forward. While the City has indicated that community comments will be considered, it is essential that this review result in substantive change rather than a continuation of approaches that have previously failed Belle Haven residents. Prior shortcomings were not the result of insufficient public engagement, but of inadequate leadership, planning, and accountability within City staff. During the City Council meeting on September 9, 2025, Vice Mayor Nash asked Library and Community Services Director Sean Reinhart, since Team Shepperd had been trying to end the contract, what Plan B was. Director Reinhart responded by defending the current approach, but Vice Mayor Nash noted that there was no contingency plan in place (see meeting video timestamp 4:13:54 to 4:16:58). Although Director Reinhart had been working on pool issues for several months, the absence of an alternative strategy demonstrated a lack of foresight. This left the City in a reactive position and allowed Team Shepperd to retain negotiating leverage, rather than ensuring outcomes that were equitable and protective of City interests. For the record, it is essential that City Directors anticipate risks, develop contingency plans, and present multiple strategic alternatives for Council consideration. Directors play a critical role in equipping the Council with the information necessary for informed decision-making. When contingency planning is absent, the City's negotiating position is weakened and public trust is diminished. It must also be stated clearly that Director-level failures are, by definition, City Manager-level failures. As City Manager, Justin Murphy is responsible for ensuring that Directors meet expectations for proactive leadership, risk management, and strategic preparedness. Accountability for these shortcomings therefore rests not only with the department, but with executive management as a whole. As the Council reviews the staff report, I urge careful evaluation of whether it reflects lessons learned, proactive problem solving, and equitable outcomes for Belle Haven residents. The report should include realistic contingency plans and establish clear expectations for staff leadership and accountability moving forward. Belle Haven residents have consistently participated in good faith and invested significant time and energy in this process. The community expects the same level of seriousness, preparation, and leadership from City staff and executive management. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now." Let us ensure that our City leadership reflects that shared responsibility and commitment to equity. Thank you for allowing this guidance to be entered into the record. Sincerely,

Eduardo L. Hernandez

Belle Haven Resident for more than twenty five years  
Belle Haven Pool Task Force Member

 Volunteering

 Public Works and utilities

 Housing insecurity

 City budget