

Proposal for Sliding Scale Afterschool Program

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Overview

This proposal presents a plan for a change in cost for the Waterbury Recreation Afterschool Program. The goal is to align our afterschool program with the new Waterbury Public Library policy on younger children, meet the needs of local families, and operate a successful afterschool program.

- The Library has made changes to serve unattended children in grades 5th and up. This change was made in consultation with other town staff. The new policy states: “Effective July 1 any child in fourth grade or below must be supervised by a caregiver over 16 while in the library, unless attending a library program they have registered for in advance”
- The enrollment at Waterbury Recreation has been declining throughout the 2024-2025 school year.
- Attendance of unattended children, most in grades 3 and 4, at the library is between 5-20 children a day. Children visit the library for free yet are not supervised.

Waterbury Recreation proposes a new cost structure for the afterschool program through a sliding scale fee. This will meet families who have been visiting the library with a low-cost alternative and with supervision.

Current Program

The Waterbury Recreation Afterschool Program served on average about 10 children per day for the 2024-2025 school year. The program operates from the end of the school day until 6pm. The program is staffed by Katie Mandych, a fulltime Recreation Department staff member, and seasonal part-time staff. Katarina Lisaius attends as needed and is there multiple times per week.

The program prides itself on being screen free with an emphasis on being outdoors. There are planned activities every day, as well as plenty of free choice.

Waterbury families pay \$110 per week or \$30 per day. Non-resident families pay \$130 per week or \$35 per day.

The budget for the program is about \$18,000 annually and for the 2024-2025 school year the program generated \$54,646.84 in revenue. A total net gain of \$36,407.90 without considering the department’s fulltime staff.

Suggestion #1: Sliding Scale Fee

A Sliding Scale Fee would allow families to choose the amount they are able to pay. Ideally a family takes into account their household income, their ability to pay, and other details of care (how long they attend afterschool, number of kids, etc). Waterbury Recreation can set the low and high of the scale. The amount of revenue generated depends on the number of children enrolled and the fee families decide to pay.

Example of Annual Revenue with Sliding Scale Fees

Annual Attendance	Sliding Scale (ave \$5)	Sliding Scale (ave \$10)	Sliding Scale (ave \$15)	Sliding Scale (ave \$20)
Full (3910)	\$19,550.00	\$39,100.00	\$58,650.00	\$78,200.00
Half (1955)	\$9,775.00	\$19,550.00	\$29,325.00	\$39,100.00
Quarter (977)	\$4,885.00	\$9,770.00	\$14,662.50	\$19,100.00

Waterbury Recreation suggests a sliding scale range of \$5-\$35 per day, with an estimate that families will pay between \$15-20 per day.

Suggestion #2: Free Afterschool

Children who have been visiting the library afterschool do so with no charge, but also with limited structure, programming and adult supervision. With the change in policy at the library, the recreation department can step in to provide the same cost of care but with supervision. This would be a cost to taxpayers as no revenue would be generated, but we would be helping families address a known cost – afterschool.

This would be a known cost of \$18,000 for afterschool care. In addition, the program would not be generating revenue, therefore there would be a net loss of over \$36,000.

In this model, Waterbury Recreation would operate a shortened program from school release to 5pm.

Suggestion #3: No Significant Changes to Current Program

Waterbury Recreation would continue to operate an afterschool program with set daily and weekly rates of care starting at the end of the school day. For this option, the department would assume that more families than the 2024-2025 school year would enroll in afterschool because of the new library policy, thus generating slightly more revenue for the Recreation Department budget.

With no changes to the program, the town budget would not be significantly impacted.

Waterbury Recreation, outside of this proposal is evaluating operating a program until 6pm.