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4 **A RESOLUTION**

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6 requesting the Director, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture provide an  
7 informational report outlining specific plans to proactively recruit lifeguards for 2022,  
8 long-term plans to develop and attract lifeguards in the future, and plans to actively  
9 address staffing issues that led to event cancellations throughout 2021

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12 WHEREAS, in March 2019, following several high-profile drowning deaths at  
13 Milwaukee's lakefront, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture (DPRC)  
14 presented File No. 19-347 outlining the lifeguard staffing shortage and the need for  
15 better water safety in Milwaukee County; and

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17 WHEREAS, the 2021 Adopted Budget included the closure of most Milwaukee  
18 County-operated aquatic facilities besides the Sheridan and Wilson Park deep well  
19 pools and the David F. Schulz Aquatic Center and Cool Waters Aquatic Center; there  
20 were no indoor pools open and only a selection of wading pools and splash pads were  
21 open; and

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23 WHEREAS, the 2021 Adopted Budget also included an appropriation to DPRC of  
24 \$272,059 to supplement seasonal staffing, which includes aquatics staff; and

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26 WHEREAS, in May and June of 2021, DPRC presented File No. 21-415  
27 regarding lifeguard staffing challenges and its impact on aquatic facilities and found that  
28 the broad reasons for declining lifeguard recruitment are: uncompetitive wages,  
29 opportunities for young people to have summer internships or pre-college jobs, national  
30 immigration policy limiting work visas, and high barriers to entry in the form of paid  
31 training and swimming requirements; and

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33 WHEREAS, in July 2021, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopted  
34 File No. 21-556, which:

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- 37 • reallocated all lifeguard positions to provide \$3 and \$4 per hour raises for every pay grade step
  - 38 • provided paid training for all lifeguards and removed the upfront costs that applicants would have to pay
  - 39 • created a bonus structure for lifeguards that stay the whole season and for lifeguards that return for the 2022 season
  - 40 • created a referral bonus for any lifeguard that recruits another individual
  - 41 who applies for and is successfully hired as a lifeguard
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44                   • created a new park worker seasonal position to address other seasonal  
45                   staffing needs at DPRC, which may include those individuals that staff  
46                   concessions, point-of-sale, and other positions at the aquatic facilities  
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48                   ; and  
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50                   WHEREAS, currently, the 2022 Requested Budget includes no changes to the  
51                   aquatics plan from 2021, meaning that only two outdoor pools will be open, the David F.  
52                   Schulz Aquatic Center, Cool Waters Aquatic Center, and a selection of wading pools  
53                   and splash pads, although it may be possible that the two outdoor pools that will be  
54                   open will be different than the ones open in 2021; and  
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56                   WHEREAS, it is anticipated, at this point, that Noyes and Pulaski indoor pools  
57                   will both be open per the 2022 Requested Budget; and  
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59                   WHEREAS, in addition to widespread aquatic facility closures in 2021, many  
60                   popular community events were cancelled; and  
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62                   WHEREAS, in May 2021, DPRC announced that the annual July 3<sup>rd</sup> fireworks  
63                   show would be cancelled due to a lack of staffing available to prepare in advance of the  
64                   event and then to clean-up afterwards—after difficulty finding a sponsor in 2019,  
65                   American Family Insurance, T&M Partners, and the Milwaukee Brewers agreed to pay  
66                   for the show that year, but it was cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and  
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68                   WHEREAS, a week after the July 3<sup>rd</sup> fireworks cancellation, the Milwaukee Air &  
69                   Water Show was also cancelled, although a further explanation was not released to the  
70                   public; and  
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72                   WHEREAS, in August 2021 it was announced that the China Lights Wisconsin  
73                   Festival, typically held at the Boerner Botanical Gardens, would be cancelled due to  
74                   staffing shortages after being cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and  
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76                   WHEREAS, although the COVID-19 pandemic is a major contributing factor to  
77                   staffing shortages and event cancellations in 2021, individuals and families are looking  
78                   forward to the return of long-standing events, traditions, and experiences that make  
79                   their communities unique and positively impact quality of life, especially in Milwaukee  
80                   County; and  
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82                   WHEREAS, event cancellations also overburden events and facilities that remain  
83                   open, which creates stress on those institutions and staff; and  
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85                   WHEREAS, it is critical that Milwaukee County, and DPRC, began to prepare  
86                   and plan for the future of not only our aquatic facilities, but our staffing needs for 2022  
87                   and beyond; and

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WHEREAS, the Committee on Parks, Energy, and Environment, at its meeting of September 14, 2021, recommended adoption of File No. 21-782 (vote 5-0); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby requests the Director, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture provide an informational report for the December 2021 standing committee cycle outlining specific plans to proactively recruit lifeguards for 2022, as well as long-term plans to ensure Milwaukee County's ability to operate its aquatic facilities and programs into the future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the report shall also include specific plans to proactively address staffing shortages that led to event cancellations throughout 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the report shall also include what measures were included in the 2022 Adopted Budget to address the aforementioned concerns.

09/14/21  
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