**Deputy City Administrator Sam Taylor explains why the city of Coeur d’Alene isn’t posting lifeguards at City Beach this summer:**

Hi FarmGal - I'm happy to chat with you about any concerns or questions you may have about City projects. Which projects, specifically, do you feel are "pet" projects? I'm glad for the community conversation!

Councilmember English did a good job of providing information about our very competitive wages related to this. I relayed that information to folks today on social media and to council and others for perspective because I thought it was important. We don't believe wages were really the main factor.

I spoke with the Parks & Recreation staff today to get more insights into our past practices, as we can tell the wages issue is at the forefront of folks' minds. We actually don't think that is the major factor into not finding employees.

Coeur d'Alene has been unique in recent years in that we not only paid some of the highest wages statewide for these positions, we even offered to pay for the training for our guards. That's fairly rare. Not only that, but we also offered for lifeguards to come work in parks maintenance on rainy days where the beach was closed, so they could be guaranteed some wages on those bad-weather days. I should note that on rainy days when the beach is "closed" that simply means we put up signs that say no lifeguard is on duty and folks have to swim at their own risk. That's been the practice forever. The beach doesn't actually, physically close, and the guards have only ever been on duty from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. in peak summer months. Other times they're not out there. We have no life guards at Sanders beach, nor does NIC have guards at the river beach along the dike road. The community is used to numerous beaches in the area with no guards.

Our recreation supervisor shared today that what we've found is that lifeguards or those who might be lifeguards for us in the past enjoy working at local theme parks like Triple Play and Silverwood more along with the Kroc Center. Silverwood is a major one, because they happen to also get a season pass if they work there, and all of their friends are typically there as well. That's something we can't compete with.

At one time we also sought a partnership with the Kroc Center but for a variety of reasons it didn't work out.

The wages for this position were competitive, and we know that our high wages, like Sandpoint's, just didn't convince folks to apply. Sandpoint shared with us that they did well hiring and they paid 25 cents more than us.

Staff here at the City also believe that it's difficult for us to recruit college students who might also take these jobs because housing in our area is a bit pricier and so it's difficult to convince them to come for the summer.

It's not just recruitment that is a challenge, but also finding the right type of employee for this type of responsibility, and in the end we had two lifeguards we beleived could come back and be the type of lifeguard our community deserves.