



LEGISLATIVE MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Juliet Misconi, Deputy City Manager

THRU: Daniel Waite, Acting Recreation Director

DATE: March 6, 2025

RE: Consideration of an agreement with the YMCA of Central Florida for a “Summer Camp Program” at the Ted Whitlock Community Center for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

SUMMARY:

The City of Palm Bay has the opportunity to enhance its summer camp offerings while reducing financial strain by partnering with the YMCA of Central Florida to operate the 2025 Summer Camp Program at the Ted Whitlock Community Center. This collaboration will ensure that the City continues to provide a safe, enriching, and educational experience for youth while alleviating administrative burdens and addressing the financial deficits associated with running the camp in-house. Given the YMCA’s expertise in youth programming, its focus on child development, and its ability to provide essential services at no direct operational cost to the City, this partnership represents a strategic and fiscally responsible decision that benefits Palm Bay residents.

Financial Efficiency and Cost Savings

One of the primary advantages of this agreement is the financial efficiency it provides. In 2024, the Recreation Department incurred an \$18,060.22 deficit operating the summer camp at this location. This shortfall stemmed from expenses totaling \$75,204.72, including:

\$65,029.96 for temporary AUE staffing,
\$2,465.05 for transportation, and
\$7,709.71 for shirts and supplies.

In contrast, summer camp revenues at the Ted Whitlock Community Center totaled \$57,144.50, leaving a significant financial gap. Additionally, the AUE temporary staffing contract increases by 12% annually, further escalating costs in future years.

By shifting program management to the YMCA, the City eliminates these direct operational

expenses, supply costs, and administrative burdens while ensuring continued service for the same age groups (K-5). The YMCA will handle all program logistics, staffing, registration, and fiscal management, allowing the City to reallocate resources toward other community initiatives and reduce financial liabilities associated with camp operations. Examples of the resource reallocation may include investing in non-capital improvements at community centers and facility enhancements; purchasing new fitness equipment for the Tony Rosa Community Center to improve health and wellness offerings for residents; and wrapping City vehicles with branding and information to increase awareness of available recreational services.

Increased Capacity and Accessibility

Beyond financial benefits, the YMCA offers a higher capacity for participation, addressing one of the key limitations of the City's previous operations. Staffing and budget constraints have restricted the number of children who could enroll in the City-run program, often leaving families without viable summer childcare options. The YMCA's well-established infrastructure, staffing model, and financial assistance programs enable it to accommodate more children while maintaining high standards for supervision and programming. This ensures that more Palm Bay families have access to affordable, high-quality summer enrichment opportunities without the constraints imposed by the City's limited resources.

High-Quality Programming and Youth Development

In addition to cost and capacity advantages, the quality of programming offered by the YMCA presents a compelling reason to pursue this partnership. The YMCA summer camp will incorporate a strong focus on STEM education, physical activity, and youth development, three critical pillars for long-term success.

STEM Education: The YMCA's experience in hands-on STEM activities will expose campers to critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation, fostering an interest in learning beyond the classroom.

Physical Activity: Structured sports and recreation programs will emphasize healthy lifestyles while reducing screen time and sedentary behaviors during the summer months.

Youth Development: The YMCA's mission extends beyond recreation, focusing on character-building, leadership skills, teamwork, and social responsibility. Through mentorship and structured activities, campers will learn positive decision-making, confidence-building, and collaboration skills, fostering their emotional and social development in a structured and supportive environment.

Another key advantage of the YMCA's camp model is its all-inclusive pricing structure, which provides greater value to families compared to the City-run camp. The City's current summer camp fee is \$90 per week, but this does not include the cost of field trips, camp shirts, or meals, requiring parents to cover these additional expenses. In contrast, the YMCA's weekly rate of \$120 per week

includes field trips, camp shirts, and free meals, significantly reducing out-of-pocket costs for families. YMCA does its own fundraising to attract sponsors to offset the weekly rate for those in need. Their agreement with the City states, “No child will be turned away for a lack of funds.”

The inclusion of free meals is especially beneficial, ensuring that all children receive nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day, easing the financial and logistical burden on parents. Additionally, by including field trips at no extra cost, the YMCA eliminates barriers to participation, ensuring that every child, regardless of financial circumstances, has access to enriching off-site experiences.

YMCA also uses a unique model for finding high-quality staff, including outreach to local colleges to recruit college students interested in early education and community service-based employment for the summer. All staff receive 40 hours of childcare training, including camp basics (like camp songs) and safety training. They also keep a low ratio of twelve students per counselor, have a rotational schedule with 45 minutes of curriculum, and offer morning shifts and afternoon shifts to avoid counselor burnout. Lastly, they offer “counselor in training” (CIT) programs for students aged thirteen and up, offering a reduced rate for CIT participants, while training them to be future counselors. All of these practices contribute to the high-quality camp experience YMCA is known for.

This enhanced program model not only improves accessibility but also ensures that children receive a well-rounded summer camp experience focused on education, physical activity, and personal growth—all while providing families with a more comprehensive and cost-effective camp option.

Reduced Liability and Risk for the City

Another critical advantage of this partnership is the reduction of liability and risk exposure for the City. Under the agreement:

The YMCA will maintain a \$2,000,000 liability insurance policy, naming the City as an additional insured.

All YMCA staff will undergo Level 2 background screenings in compliance with Florida law, ensuring a safe environment for all participants.

The agreement includes an indemnification clause, meaning the YMCA assumes responsibility for any legal or operational risks associated with camp activities, protecting the City from potential claims or lawsuits.

These safeguards enhance the safety and security of the program while significantly reducing the City’s exposure to liability.

Community Impact and Long-Term Benefits

The YMCA has a proven track record in youth programming, fostering character development,

social responsibility, and lifelong wellness habits. By leveraging their expertise, Palm Bay can ensure that its summer camp remains a high-quality, enriching experience that benefits local families. Additionally, this collaboration sets the foundation for potential future partnerships in afterschool care, and other community initiatives that align with the City's long-term goals.

Transitioning the 2025 Summer Camp Program at the Ted Whitlock Community Center to the YMCA presents a cost-effective, high-quality, and community-driven solution that reduces financial deficits, expands program capacity, enhances youth development opportunities, and minimizes risk exposure for the City. This initiative will serve as a pilot program, allowing both parties to assess its effectiveness while keeping the Tony Rosa Community Center camp under City management this fiscal year.

If the partnership proves successful and there is mutual interest, the City and the YMCA will explore opportunities to expand the collaboration in FY 2026, including discussions with our tenant at the Evans Center to enhance youth programming throughout Palm Bay. The experience gained from this trial run will be instrumental in determining the most effective and sustainable approach to summer camp operations moving forward.

REQUESTING DEPARTMENTS:

Recreation

FISCAL IMPACT:

Estimate Savings of \$72,833.56 from Temporary Staffing and savings of \$12,500 from Supplies and Transportation. Estimated decrease of \$60,000 in revenue from Summer Camp Registration.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Motion to approve the City Manager to execute the agreement with the YMCA of Central Florida to provide a summer recreation program "Summer Camp Program" at the Ted Whitlock Community Center.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Agreement