

Dallas city council to look at other ways to fund aquatic center

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — At this point, the Dallas City Council hasn't voted on plans to close the Dallas Aquatic Center.

It did approve a motion at its May 16 meeting to explore other funding methods to pay for expenses at the aquatic center.

The motion, which reads that the city will "pursue other revenue streams for

the aquatic center, primary funding, for the purpose of removing it from the general fund. This motion implies that within the fiscal year, this council will strategize and submit a plan for funding the aquatic center separate from the general fund."

Councilor Micky Garus made the motion, which passed on a 5-4 vote, with Garus, and councilors Bill Hahn, Jackie Lawson, and LaVonne Wilson voting in favor. Councilors Jim

Fairchild, Kevin Marshall, Murray Stewart and Ken Woods voted against it. Mayor Brian Dalton cast the deciding "yes" vote to pass the motion.

Councilor Kelly Gabliks was excused from the meeting.

Concern among citizens about closing the aquatic center likely stemmed from a budget committee meeting on May 2, when Garus asked a question about transferring the budget for

the aquatic center to other needs, such as streets, police and fire.

He said the city should think about making those areas a higher priority than the center.

Others at the meeting encouraged him to bring that issue before the council because making that decision in a budget meeting would essentially close the center.

Garus did not make a motion to change that line item on May 2, instead bringing

the issue to the May 16 council meeting.

In the current budget, expenses at the center are about \$826,000 with revenues at \$465,000. The \$340,000 difference is paid out of the city's general fund.

"When it's all said and done, the center generally averages between 55 and 60 percent coverage, which for an aquatic center is pretty typical with other (publically operated) aquatic centers around the state," said City

Manager Ron Foggin.

He said in conversations with councilors, he hasn't found support for the idea of closing the center.

"Most of the councilors that I've talked have committed that we're not closing the aquatic center. They committed to keeping it open," he said. "They recognize the importance of the center to this community and the livability aspect is extremely important to the council."

Seuss stories come to life in musical at Perrydale

Show weaves the tale of Horton the Elephant, the Whos of Whoville, the mischievous Cat in the Hat



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

JoJo, center, played by Brayden Syphers, tries to hide after one of his "thinks" gets him in trouble in Perrydale's production of "Seussical the Musical."

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PERRYDALE — JoJo may be the smallest Who, but his imagination is boundless.

His "thinks" as his daydreams are called in Perrydale's production of "Seussical the Musical," transport him to other worlds.

And that gets him into a lot of trouble, thanks to that mischievous Cat in the Hat and his cohorts, Thing I and Thing 2.

"Have you been thinking again?" JoJo's parents ask, looking at yet another mess he's made while lost in his thoughts.

Those could be about swimming with fish, or witnessing the antics of a mysterious cat wearing a top hat.

"Think something normal!" they say.

JoJo doesn't and that turns out to be a good thing for Whoville.

So is Horton, the gentle and caring elephant, who hears Whoville's cries for help.

Like JoJo, he is pressured to think he didn't "hear a Who" and forget about answering those pleas.

"Not many people understand who he really is, but he's still a kind and caring person," said Dylan Milburn, who plays Horton.

Horton sees what looks like a speck of dust floating

Showtime!

What: "Seussical the Musical."

Where: Perrydale School in the old gym, 7445 Perrydale Road, Amity.

When: Thursday and Friday, shows start at 7 p.m.

Admission: Free. VIP tickets are sold for \$20 for Friday's show only.

For more information: 503-623-2040.

in the air — and oddly hears it, too. Whoville is contained within that tiny floating object and desperately needs a hero.

He decides to believe his ears and safely catches it in a clover. That clover looks like multi-colored cotton candy, but this is Seuss, after all. Now he must protect his find against those who don't hear what he hears.

"He does not see them, but he knows they are there," Dylan said. "Not many people believe him."

As he says throughout, though, "a person is a person, no matter how small."

"Seussical the Musical" is based on the collective work of Dr. Seuss.

"Horton hears a Who is really the main one, but they throw in a lot of different books from Dr. Seuss," said Misty Matthews, Perrydale's drama and music teacher

and director of the production.

She cast about 45 students in the musical, including parts for elementary students.

The set, done in Seussical fashion, is an artistic splash of bright colors, setting the whimsical mood for the musical.

"It's fun to get the little kids involved," Matthews said. "It's a fun show."

How could it not, with the Cat in the Hat as one of the main characters?

Timothy Fairchild plays the prank-pulling feline and says he up to his typical tricks.

"I am the devil's advocate," Fairchild said. "I'm on JoJo's side, but I'm also the marshal in the 'People vs. Horton the Elephant.' I'm the one who is kind of attacking him."

For JoJo, the Cat encourages him not to obey his parents and continue his "thinks."

"I'm trying to get him to think outside of the box and not really worry about what other people think about his 'thinks,' and how they can do amazing things," Fairchild said.

Brayden Syphers, who plays little JoJo, believes that is the lesson of his character's story.

"Having a good imagination, that is what the play is about," he said.

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Lynda, Dan's wife

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El Pique (6th season) • Family Building Blocks (2nd Season)
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