

City likely to resume maintenance of the East and West Side Recreation fields until 2020

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SARATOGA SPRINGS — At its March 15 meeting, the Saratoga Springs City Council will likely approve a new contract stipulating that the city would resume management and maintenance of the East and West Side Recreation fields until 2020.

The city and the Saratoga Springs City School District dissolved a previous agreement, which had been in place since 1978, at the beginning of this year that had the city maintaining the fields for \$50,000 and 25,000 for capital improvements per year.

"Through our conversations with our own staff and with city officials, we concluded it is in the best interest of the community and the school district to enter into a long-term agreement with the city," said Dr. Janice White, superintendent of schools in a release on the contract.

The proposed contract, which would be enacted April 1 and run until the end of 2020, would have the city receive a range of payments from the district for annual maintenance and capital improvements; from \$130,000 the first year to \$150,000 in 2020.

According to Mayor Scott Johnson, the payments will be dispersed as follows: for annual maintenance, \$100,000 in 2011 and 2012, \$105,000 from 2013 to 2017, and \$110,000 from 2018 to 2020.

For capital improvements, the district would pay \$30,000 in 2011 and 2012, \$35,000 in 2013 and 2014, \$40,000 from 2015 to 2017, and \$45,000 from 2018 until 2020.

"I think it was a good combined effort between the city and the school district to do what's best for our city, especially our youth," said Johnson, who was involved with negotiating the new agreement.

He said the agreement was a "typical settlement," and that the higher payment would be a more reasonable way to cover annual labor costs at the fields.

"I'm happy with this agreement," said city Accounts Commissioner John Franck, indicating he will vote for the proposal. "I think it's a win-win for both the city and the school district."

Public Safety Commissioner Richard Wirth said he would probably support the measure, along with Finance Commissioner Ken Ivins Jr., who said he would have to review the final contract language before coming to a decision on the agreement.

"This is what we discussed and it sounds, deepening on the exact details, like it is in the best interest for both parties,"

Ivins said Friday after reading the press release on the proposal.

"I think the city all along wanted to continue the partnership, but it became not financially feasible," said Public Works Commissioner Anthony "Skip" Scirocco, who was also a part of the contract negotiations.

"I think it's a win-win situation for both the city and the school district," he said, indicating that he will vote for the measure.

The City Council will convene at 6:50 p.m., Tuesday, March 15 in the council chamber of City Hall.