Task force working hard to open pool

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WALHALLA — The turnout for the third pool task force meeting was the strongest it has been since the Walhalla City Council opted to form the group to focus on re-opening the city pool.

According to Mayor Danny Edwards, the labor costs for running the pool for three months aren't as much as it takes to keep the pool safe for swimmers.

"Based on past budgets, we set aside $4,000 for chemicals, $400 for concession supplies, $1,777 for pool insurance, $527 for property insurance and $2,000 for electricity," Edwards said.

However, City Councilman Tjay Bagwell added that the fundraising aspect of the project will be one of the most crucial, but it's important that people don't lose interest."

The task force is working to get the pool under the direction of a nonprofit organization so donations can be legally accepted on its behalf.

Some short-term goals include using civic organizations and local students to begin the beautification of the area in and around the pool.



FILE PHOTO

Community members and city leaders are working feverishly to open Walhalla's city pool by this summer, but funding remains the largest issue standing in their way.

Bagwell said that if the property can be turned into an area where families come to spend the day, then more people are going to make a habit of coming into town.

Task force chairman Henry Biemann said a lofty goal is to open the pool this summer, but the funds needed have yet to be collected.

Bagwell, however, said it's important not to waste a day when it comes to reaching the eventual opening.

"If we wait a whole 14 months to open the pool, then this project will become like projects that everyone has experienced in the past," Bagwell said. "They run out of momentum or never fully take shape because people say, 'We have lots of time, we can do it later.' So we need to shoot for the mid-summer opening and build on that good will and momentum. Two, this will take a lot of capital, and we only get one chance to make a second impression. Meaning, when we open it we want to open it right."

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