



**Is there really a need for a Metropolitan Park District to support the Friends Of The Pool's over \$20 million dollar Methow Aquatics Complex???**

<https://nopooltaxes.com>

## **Shane Ruoss Letter to the Editor - 8/23/2023**

### **Not responsible**

Dear Editor:

In a letter in the Aug. 9 paper, Friends of the Pool members stated that an earlier letter "implies that we are asking the public to foot the bill of building the pool. Not so!" This contradicts FOP's own study which states "[t]he pool will likely be funded through a range of public, private, and philanthropic funding sources, but it is likely that debt issued by the MPD [Metropolitan Park District] will be a prominent source of capital."

The upcoming ballot measure would allow tax revenues to be spent "to provide ongoing funding to develop, construct, operate, and maintain the Methow Aquatics Center and related existing and future facilities." Those last six words are an undefined open door. They would allow this new, permanent taxing district to expand in unknown ways on the same site as the proposed \$25-plus million pool complex, or elsewhere, at the discretion of future boards of commissioners without any further public votes. Voters should clearly understand this. All but one of the 23 MPDs in Washington are governed by elected boards. The governing board of commissioners of this proposed MPD will be appointed, not elected. Assurances by current pool advocates mean nothing. We are voting on the ballot language, not assurances printed in the newspaper.

A FOP-commissioned study estimated an outdoor replacement of the Wagner pool would cost less than half, or \$10 million to \$12 million less than the cost of the proposed indoor aquatic center, with an operational deficit of over \$500,000 less per year. For comparison, \$10 million to \$12 million would pay for the new Winthrop fire station and the Twisp Civic Center with money left over. The difference in the operational deficits alone would pay for a new outdoor pool every 15 years or so.

Likely the permanent taxing demands of this proposed Metropolitan Park District will compete directly with many voters' willingness to fund existing needs, i.e., the recent hospital special levy, EMS and school levies. I feel this is a fiscally irresponsible approach for replacing the Wagner Pool.

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