



## The Chairman's Corner

by

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### NY SWIMS

They're something most of us likely don't give much thought ... until the beach closes for lack of lifeguards to oversee those who enjoy the water.

That's one of the needs the New York State's SWIMS (the New York Statewide Investment In More Swimming) grant aims to address, with the funds intended for use municipally operated pools or beaches, said Columbia County Youth Bureau Executive Director Dan Grandinetti. According to CDC statistics, drowning is the leading cause of death nationwide for children ages one through four.

The grant is intended for such items as the recertification of lifeguards, lifeguard recruitment, increased salaries, and lifeguard training such as CPR and first aid, he added. In addition, a state press release notes that "NY SWIMS will build out municipal pools in high-need areas, connect New Yorkers to the state's rivers and lakes, deploy pools in urban environments, and invest in state parks and pools."

The county's share of SWIMS was \$25,000, with the program set to run from May 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025. In the county, funding would be distributed equally to Chatham, New Lebanon, Ancram, Canaan, Austerlitz, Ghent, and the City of Hudson.

"There is a shortage of lifeguards here," said Director Grandinetti. "A lot of the grant went to retain, recruit and add lifeguards, as well as to add additional hours to their programs."

The two-week training/certification process is oftentimes offered by school districts, he said, although that occurs annually but a time or two. The cost of the training is generally in the neighborhood of \$200.

According to NYS Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, to become certified as a lifeguard one must complete a 200-yard swim in four minutes or less using crawl or breast strokes; a 20-yard underwater swim, surface dive and recovery simulating an underwater search and recovery for a victim; and swim underwater for 20 yards, surface, swim away from wall and surface dive to recover a 10-pound brick – the candidate must swim either on their side with the brick on their hip or swim on their back with the brick on their torso, simulating a victim carry, and place the brick on the shallow end deck without walking.

Also, complete a 50-yard sprint in 45 seconds or less using a crawl or breast stroke, while towing an examiner on a rescue tube; complete a rescue tube tow for 20 yards; and perform adult CPR (professional level) for two minutes with adequate one-person skills using a pocket mask for a suspected drowning victim.

"Clearly, the physical activity needed for the training is pretty intense," said Director Grandinetti. There is hope for additional state funding to help address this critical need, he added, although no word on that has yet been forthcoming.