

Swartz Creek Area Senior Center to cut back plan for addition

by Laura Angus | Swartz Creek News

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SWARTZ CREEK, Michigan — The Swartz Creek Area Senior Center is scaling back plans for an addition because it can't afford the original [\\$940,000 plan](#).

The City Council voted Monday to direct city staff to create a lease agreement with the center so it can build an addition without the city's help.

"The decision was made solely on the unaffordability of the larger, 6,000-square-foot building," said City Manager Paul Bueche.

The original plan the City Council voted on in December would have added 6,600 square feet and required the city loan money to the center to fund it.

"We didn't feel that long-term that would be a good decision because of the economic climate that we're in," said senior board President Jim Florence.

The new plan will add 4,400 square feet and will not require the center to borrow money. The center has about \$300,000 in unused funds from the city's senior millage, and expects \$200,000 from the Genesee County senior millage, said Florence.

The city stopped levying its millage when the county's was approved by voters in 2006.

The new plan eliminates a crafts room and scales back the amount of storage, office and meeting space.

Under the agreement the city and the center will create, the city will give the center \$5,000 a year for maintenance and utilities, but the city will stop contributing if it needs to reduce its workforce because of budget constraints. Currently, the city pays for the center's utilities.

An agreement between the city and the center would require a vote by City Council.

Florence said once the lease agreement is in place, the center will go to the county for funding and get started with the building process. He hopes to break ground this spring.

"I just think it's urgent that we do it and do it now," he said.

The center's membership is growing, with 87 new members joining since the beginning of the year, said Florence. The addition will help, but won't solve the center's space problems, especially as the Baby Boomer generation ages.

"I think long-term it isn't large enough," he said.

Council members like C. David Hurt said it was unfortunate that the center needed to be scaled back but thought it was best for all involved.

"We cannot be taking on that kind of debt," said Hurt. "I think it's better to hold tight. When the waves are getting choppy, it's not a good time to change seats in the boat."