

Less cash for Family Center not dire news

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MILLVILLE — The Holly City Family Center will likely need to make do with less money from two key supporters.

Millville Housing Authority Executive Director Paul Dice delivered the news at this week's Board of Commissioners meeting.

Holly City Development Corp., the authority's nonprofit agency that oversees the center, is preparing for a possible \$50,000 loss in funds it previously has received from the city and Millville Public Schools.

When the center faced closure last year due to a budget shortfall, many organizations — including the city and school district — stepped up with contributions. But due to budget concerns, the city and school district are unsure they will be able to provide more money in 2010.

The entities paid the Family Center a total of \$50,000. In return, the center reinstated a swim program for city kindergartners and offered free memberships to low-income families.

Dice said the lack of money means the Family Center will draw from its reserves, but stressed the facility isn't in jeopardy. He said the authority has hired Triad Associates to be its grant writers and is hopeful it can find some new grants to offset this loss.

"The fact we are not receiving this money does not mean we're going to shut the doors," Dice said. "Fortunately, we are in a better financial situation than we were last year. But we need to solve this by next fiscal year."

Vice Mayor Joseph Derella, the city's director of revenue and finance, said the city was unable to include a \$25,000 appropriation in the 2010 fiscal year municipal

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budget due to decreased revenues. The city's budget proposal, which is slated for a final vote on Dec. 15, includes a 9-cent increase for the municipal tax rate.

"The city is not in the financial position to do that at all," Derella said, referring to the Family Center contribution, calling the situation unfortunate.

The school system's

business administrator, Bryce Kell, said the district made its payment for the current school year and is trying to find a way to continue paying the authority next year.

The district received a Carol M. White Physical Education grant three years ago, but that grant has run out; Kell said the staff is trying to determine if it can obtain another grant to cover the kindergarten swim program.

"We'd like to continue it if we can," he said.