

## **Symons Recreation Complex Natatorium Board Minutes April 14, 2025**

The Natatorium Board met on April 14th, 2025 at 5:30 pm. The following people were in attendance: Dave Turk, Grant Worthington, Larry Engel, Todd Coppernoll, Melony Walters and Mary Miller. Staff member Mike Hardy was present. SRC Foundation members Alan Lins, Suzanne Fish, and Dean Amundson were also present.

1. Call to Order - Walters called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.
2. Roll Call of Membership
3. Open Meetings Compliance - Verification was met, per Hardy.
4. Approve Agenda – Engel made a motion to approve the agenda. Turk seconded. Motion carried.
5. Approval of Minutes of March 25, 2025 – Engel made a motion to approve the minutes. Miller seconded. Motion carried.
6. Public Comment – Michael Duesterbeck addressed the Board on his feelings that Richland County should be more proactive about replacing dated equipment and facilities, including Symons. He stated that he has been involved as a contractor consulting on County facilities and feels that the County needs to invest more money and take more pride in the facilities it owns, like Symons. He would like to see the County spend more money and attention on upgrading the facilities and services it offers, like Symons, to avoid Richland Center “dying” and doing better to attract new residents and visitors to make the quality of life in the community more attractive. He urged members to be more aggressive in upgrades to Symons and other publicly owned facilities to show a more aggressive investment in the community.

### Administrative Reports:

7. Staff Report – Hardy provided first quarter membership reports, which showed after considerable gains in January and February, membership has leveled off at just over 2,200. He noted this is about 500 members more than what we had last year at this time, and added that numbers will likely stay or even drop slightly with the nicer weather. Membership is about the same as pre-COVID levels and one of the top 3 years so far after 2017 & 2018 for totals. A first quarter budget summary was also provided, showing that Symons is performing much better than the last 4 or 5 years, however Hardy cautioned that Symons is still reliant on the tax subsidies received of the City and County, which amounts to about 20% total of the budget with memberships covering 80% of expenses. Symons needs to continue to look for more sustainable options as public funding will continue to decrease. Symons is again partnering with the ADRC to offer the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Wellness Stride which is part of the Older Americans Act 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.
8. Symons Recreation Complex Foundation Report – Al Lins provided an update of their meeting this month, which included donations of 3 TVs, additional \$1,000 contribution for a race timing system and marketing postcards for the Culvers Share Night. He informed the Board that the Foundation will be holding a Share Night at Culvers on April 30 and invited members to attend to support Symons.
9. Update on Re-branding, Sponsorships and Partnerships – no report

### Action Items:

10. Consider recommending acceptance of April donations (\$7159) – Hardy reviewed donations offered by the Foundation including a Door FOB system for \$1,800, a Floor Scrubber for \$4,100, a Basketball Hoop for \$1,000 and a Retractable Hose Reel for \$259. These donations would need to be approved by Finance Committee and County Board. Motion to recommend acceptance by Walters, seconded by Engel. Motion carried.
11. Consider recommendations to the County/City Swimming Pool (Symons) agreement – Hardy advised that the Richland School District is taking a step back from considering entering a partnership at this time, possibly exploring in the future. With that, he is recommending that we pick up on where we left off on the agreement

so we can get the outdated agreement updated to address current needs. Walters asked if the attorney could provide a clean copy, as the current copy was redlined and she would like to see a final version without the notes that would be submitted for approval. Hardy said he could have the attorney provide a clean copy if there were no other changes, then it would be submitted to City Council and County Board after the Natatorium Board approves it. Final agreement will be considered at the next meeting.

12. Consider applying for a LWCF grant for renovations of the tennis and basketball courts – Hardy requested a recommendation to allow for an application for LWCF funding to renovate the tennis/basketball courts to pickleball. The grant would be a 50% match with available in 2026. The \$300,000 estimated project would need to be completed by 2028, which would give us time to find the matching funds. Turk noted that there may be an opportunity to use some of the \$2 million UW grant towards that match, though the bridge replacements will take up a large chunk. Walters moved to apply for a LWCF grant up to \$150,000 to match court renovation costs. Seconded by Engel. Motion carried.
13. Consider applying for a RTP grant for trail signage and mapping of the former UW Richland wellness trails – Hardy noted a May 1 deadline for RTP grant applications which could provide an 80% funding for improvements of the wellness trail behind Symons. He noted that the plan would be to maintain the trail surface as natural (grass/dirt) as is now and avoid any future maintenance increases, but focus on mapping and interpretative signage as well as trailhead access, which could be done in phases. A \$100,000 trail project would cover better trail access with a primitive trailhead and small parking area in addition to signage and mapping. The match required would be \$20,000. He added that we could apply for a \$50,000 project which would cover mapping, signage and some benches at overlooks along the trail, which would only need a \$10,000 local match for the \$40,000 grant. Turk noted that it may be best to plan this in phases and only pursue the mapping and signage (\$50K) portion this year. Engel felt \$20,000 would be fairly easy to raise. Walters moved to apply for a \$40,000 RTP grant for 2026 trail improvements, seconded by Coppernoll. Motion carried.
14. Consider future SRC Staffing Organization Models – Hardy presented 4 options for staffing re-organization at Symons, noting that 3 of the 4 result in savings of between \$11,000-\$31,000 each annually, and the 4<sup>th</sup> plan no budget change. He noted that SRC needs to review staffing plans as it has never really changed in over 30 years, and we need to look at more sustainable options while better serving our members and pursuing outside opportunities. Hardy and Assistant Director Ewing have discussed future staffing and both agree that focus needs to grow in 2 areas: Director of Development to better pursue partnerships, grants and more sustainable funding sources and Member Services Manager to better attract and retain members as well as improve internal communications and member satisfaction. Experience, education and backgrounds of current staff can fulfill these duties to avoid added expense. Walters noted that as members have just received the information, they would like to review more and reconsider at a future meeting.
15. Consider SRC membership rate discounts – Members discussed requests to provide a 10% discount for local hospital and clinic employees. After discussion it was decided to table the action and instead look into future partnership opportunities with the hospital when we can re-visit incentives. Members also considered a request to allow Richland County educational institutions free use of SRC for educational events, but decided to continue addressing each request individually rather than setting policy for all school requests.
16. Future Agenda Items – None
17. Adjourn – Walters made a motion to adjourn at 6:51pm. Coppernoll seconded. Motion carried.