

Date Posted : October 9, 2025

NOTICE OF MEETING

Please be advised that the Symons Recreation Complex Natatorium Board will convene on Monday, October 13, 2025 at 5:30 PM in the Richland County Board Room of the Courthouse at 181 West Seminary Street, Richland Center, WI 53581.

Information for attending the meeting virtually (if available) can be found at the following link:

<https://symonsrec.com/info/minutes/>

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Verification of Open Meetings Law Compliance
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approve Minutes of the August 11, 2025 regular meeting
6. Public Comment

Administrative Reports

7. Staff Report
8. Symons Recreation Complex Foundation Report
9. Update on re-branding, sponsorships and partnerships related to growth and sustainability of current and future facilities that are part of the SRC
 - Innovation Grant project update
 - Venture Architects Study update

Action Items

10. Consider open gym pass daily/month fees for non-members
11. Consider recommending acceptance of \$25,000 Stewardship Grant for Marty Brewer Nature Trail Improvements
12. Consider recommending acceptance of \$1,000 grant from Richland Campus Community Foundation for Pool Party and printer supplies
13. Consider future space needs of Symons Recreation Complex

Closing:

14. Committee Correspondence
15. Future Agenda Items
16. Adjourn

Symons Recreation Complex Natatorium Board Minutes August 11, 2025

The Natatorium Board met on August 11th, 2025 at 5:30 pm. The following people were in attendance: Larry Engel, Grant Worthington, Melony Walters, John Cler, Rachel Schultz. Staff members Mike Hardy and Kyle Ewing were also present. Symons Recreation Complex Foundation Board members Alan Lins and Dean Amundson were present. 1 member of the public was in attendance online.

1. Call to Order - Cler called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.
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 as presented. Schultz seconded. Motion carried.
5. Approval of Minutes of July 14th, 2025 – Engel made a motion to approve the minutes. Walters seconded. Motion carried.
6. Public Comment – none

Administrative Reports:

7. Staff Report – Hardy provided updates on custodian staffing as well as work completed by lifeguards in cleaning up around the outside of the building by lifeguards during the week the pool was closed for annual maintenance. He also noted that the gym is now being used by the school starting this week with volleyball being setup. SRC is currently working with the Pickleball Club to develop pickleball league and clinics in the gym and will work on scheduling open gyms in the fall and winter. Ewing reported that several costly repairs were needed to be made while the pool was shut down, including the replacement of sand filters due to age and sand being backwashed into the pool. However, with the new filters and repairs, mechanicals will run more smoothly and create fewer maintenance calls and costs.
8. Symons Recreation Complex Foundation Report – Al Lins reported that the Foundation received an offer to match \$25,000 in donations for the fundraising campaign that will be run in September. The SRCF goal is \$50,000 for fall fundraising.
9. Update on Re-branding, Sponsorships and Partnerships – Hardy reported that the City released an RFP for the Innovation Grant project to study SRC structure and sustainability. The RFP is online, and a contractor should be selected next month. No updates on the Venture Architects study. Their walk through was July 1 and they have not returned since then but should have a report by the next meeting for review. Hardy has been working on a Sponsorship and Donation Policy draft, and with the Foundation working on a new campaign, they policy will include some collaborative ideas.

Action Items:

10. Consider 2025 Open House Dates (October 25 & 26) and allow free admission to Symons both days – Hardy noted that the annual Open House for Symons will take place during Pumpkinfest weekend and this year allow the public to tour the campus gymnasium as well. Walters moved to allow free admission during Open House weekend, seconded by Engel. Motion carried.
11. Consider updates to the County/City Symons agreement – Hardy noted that the previous version of the agreement recommended by the Board was reviewed by City Finance Committee, but not advanced to City Council as the City would like some changes considered. The City is requesting that line 2 be revised to read *“The City agrees to reimburse the County for 50% of all actual costs incurred for the operation of Symons, including all budgeted items and any additional expenditures formally approved by both parties.”* And line 5.3 to read *“No unbudgeted expenditures may be made without the express, prior consent of both the County and the City. In the*

event of an emergency requiring immediate action to prevent imminent threat to public health, safety, or property, expenditures may be made, provided that the responsible party receives approval from both the County Administrator and City Administrator. Failure to obtain said approval may result in the responsible party bearing the cost of such expenditure.” The agreement will expire and require renewal on December 31, 2026.

Walters moved to recommend the amended agreement to City Council and County Board for consideration, seconded by Engel. Motion carried.

12. Consider donations to Symons Recreation Complex - Hardy presented donation offers including \$5,700 for a new treadmill and \$1,000 for miscellaneous weight room equipment from the SRC Foundation and \$510 for indoor pickleball nets from the Pickleball Club Federation. Motion by Engel to accept the donations, seconded by Schultz. Motion carried.

Closing:

13. Committee Correspondence – None

14. Future Agenda Items – None.

15. Adjourn—Cler made a motion to adjourn at 5:55pm. Walters seconded. Motion carried.



Innovative

Public Advisors

Proposal for Planning Services for the Operational Structure of the Symons Recreational Complex

August 25, 2025

Innovative

Public Advisors

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 - IPA Partner Jess Wildes
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Innovative Public Advisors

To: City of Richland Center
Attn: Darcy Perkins, Municipal Services Specialist
450 S. Main Street, Richland Center, Wisconsin 53581

Dear Darcy Perkins:

Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) is pleased to submit our proposal in response to the City of Richland Center's RFP for Planning Services for the Operational Structure of the Symons Recreational Complex. We recognize the importance of this facility as a valued community asset and the City's commitment to identifying a sustainable operational model that enhances services while reducing public subsidy reliance.

IPA is a premier public sector strategy firm with extensive experience in municipal planning and recreation facility planning. Leading this project for IPA is Craig Hoepfner, CPRP, Parks and Recreation Advisor, who brings more than 30 years of experience leading large municipal park systems, securing millions of dollars in grants, and developing major community facilities. His expertise in operational assessments, facility planning, and stakeholder engagement—combined with IPA's proven track record of supporting Wisconsin municipalities—uniquely positions our team to guide Richland Center through this important initiative.

Our approach will directly align with the City's objectives: conduct a comprehensive assessment of operations and finances, analyze peer facilities, engage stakeholders and the community, and develop multi-year financial models for alternative operational structures. We will deliver clear recommendations supported by robust data, visualizations, and practical implementation strategies to guide decision-making and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Symons Recreational Complex.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with the City, County, Natatorium Board, Symons Foundation, School District, and community members in charting a sustainable future. IPA is committed to providing Richland Center with an objective, thorough, and results-driven evaluation that will position the Symons Recreational Complex for lasting success.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,



Jay Shambeau, ICMA-CM, MPA
Partner, Innovative Public Advisors
jay@public-advisors.com | 262-355-6102



Jess Wildes, MPA, MS
Partner, Innovative Public Advisors
jess@public-advisors.com | 262-339-5658



Craig Hoepfner, CPRP, MBA
IPA Parks and Recreation Advisor
craigh34@outlook.com | 262-388-4751

Executive Summary

Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) is energized by the opportunity to partner with the City of Richland Center to evaluate and recommend a sustainable future operational structure for the Symons Recreational Complex. We understand the City's goals: to enhance services, optimize facility usage, and reduce reliance on City and County subsidies by exploring alternative ownership and management models. Our approach is designed to align directly with these objectives and the scope of work outlined in the RFP:

- **Comprehensive Assessment:** Analysis of facility usage, financial performance, and comparison with at least three peer facilities to identify operational opportunities and alternatives.
- **Stakeholder and Community Engagement:** Inclusive surveys, focus groups, and structured working sessions with the City, County, Natatorium Board, Symons Foundation, and other partners to ensure broad representation and meaningful input.
- **Strategic and Financial Modeling:** Development of multi-year projections, S.W.O.T. analyses, and feasibility assessments for alternative models—including potential partnerships with entities such as the School District, YMCA, or public-private collaborations.
- **Actionable Deliverables:** Professional reports and presentations synthesizing findings into clear, implementable strategies with defined steps, resource needs, and performance measures.

IPA's Parks and Recreation Advisor Craig Hoepfner, CPRP, brings more than 30 years of experience directing large municipal park and recreation systems, overseeing multimillion-dollar budgets, leading facility planning efforts, and securing millions of dollars in grant funding to expand community amenities. His career reflects a strong record of operational efficiency, creative programming, intentional planning, and community engagement—skills that directly align with the City's objectives for Symons Recreational Complex.

Craig's expertise is reinforced by IPA's broader capacity in strategic planning, community engagement, governance development, financial modeling, and stakeholder facilitation. Our team has successfully led Innovation Planning Grant projects across Wisconsin, giving us direct experience with the expectations of the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR), the depth of community engagement required, and the importance of delivering clear, actionable recommendations supported by robust financial analysis. IPA excels at blending technical rigor with inclusive engagement, ensuring that both the data and the voices of residents and stakeholders shape the final outcome.

Together, IPA's blend of recreation leadership, financial acumen, and municipal planning experience ensures that Richland Center will receive practical, community-driven recommendations that address today's fiscal realities while positioning the Symons Recreational Complex for long-term sustainability and success.

Approach and Workplan

Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) will deliver a comprehensive, clear, and actionable study for the Symons Recreational Complex. Our approach is designed to meet the City of Richland Center's objectives: enhancing community benefit, optimizing facility usage, and reducing reliance on public subsidization. We combine technical analysis with inclusive engagement to ensure both data and community voice drive the final recommendations. IPA will facilitate the process through the following workplan:

Project Initiation and Data Collection

- **Kick-Off Meeting:** Convene a working group of City, County, Natatorium Board, Symons Foundation, and potential partners (e.g., School District, YMCA) to confirm goals, roles, and communications protocols.
- **Inception Report:** Deliver a refined project plan summarizing scope, milestones, communication strategy, and initial data requests.
- **Data Gathering:** Collect and review historical usage, financials, staffing, facility reports, and prior studies to establish a baseline.

Facility and Financial Assessment

- **Usage Analysis:** Evaluate program participation, attendance patterns, demographics, underutilized spaces and timeframes, and trends.
- **Financial Review:** Analyze revenues, operating expenses, staffing expenditures, and maintenance costs to assess fiscal performance.
- **Comparative Study:** Benchmark against at least three comparable recreational facilities, focusing on governance, operational models, funding structures, and programming innovations.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- **Survey Administration (x2):** Design and implement a community survey utilizing the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) active voter contact information for the City of Richland Center (approximately 2,471 email addresses) and Richland County (approximately 9,464 email addresses). This will result in well over 100 responses. IPA will also conduct an additional statistically relevant online survey of City and County staff and elected officials.
- **Focus Groups and Listening Sessions:** Facilitate structured opportunities for residents to share experiences, expectations, and desires for the Symons Recreational Complex.

- **Stakeholder Working Sessions:** Conduct three facilitated sessions with City, County, and partners to ideate, validate data, explore models, and refine recommendations.

Strategic Options and Financial Modeling

- **S.W.O.T. Analyses:** Develop strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the current operational model and each alternative model under consideration.
- **Financial Projections:** Create 5–10 year financial models for each option, including operating costs, capital investment needs, revenue projections, and subsidy requirements.
- **Feasibility Testing:** Evaluate alternative models—including School District partnerships, YMCA operation, public-private models, or hybrid governance structures—for financial sustainability and service impact.

Draft Findings and Public Feedback

- **Draft Report:** Present preliminary analysis and recommendations in a comprehensive report that includes comparative data, financial models, and visual exhibits.
- **Working Group/Public Presentation:** Share findings with the project working group and the public to gather feedback and assess reactions to alternative operational models.
- **Refinement:** Incorporate stakeholder feedback into the final recommendations.

Final Report and Implementation Strategy

- **Final Comprehensive Report:** Provide a clear, actionable document with recommended operational model(s), implementation steps, timelines, and measurable performance indicators.
- **Formal Presentation:** Deliver professional presentations to the City Council, County Board, and Natatorium Board, ensuring leaders are equipped to make informed decisions.
- **Implementation Roadmap:** Outline practical next steps, including governance changes, partnership structures, and communication strategies.

Commitment to Intentional Communication

In addition to the technical, financial, and governance analysis described above, IPA places high importance on communications as a driver of successful implementation. Throughout the study, we will emphasize clear and consistent messaging with stakeholders, ensuring that residents, partners, and decision-makers remain engaged and informed. As a final deliverable, IPA will also equip the City of Richland Center with a tailored communications strategy—a practical guide to help leaders plan, share outcomes, build public trust, and navigate next steps in implementing the chosen operational model for the Symons Recreational Complex.



Proposed Project Schedule with Key Milestones

IPA proposes a clear and efficient project schedule that balances comprehensive analysis with meaningful engagement. The following timeline outlines the major phases, deliverables, and stakeholder touchpoints, demonstrating our ability to complete the project within 16 weeks while ensuring a thorough evaluation and actionable results.

Weeks 1–2: Project Initiation

- Kick-off meeting with City, County, Natatorium Board, Symons Foundation, School District, and other stakeholders.
- Confirm project scope, goals, communication protocols, and data needs.
- **Deliverable: Inception Report - Project Definition Summary** (*Summarizing our understanding of the project, refined work plan, key milestones, communication plan, and initial data collection strategy*).

Weeks 3–5: Data Collection and Assessment

- Review existing reports, financial statements, and facility usage data.
- Conduct comparative analysis of at least three peer facilities.
- Begin stakeholder interviews, and finalize community and stakeholder surveys (design and execution).
- **Deliverable: Preliminary Data and Assessment Framework** (*Detailed written report presenting all assessment findings, analysis (SWOT, space needs, marketing), financial models, and preliminary recommendations for operational models, including their pros, cons, and potential impacts*).

Weeks 6–7: Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- Launch statistically relevant community and stakeholder online surveys to resident/voter lists, and City and County staff and elected officials.
- Facilitate initial structured stakeholder working session.
- Hold community focus group to gather resident feedback.
- ***Deliverable: Community Survey Results and Focus Group Summary.***

Weeks 8–10: Operational and Financial Analysis

- Complete S.W.O.T. analysis of current and alternative models.
- Develop space needs assessment and marketing review.
- Prepare draft multi-year financial models (5–10 years) for each option.
- ***Deliverable: Draft Financial Models and Operational Alternatives.***

Weeks 11–12: Preliminary Findings

- Facilitate second stakeholder session to review draft findings.
- Present preliminary recommendations at a public information session.
- ***Deliverable: Draft Comprehensive Project Report with Preliminary Recommendations.***

Weeks 13–15: Refinement and Finalization

- Facilitate third stakeholder session to refine recommendations.
- Incorporate feedback from community and governing bodies.
- ***Deliverable: Final Comprehensive Project Report.***

Week 16: Presentation and Close-Out

- Formal presentation of findings and recommendations to City Council, County Board, and other key stakeholders.
- ***Deliverable: Final Presentation and Implementation Strategy.***



IPA Partner Jay Shambeau conducting a workshop for the City of River Falls

Firm Qualifications and Relevant Experience

Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) is a Wisconsin-based public sector consulting firm specializing in operational studies, strategic planning, organizational assessments, and executive recruitment. Founded by seasoned municipal administrators, IPA has grown into a premier partner for cities, villages, towns, and counties seeking innovative yet practical solutions to complex challenges. Our team combines decades of hands-on local government leadership with subject-matter experts (e.g., Craig Hoeppepner) in parks and recreation, Fire/EMS, law enforcement, communications, and information technology (IT).

IPA has developed a strong reputation for guiding communities through municipal planning projects that balance service expectations with fiscal realities. This includes leading recreation facility assessments, financial modeling, and governance reviews that help elected officials make informed, data-driven decisions. Our approach is highly collaborative, rooted in stakeholder engagement, and oriented toward actionable recommendations that reflect each community's unique character and goals.

Relevant Municipal Planning and Recreation Facility Assessments

Building on more than three decades of recreation leadership, our Parks and Recreation Advisor, Craig Hoeppepner, CPRP, brings extensive experience managing the Oconomowoc Community Center. He has successfully led major design, funding, and construction initiatives for public spaces in Oconomowoc, West Bend, and Waukesha. Most recently, Craig established the Friends of Oconomowoc Parks and Trails organization and authored the 2030 Park and Open Space Plan, further demonstrating his ability to blend community engagement, strategic planning, and long-term facility development.

IPA's work through the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's Innovation Planning Grant program is extensive—exploring shared service models for municipalities across the state, including:

- Fire/EMS studies for the Villages of Orfordville and Cambridge, Town of Holland, City of Onalaska, and more.
- Policing and public safety studies for the Villages of Wind Point and Deer Park.
- Municipal staffing studies for the Village of Kewaskum and City of Neillsville.
- IT service studies for the Village of Bayside and Village of Trempealeau.
- Downtown economic development and tourism plan for the Village of Trempealeau.

Each project integrated stakeholder engagement, facility and inventory assessments, and detailed financial modeling to evaluate options for sustainable shared-service delivery.

Experience with Public-Private Partnerships and Service Transfers

IPA's portfolio includes extensive work with public-private partnerships and service transfers, where we develop governance and funding models that balance municipal oversight with nonprofit, contracted, or intergovernmental delivery. Through this experience, we help communities carefully evaluate multiple service pathways—ranging from direct municipal operation to joint departments or external partnerships—and identify the model that delivers the greatest long-term value, sustainability, and accountability. Recent examples include:

- **Library and Recreation Facilities:** Advising on operational structures that balance municipal oversight with nonprofit and private sector support, IPA is currently assisting the City of Oconto Falls and surrounding municipalities in developing a joint library system. This effort involves extensive public engagement, the creation of public-private partnerships, and the transfer of services from multiple jurisdictions into a single, shared library—ensuring both efficiency and expanded community access.
- **Fire/EMS:** IPA has conducted numerous studies examining contracted services, joint departments, and cross-jurisdictional collaborations. In many communities, EMS is provided through private contracts while fire response relies heavily on full-, part-time or volunteer personnel, creating unique challenges for sustainability and service delivery. Shared service discussions in this field are inherently complex and require meaningful engagement from municipal leaders, elected officials, fire and EMS personnel, and community stakeholders. With the expertise of IPA's Fire/EMS Advisor, Paul Stephans, we facilitated inclusive processes where every voice was heard, multiple governance and service models were evaluated, and agencies gained a clear understanding of their options for potential partnerships, consolidation, or enhanced collaboration.
- **Downtown Economic Development and Tourism:** IPA is partnering with the Village of Trempealeau, its local nonprofit organizations, and neighboring municipalities to strengthen downtown vibrancy and regional collaboration. By sharing resources—whether through coordinated marketing, joint event planning, or collaborative infrastructure investment—the community is able to achieve a greater collective impact than any single entity could on its own. Our work focuses on activating public spaces with strategic programming and placemaking initiatives that draw residents and visitors alike, while aligning local nonprofits and municipal leaders around a unified tourism strategy. This collaborative approach not only enhances the quality of life for residents but also drives visitor traffic, supports small businesses, and generates positive economic development outcomes across the region.

Through our practical experience working in municipal leadership roles ([see resumes on pages 12-14](#)) and work with the Innovation Planning Grant program, IPA has the ability to navigate governance, finance, and stakeholder engagement—helping communities make informed and sustainable decisions about facilities, staffing, and services while building the trust and partnerships needed for successful implementation.

Innovative Public Advisors

Advancing local government a different way—the IPA way.

Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) is a premier public sector executive recruitment and strategy firm dedicated to empowering municipalities with tailored solutions that enhance leadership, optimize operations, and drive positive community impact.

Founded by experienced municipal professionals Jay Shambeau, ICMA-CM, MPA, and Jess Wildes, MPA, IPA offers a wide range of services. With a focus on delivering innovative, sustainable solutions, IPA is committed to helping local governments navigate complex challenges and strengthen their capacity to serve their communities effectively.

Services



**Executive Recruitment
& Interim Services**



**Economic Development
& Grant Writing**



**Strategic & Specialty
Plan Development**



**Professional Coaching
& Mentorship**



**Communications &
Marketing Strategies**



**Governance Training
& Facilitated Retreats**

IPA Team

Innovative Public Advisors is led by partners Jess Wildes and Jay Shambeau, two seasoned professionals with extensive experience in public sector management and strategic consulting.

Together, they bring a wealth of expertise in government administration, operations, communications, and leadership development—offering innovative solutions to help local governments thrive.



CRAIG HOEPPNER CPRP

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EDUCATION

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

UW - Milwaukee

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Parks and Recreation
Administration, UW - La Crosse

CERTIFICATES & AWARDS

National Recreation and Park
Association (NRPA) Certified
Park and Recreation
Professional

NRPA two-time
Gold Medal Finalist

Wisconsin Park and Recreation
Association (WPR)
Professional Award of Merit

WPRA George Wilson
Service Award

WPRA Presidential
Recognition Award

WPRA Recreation Section
Young Professional of the Year

Boy Scouts of America
Eagle Award

Seven-time WIAA Boys
State Basketball Official

INNOVATIVE PUBLIC ADVISORS, PARKS & RECREATION ADVISOR

Craig is a certified park and recreation professional with more than 30 years of municipal leadership experience. He has overseen multimillion-dollar budgets, secured millions in state and federal grants, and led the design and construction of major public amenities, including the Lac La Belle Boat Launch, Oconomowoc Skate Park, multiple splashpads, and the Downtown West Bend Riverwalk (Phase 1). Known for his strategic planning expertise, project leadership, and collaborative approach, Craig has been recognized with multiple state and national awards for his ability to create vibrant, sustainable, and community-driven parks and recreation systems.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY DIRECTOR

City of Oconomowoc, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, 2019–2023

- Managed the Oconomowoc Community Center, including staff, programming, budgeting, maintenance and capital repairs.
- Led the design, funding, and construction process for Oconomowoc Skate Park, Oconomowoc Rotary Splashpad at Roosevelt Park, John & Lavinia Rockwell Park, LCPC Pickleball Courts, and more.
- Wrote successful Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grants for John & Lavinia Rockwell Park (\$250,000 and \$330,000) and Lac La Belle Boat Launch reconstruction (\$1,020,000) projects.
- Established the Friends of Oconomowoc Parks and Trails.
- Updated the City of Oconomowoc Bike and Trail Plan
- Worked with DNR/DOT/City staff to complete preliminary study for Meadow View to Nature Hills multi-use pathway
- Authored the approved 2030 Park and Open Space Plan.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY DIRECTOR

City of West Bend, West Bend, Wisconsin, 2004–2019

- Supervised 17 full-time, 6.5 FTE recreation seasonal employees and hundreds of volunteers annually.
- Prepared and managed a \$1.95 million Parks, Recreation & Forestry operating budget and additional \$500,000 capital budget.
- Managed 1,425-acre park system with 37 properties, 20 miles of trails.
- Raised more than \$1.5 million dollars to construct the Silver Lining Stage, Regner Pavilion, Rotary Splashpad, new restrooms, renovated the Strachota Bandstand and the Rotary and Kiwanis Concession Stands.

RECREATION SERVICES MANAGER & RECREATION SUPERVISOR

City of Waukesha, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 2002-2004 and 1990-2002



JAY SHAMBEAU

ICMA-CM, MPA

jay@public-advisors.com | 262-355-6102

EDUCATION

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

UW - Oshkosh

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Regional Analysis and Geography, UW - Green Bay

LEADERSHIP WISCONSIN

UW-Madison, 2014

ACCOLADES

Credentialed Manager
International City/County
Management Association, 2024

Recipient of ICMA's prestigious
30 Years of Service Award

SERVICE

Rotary International
West Bend Sunrise Rotary Club

Boys and Girls Club of
Washington County
Board Member

United Way of Washington
County, Campaign Co-Chair

West Bend Area Chamber of
Commerce, Board Member

West Bend Tourism
Commission, Chairman

Kettle Moraine Lutheran High
School, Board Member and
President

INNOVATIVE PUBLIC ADVISORS, PARTNER

Jay is a highly experienced public sector professional with 32 years of expertise in city and county government management, strategic planning, and public policy. Jay has worked with municipalities of all sizes to drive organizational efficiency, enhance governance, and secure critical funding. His background includes leading complex projects, facilitating collaborative planning efforts, and providing executive coaching to local government leaders. Jay is known for his relationship skills and practical approach, blending deep knowledge of governmental processes with a commitment to delivering impactful results. His leadership and insight have helped numerous local governments achieve their goals and navigate the challenges of an ever-evolving public sector landscape.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

City of West Bend, West Bend, Wisconsin, 2016–2025

- Responsible for the administration of daily city operations and implementing policies established by the City Council.
- Oversee \$30M budget, lead economic development activities, manage department head team, foster community engagement, ensure efficient delivery of services, and promote the city's growth and development.

ASSOCIATE

Public Administration Associates, LLC, Wisconsin, 2024

PLANNING AND PARKS ADMINISTRATOR

Washington County, Wisconsin, 2014-2016

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Calumet County, Wisconsin, 2008-2014

- Responsible for the daily operations of county government, ensuring efficient delivery of services and adherence to budgetary guidelines.
- Collaborated with elected officials, managed staff, and facilitated communication between departments to promote effective governance and community engagement.

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

Village of Kewaskum, Wisconsin, 2006-2008

- Responsible for the management of municipal operations, including implementing policies set by the Village Board and managing all departments.
- This position involved budgeting, community planning, economic development, and fostering relationships to ensure effective service delivery and enhance community development.

PLANNING DIRECTOR & VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER

Clark County, Wisconsin, 1993-2006



JESS WILDES MPA, MS

jess@public-advisors.com | 262-339-5658

EDUCATION

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

University of Wisconsin
Oshkosh

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Integrated Marketing
Communications
Eastern Michigan University

BACHELOR OF ARTS

College of Saint Benedict &
Saint John's University

SERVICE

Rotary International
West Bend Sunrise Rotary Club

International City/County
Management Association
(ICMA) Assistant Chief
Administrative Officer (ACAO)
Committee Member

Wisconsin Economic
Development Association
(WEDA) Board Member

Mid-Moraine Municipal
Court Board Member

Downtown West Bend Business
Improvement District (BID)
Board Executive Director

Visit Washington County Board
Member and Vice President

Honored as one of ELGL's
"Top 100 Influencers in
Local Government"

INNOVATIVE PUBLIC ADVISORS, PARTNER

Jess is a seasoned strategist specializing in local government communications, public relations, and grant acquisition. With a proven track record of securing significant local, state, and federal funding, Jess has helped municipalities access critical resources to support community development, infrastructure, and essential services. Her work also includes crafting effective communication strategies, enhancing public engagement, and building transparent, trust-based relationships between local governments and their communities. With her expertise in both strategic messaging and grant writing, Jess is committed to helping local governments secure the resources they need while fostering strong, effective communication.

ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

City of West Bend, West Bend, Wisconsin, 2020–2025

Also served as Communications and Economic Development Director

- Performed economic development activities to promote business development, retention, and job creation.
- Coordinated with all departments to increase the quality and consistency of the city organization's messaging and content
- Acquired alternative revenue sources through grants (\$6.5+ million), fundraising and partnerships.
- Set strategy and manage a talented team of professionals responsible for community television programming, social media, public relations, internal and external communications, brand management, and tourism promotion.
- Built meaningful relationships with constituents, community leaders, business owners, state-level officials, and economic developers.
- Managed five city departments: Assessors, Communications, City Clerk, Human Resources, and Information Technology.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

Museum of Wisconsin Art, West Bend, Wisconsin, 2017–2020

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Trefoil Group, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2016–2017

DIRECTOR OF RECRUITMENT MARKETING

Mount Mary University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2013–2016

Northland College, Ashland, WI, 2009–2013

Fee Proposal

Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) proposes to complete this project on a fixed-fee basis of \$62,000. The proposed not-to-exceed fee is all-inclusive; travel costs for site visits and public engagement activities, mileage, meals, and lodging are incorporated into the fixed fee. Similarly, expenses related to meeting facilitation, survey tools, printing, and presentation materials are included. No additional costs will be billed to the City beyond the approved project budget.

The project will be structured in four key phases, each representing a major milestone and deliverable:

Project Initiation and Data Collection (\$10,000)

- Kick-off meeting with the City, project team alignment, and refinement of scope and timeline.
- Collection and review of existing documents, facility data, budgets, and prior studies.
- Development of detailed stakeholder engagement plan.
- *Value: Establishes a clear project foundation, ensures accuracy and efficiency in subsequent phases.*

Facility Assessment, Stakeholder Engagement, and Program Analysis (\$25,000)

- Site visits to the Symons Recreation Complex and supporting facilities.
- Interviews with staff, elected officials, and community stakeholders.
- In-person working sessions (throughout the project).
- Facility condition evaluation, program usage review, and benchmarking against peer communities.
- *Value: Provides an objective and data-driven understanding of existing conditions and future needs.*

Financial Modeling and Governance Options (\$13,000)

- Development of operating and capital cost models.
- Evaluation of governance and management structures, including public-private partnerships or service transfer options.
- Comparative analysis of funding strategies and subsidy levels.
- *Value: Equips decision-makers with clear financial scenarios, aligning operations with long-term sustainability.*

Final Report, Recommendations, and Presentations (\$14,000)

- Preparation of document and final reports with actionable recommendations.
- In-person presentation to City leadership, facility stakeholders, and the public.
- Integration of community feedback into final deliverables.
- Provide a communications strategy to guide leaders in planning, sharing outcomes, building public trust, and navigating next steps for implementation.
- *Deliverable: Polished, complete, and actionable report that delivers clear recommendations and a detailed roadmap balancing community expectations, fiscal responsibility, and service quality.*

References

Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) has extensive experience leading Wisconsin municipalities through strategic planning and shared service evaluations, many funded by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's Innovation Planning Grant. These projects combine financial modeling, organizational assessment, and stakeholder engagement to deliver actionable, community-driven recommendations that strengthen intergovernmental collaboration, public-private partnerships, and position local governments for long-term cost savings and sustainability.

Trempealeau County, Wisconsin

Three-year Comprehensive Strategic Plan and Communications Plan

The IPA team conducted a detailed communications needs and staffing assessment for Trempealeau County, which guided the creation of a countywide [Strategic Communications Plan](#). Building on that foundation, IPA led an inclusive strategic planning process that engaged county leaders, staff, and stakeholders, resulting in a polished and actionable three-year [Comprehensive Strategic Plan](#) that establishes priorities, measurable goals, and a clear roadmap for implementation.

Rebecca Glewen, County Administrator, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin
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City of Neillsville, Wisconsin

Innovation Planning Grant Study

IPA conducted a comprehensive study titled [Seeking Partnerships and Efficiencies: A Study of the City of Neillsville's Police, Public Works, and City Hall Staffing](#). This project evaluated organizational structure, staffing capacity, and opportunities for shared services, with the goal of identifying sustainable solutions that enhance service delivery, improve operational efficiency, and reduce long-term costs.

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Town of Holland, Wisconsin

Innovation Planning Grant Study

The IPA team conducted an in-depth analysis titled [Exploring Shared Fire Services: A Feasibility Study for the Town of Holland and Regional Partners](#). This study examined the potential for greater collaboration among the Town of Holland, Village of Holmen, City of Onalaska, and Town of Onalaska to address growing service demands and increasing fiscal pressures. The project assessed current staffing models, response times, facilities, and apparatus needs, while also evaluating governance structures and financial implications of various shared-service options.

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