



1250 Symons Circle • Richland Center, WI 53581 • 608-647-8522 • info@symonsrec.com

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Date Posted : January 8, 2026

## NOTICE OF MEETING

Please be advised that the Symons Recreation Complex Natatorium Board will convene on Monday, January 12, 2026 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 December 8, 2025 regular meeting
6. Public Comment

### Administrative Reports

7. Staff Report
8. Symons Recreation Complex Foundation Report
9. Innovation Grant project update

### Action Items

10. Consider acceptance of donations
11. Consider request from RCHS to use the pool for Sea Perch practices
12. Consider offering drawing for prizes for completed Symons IPA project surveys
13. Consider Symons Staffing Reorganization Plan
14. Consider future space needs/priorities of Symons Recreation Complex

### Closing:

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

## **Symons Recreation Complex Board Minutes December 8, 2025**

The Symons Recreation Complex Board met on December 8th, 2025 at 5:30 pm. The following people were in attendance: Todd Coppernoll, Dave Turk, Larry Engel, Mary Miller, Melony Walters, John Cler, Rachel Schultz and Al Lins. Staff members Mike Hardy and Kyle Ewing were also present. Craig Hoepner (Innovative Public Advisors) 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. Coppernoll seconded. Motion carried.
5. Approval of Minutes of October 13th, 2025 – Schultz made a motion to approve the minutes. Engel seconded. Motion carried.
6. Public Comment – none

### Administrative Reports:

7. Staff Report – Hardy provided updates on November membership and visitor counts and YTD budget report. The Ugly Sweater Fun Run/Walk had just over 60 participants, and the post-race soup, cookies & social time was moved to the campus gym, which was very well received and noted that many people stuck around longer this year. Celebrate Pink silent auction fundraiser finished with just over \$3,200 raised to purchase a new leg extension/curl machine.
8. Symons Recreation Complex Foundation Report – Al Lins reviewed notes from the SRCF meeting held earlier, including the Foundation working to establish an endowment fund to support future SRC expenses. To date, just over \$100,000 is in the endowment.
9. Innovation Grant project update– Hardy introduced Craig Hoepner, a consultant with IPA who the City contracted with to provide the study. Hoepner thanked the Board for their work on Symons to date, and noted that in comparison, Symons operates about as efficiently financially as most of the other 6 comparable facilities that we visited. The 6 site visits that were made with SRC staff and SRCF representatives included TAG Center (City of Mayville), Cambridge Community Activities Program (Cambridge School District), Whitewater Aquatic & Fitness Center (City of Whitewater/Whitewater School District), Sauk Prairie Aquatic Center (Sauk Prairie School District), Lunda Community Center (Lunda Foundation-Black River Falls) and Bloomer Area Aquatic & Recreation Center (Bloomer). While the study included a mix of different examples of management including school district/Fund 80, City and Non-Profit (as well as a shared City-School District model in Whitewater), SRC currently most closely mirrors TAG center operations in Mayville, which has a city population the same as Richland Center, but a facility 20 years newer and a budget twice as much as Symons with about 400 fewer members and a subsidy about twice as much. Both SRC and TAG have subsidies of about 20% of their respective budgets, and no other facility had a subsidy less than 20%, so the City and County should feel pretty good about where SRC current sits on public spending. Hoepner did note that the age of SRC really stood out against the other facilities, and the lack of family locker rooms at SRC was not present in other facilities and while he knows that issue is a priority and being discussed, he encouraged the Board to keep working on adding family locker rooms as a priority while updating the facility in other areas. Hoepner added that IPA will be putting together a more formal presentation of comparable site visits after the holidays, and the next step will likely be the collection of community surveys in early 2026 from both member and non-members.

#### Action Items:

10. Consider accepting donations – Hardy reported that the following donations were offered to Symons: \$11,000 from the Symons Foundation to install new benches in the locker rooms and corridors; \$4,000 from the Symons Foundation for a leg extension/curl machine; and \$500 from the Symons Foundation for a new table covering for marketing/special event promotions. Walters moved to accept the donations as presented, seconded by Coppernoll. Motion carried.

11. Consider request from St. Mary's School to use the pool for Sea Perch activities – Hardy reported that like last year, the St. Mary's middle school students would be participating in the Sea Perch program and would like to use the pool to practice with their underwater robots. Last year we charged \$15 per hour which essentially covers the cost of lifeguards and allows for private use of the pool. Engel moved to recommend allowing St. Mary's to use the pool for Sea Perch activities at the same rate (\$15 per hour) as last year, seconded by Coppernoll. Motion carried.

12. Consider solicitation of RFPs to design and construct the outdoor tennis/BB courts - Hardy noted with the County finalizing use of the UW grant funds, the tennis/BB/pickleball courts have been included. There has been some requests to keep one tennis court in the re-design, as there currently in only one in the City (and surrounding area) which is often flooded and in poor shape. Hardy provided an aerial phot of the current complex at Krouskop Park which includes 1 basketball, 1 tennis and 6 pickleball court which would fit on the current campus court footprint. Additionally, Hardy noted that as this is a complete rebuild now would be the time to move the courts if they wanted to consider the future building addition on the west end rather than north, and there is adequate space behind (north) of the current building, although there would likely be a small increase in excavation/base material costs. Regarding lighting questions, Hardy suggested to keep costs down, the current wiring for lights could be capped and installed later if lighting was desired. The current poles are no good and will need to be removed anyway. Board will consider at future meeting after seeing how costs are impacted by moving courts behind SRC.

13. Consider solicitation of RFPs to design maps and signage for Marty Brewer Nature Trails– Cler presented sample sign wording he created to use in the new signs. He walked the trails and located several sites where signs could be placed. To get the wording included with graphics, trail wayfinding maps, and consistent theme as well as solicit manufacturing, we need an RFP to select a vendor. Money would come from the 2026 Stewardship grant we were awarded from the DNR. Engel moved to solicit RFPs for Marty Brewer Trails, seconded by Lins. Motion carried.

14. Consider future space needs/priorities of Symons Recreation Complex – Hardy presented maps of proposed land division dedicated to Symons as well as Marty Brewer Trails (County) which will allow the County to survey property to market to potential re-use for the rest of the campus. The maps included lands recently dedicated to the Richland School District. Members would like to see more land on the east side of Symons, extending to the current library building, to ensure accessibility on all sides if needed as well as to maximize parking to accommodate future member growth. Hardy will re-submit parcel request with additional land on the east side of Symons included for Campus Reconfiguration Committee for their 12/17/25 meeting.

#### Closing:

14. Committee Correspondence – None

15. Future Agenda Items – None.

16. Adjourn—Coppernoll made a motion to adjourn at 6:38pm. Lins seconded. Motion carried.

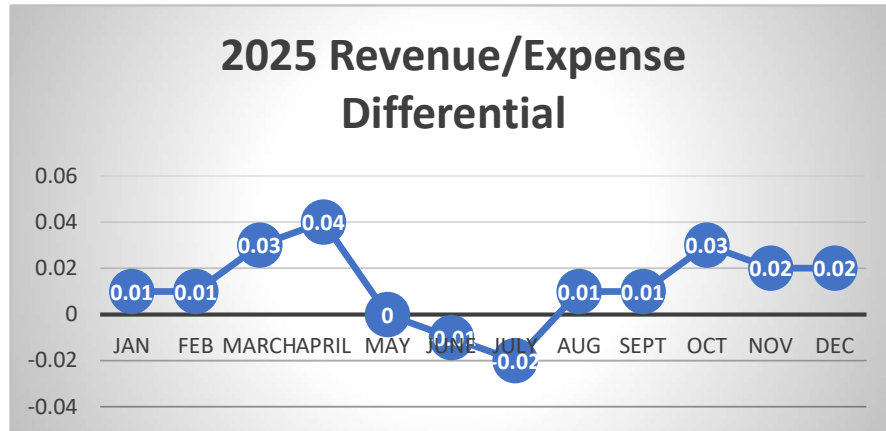
# SYMONS RECREATION COMPLEX PERFORMANCE REVIEW

## December 31, 2025 Financial Review

	2025 Budget	YTD	Remaining	% remain	Notes
Total Revenues	\$509,700.81	\$464,559.39	\$45,141.42	9	does <b>not</b> include \$26,980.21 City
Total Expenses	\$509,700.81	\$476,263.08	\$33,437.73	6	budget 3% under target (surplus)

Including \$26,980.21 City 2nd payment, 2025 revenues = \$491,539.60 (4%)

Current 2025 revenues (with City payment) exceed expenses by 2% (some 2025 expenses < \$4,000 expected yet)



Differential from target % : Q1 = 3%; Q2 = -1%; Q3 = 1%; Q4 = 2%\*

## December 31, 2025 Membership Review

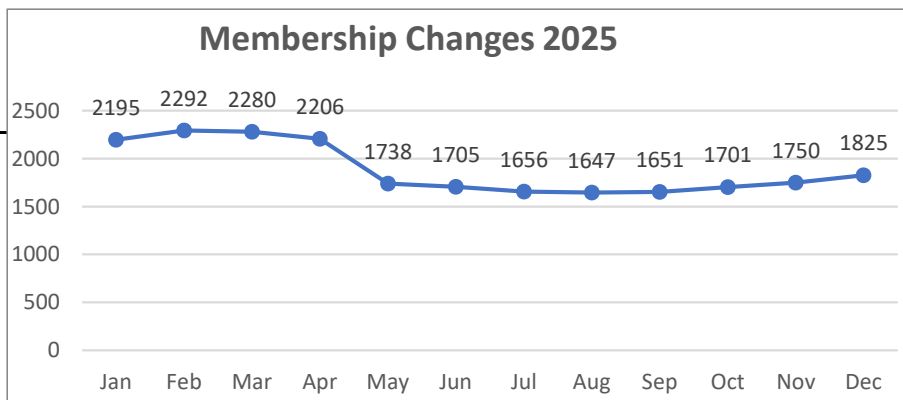
Current Active Memberships	
12-Month	1165
3-Month	20
1-Month	406
EFT-Bank (Monthly)	168
other	66
<b>Total Active Members</b>	<b>1,825</b>

Drop In (Non-Member) Day Pass	
December Passes	529

Dec. Member Visits (per day)		
day	total	ave.
Monday	1,416	354
Tuesday	1,104	276
Wednesday	1,026	256
Thursday	681	170
Friday	950	237
Saturday	459	114
Sunday	412	103
<b>Total Visits</b>	<b>6,048</b>	<b>195</b>

December Member Visits (per hour)		
:00	total	ave.
12am	4	1
1am	1	0
2am	0	0
3am	26	6
4am	133	33
5am	420	105
6am	290	72
7am	463	115
8am	465	116
9am	465	116
10am	517	129
11am	378	94
12pm	391	97
1pm	364	91
2pm	257	64
3pm	335	83
4pm	372	93
5pm	586	146
6pm	262	65
7pm	102	25
8pm	79	19
9pm	59	14
10pm	51	12
11pm	28	7

December Insurance Member & Open Gym Visits			
Renew Active	782	Prime	29
Silver Sneakers	279	Active & Fit	10
Silver & Fit	62	<b>Open Gym Passes</b>	<b>145</b>





# Symons Recreation Complex Study: Project Update and Next Steps

**December 28, 2025**

Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) was hired to conduct a comprehensive operational, governance, and financial sustainability study for the Symons Recreation Complex. The purpose of the study is to evaluate current conditions, explore alternative ownership and management models, and develop actionable recommendations that position Symons for long-term success and sustainability while preserving its role as a valued community asset.

Since project initiation, IPA has completed the foundational phases of the work, including project kickoff, stakeholder interviews, facility visits and benchmarking, and an initial SWOT analysis. These efforts now set the stage for the next critical phase of community-wide public engagement.

## Work Completed to Date

### Project Kickoff, Stakeholder Interviews, and Early Engagement

IPA Partner Jess Wildes and Parks and Recreation Advisor Craig Hoeppner facilitated an initial project kickoff on November 4, 2025. Since then, several in-person interviews with key stakeholders representing City and



County leadership, the Natatorium Board, Symons Foundation, School District, facility leadership, and long-time community partners. These conversations—conducted by IPA Partner Jay Shambeau and Hoepfner—provided important historical context, operational insight, and candid perspectives that would not be captured through surveys alone. Across both group discussions and individual interviews, several consistent themes emerged:

- Broad agreement that the Symons Recreation Complex is a well-managed and highly-valued community asset.
- Recognition that the current municipal ownership and subsidy model presents long-term financial and operational challenges.
- Interest in exploring alternative ownership and management structures, including nonprofit, hybrid, or partnership-based models.
- A shared desire to preserve aquatic services and community access while reducing financial risk to the City and County.

This interview-based engagement has directly informed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, benchmarking framework, and the range of operational models now under evaluation, ensuring that early technical analysis is grounded in real-world operational and governance realities.





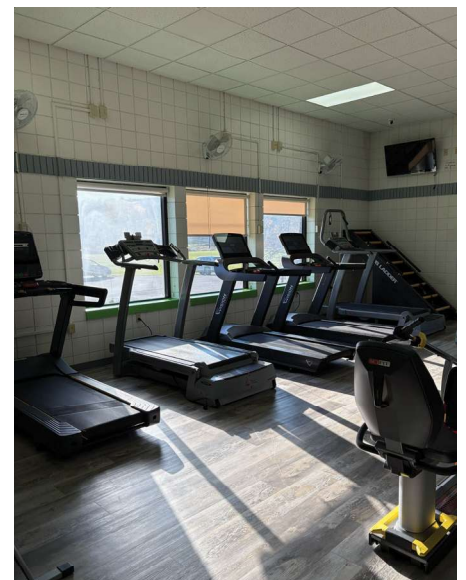
## SWOT Analysis: Existing Conditions

Building on early stakeholder interviews, in-person meetings, and initial document review, IPA has developed a preliminary SWOT framework to help organize key themes related to the current operational environment at the Symons Recreation Complex. This initial analysis is directional rather than conclusive and is intended to inform the next phases of the study.

The preliminary SWOT will be further refined and validated through upcoming public engagement, including community surveys and public information sessions, and will be fully developed and documented in the final comprehensive report. At this early stage, several themes have emerged:

- **Preliminary Strengths:** Strong community support, committed leadership and staff, unique amenities such as the only indoor pool in Richland County, successful and diverse programming, and a long history of philanthropy and partnership support.
- **Preliminary Challenges:** Aging infrastructure and deferred maintenance needs, reliance on limited municipal levy support, fluctuating City and County involvement over time, limited family-oriented amenities, and uncertainty surrounding long-term capital funding responsibilities.
- **Preliminary Opportunities:** Expanding partnerships with the School District, healthcare providers, nonprofits, and private entities while improving marketing and brand awareness and pursuing grant and alternative funding sources. Additional opportunities include reconfiguring facility space to better meet current and future needs, enhancing outdoor amenities, and exploring alternative operational and governance models.
- **Preliminary Threats:** Rising operational and capital costs, demographic and population trends, increased competition from private fitness providers, and uncertainty around future public funding priorities.

This preliminary framework will serve as a foundation for deeper financial modeling, governance evaluation, and scenario testing. The final SWOT analysis presented in the comprehensive report will integrate quantitative data and community feedback to support clear, actionable recommendations.



## Comparable Facility Site Visits and Benchmarking

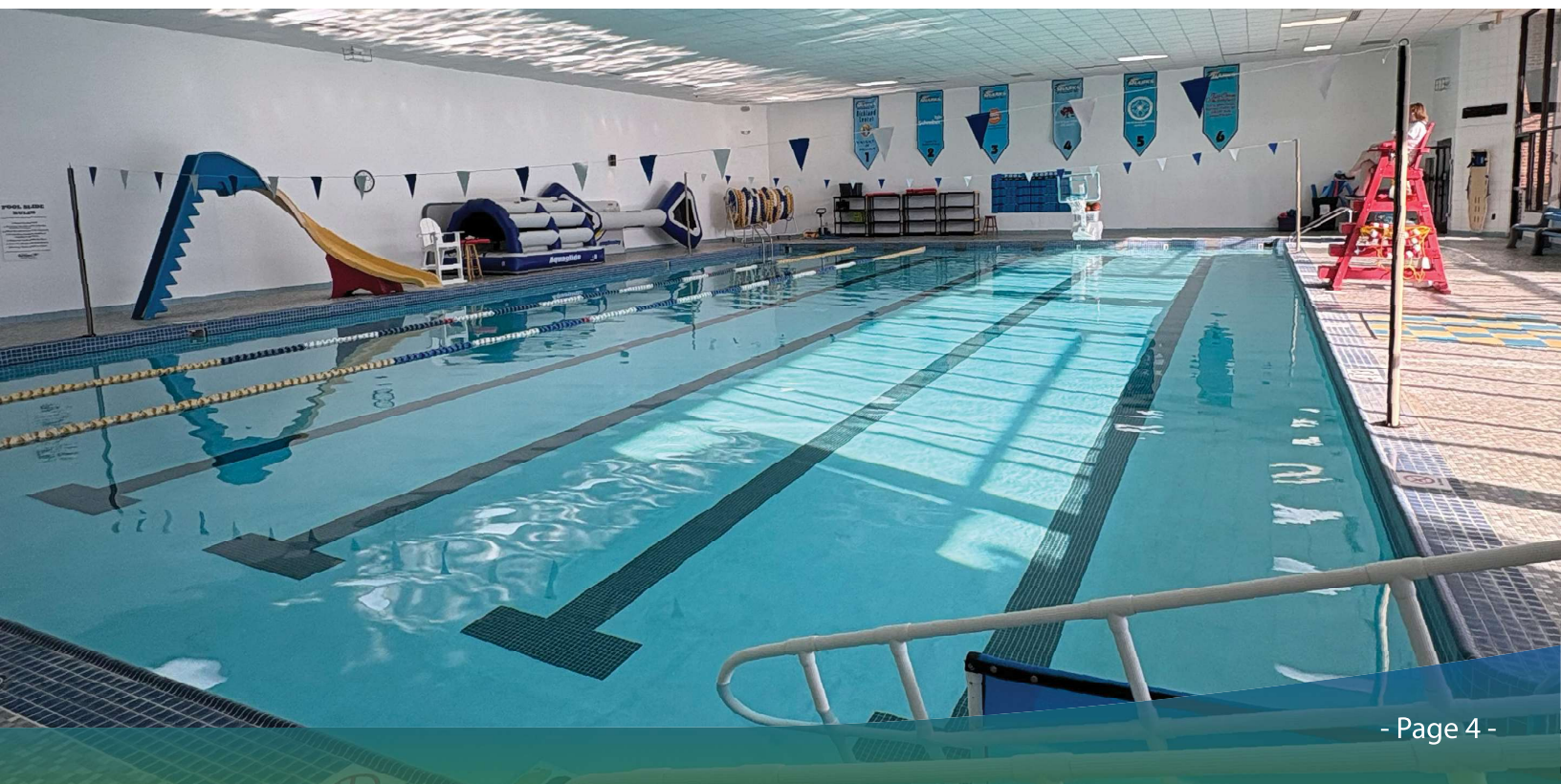
IPA Parks and Recreation Advisor Craig Hoepfner and Symons Director Mike Hardy have conducted site visits to six comparable aquatic and recreation facilities across Wisconsin—exceeding the original project scope. These facilities represent a range of ownership and operational models, including City-operated, School District-owned, nonprofit (501(c)(3)), and hybrid structures. Key observations include:

- The Symons Recreation Complex is well-run and cost-efficient, operating with a subsidy level that is on the low end of comparable facilities.
- Facilities most similar in size and community context operate successfully under a variety of non-municipal and hybrid governance models.
- Long-term sustainability at peer facilities is supported through diversified revenue sources, partnerships, and philanthropic support.

These findings confirm that Richland Center has multiple viable pathways forward that can maintain service quality while addressing long-term sustainability concerns.

## Ongoing Stakeholder Conversations

In parallel with formal analysis, IPA has continued targeted conversations with City and County administration, elected officials, Foundation leaders, School District representatives, and community advocates. These discussions have reinforced the importance of aligning any future operational model with broader community goals, intergovernmental relationships, and realistic funding capacity.





## Next Steps: Public Engagement

The project is now moving into its next major phase: community and stakeholder engagement. Over the coming weeks, IPA will work with the City and Symons team to implement a multi-faceted engagement approach designed to gather broad, meaningful input and ensure transparency throughout the process. This engagement will include:

- **Community and Stakeholder Surveys:** IPA will design and administer online surveys for city/county residents (external survey) and city/county/Symons staff and elected officials (internal survey). The surveys will gather feedback on facility usage, community priorities, perceptions of Symons, and perspectives on potential ownership, management, and funding models.
- **Community Focus Group:** IPA will facilitate a community focus group to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to share more detailed feedback, discuss priorities, and react to emerging themes in a small-group setting. As part of this engagement, IPA Advisor Craig Hoepfner has already provided project updates and solicited feedback to the Natatorium Board in November. These conversations have functioned as an initial focus-group-style discussion and will be supplemented by additional community-focused engagement as the project progresses.
- **Stakeholder Working Sessions:** IPA will conduct structured stakeholder sessions with the project team to provide updates, review preliminary findings, and discuss emerging operational and governance options with key partners and decision-makers. These sessions will help refine assumptions and inform recommendations.
- **Public Input Session:** IPA will facilitate a public information and input session to share early findings and potential pathways forward, answer questions, and provide the broader community with an opportunity to offer input prior to finalizing recommendations.

Feedback gathered through each of these engagement activities will be integrated with financial modeling, governance analysis, and benchmarking results and will directly inform the development of preliminary and final recommendations.

## Project Timeline

This project is at the mid-point of the 16-week study timeline. The work completed to date has established a strong foundation of operational understanding, diverse stakeholder insight, and comparative context. Following the upcoming public engagement phase, IPA will begin drafting the comprehensive project report, including preliminary recommendations for future operational and governance options. The project remains on track and on schedule, with preliminary findings anticipated for presentation in late February or early March—consistent with the original project schedule.



# Innovative Public Advisors

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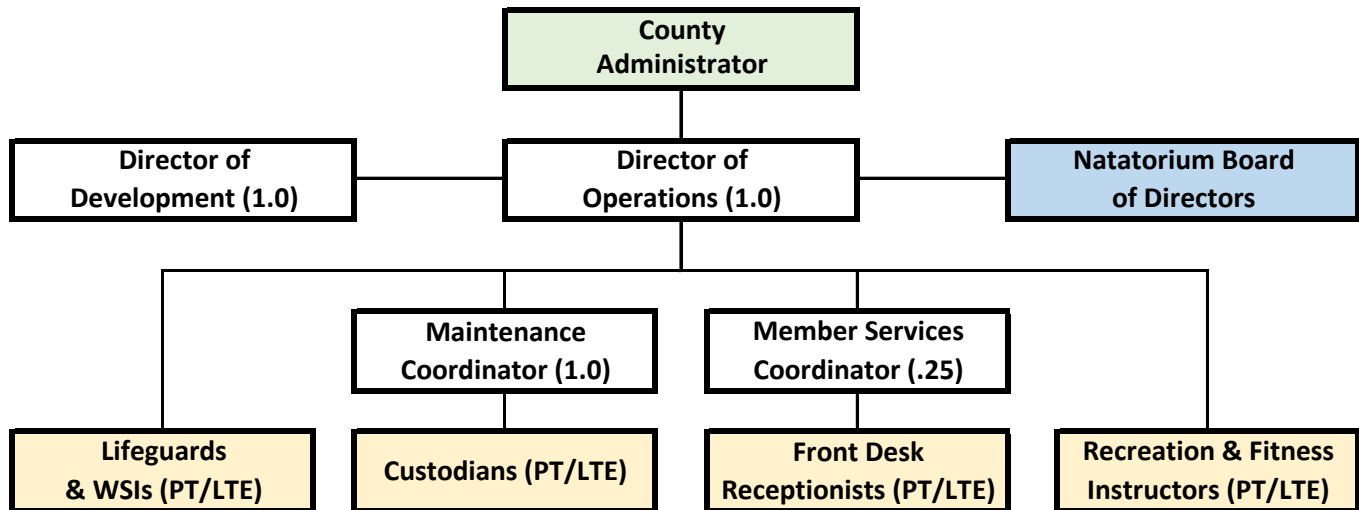
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# Symons Recreation Complex

2025/26 Organizational Chart proposal (phase 1)



## Proposal for Natatorium Board make-up

**County Board reps** (3 incl. County Board chair or designee)

**City Council reps** (3 incl. Mayor or designee)

**At-Large reps** (3 incl. Symons Foundation Board rep) *all at large reps need to be current Symons member*

## Proposal for SRC Staffing

**Director of Development** (1.0 FTE) - grant writing, fundraising, partnerships, communications/promotions, employee recruitment & retention, and Natatorium Board/community partnership development and sustainability

**Director of Operations** (1.0 FTE) - facility management, program supervision & development, CPO, facility licensing, staff oversight & training, lifeguard/WSI training, assisting with Woodman Outdoor Pool as needed by City

**Lifeguards/WSIs** - (PT/Casual) - no changes (a minimum \$1/hr increase in 2025 is needed as SRC is well below average)

**Maintenance Coordinator** (1.0 FTE) - oversight of major pool & building mechanicals, HVAC, mowing, snow removal, equipment maintenance/coordinate with outside vendors as needed, cleaning, painting, etc.

**Custodians** - (PT/Casual) - interior cleaning (windows, floors, vents, wipe down equipment, etc.)

**Member Services Coordinator** (.25 FTE) - approx 20 hours/wk oversight of member relations & billing, insurance billing, front desk schedules & training, respond to member requests, newsletter production, private party rentals

**Front Desk/Receptionists** (PT/Casual) - no changes

**Fitness Instructors** (PT/Casual) - no changes



## **Financial Impact**

**\*Natatorium Board** = no impact

**\*Permanent, Full-Time (benefit-eligible) Staff** = remain at 3.0 FTE. Director becomes Director of Development - salary drops from Grade 15 to Grade 14. *Budget neutral*. (Director salary to move to closest step as current rate on lower grade). Assistant Director becomes Director of Operations - increase from Grade 13 (\$27.80/hr.) to Grade 14 (\$29.90/hr). *Projected budget Increase of \$4,368/annual*. Maintenance Coordinator salary remains at Grade 11. *Budget neutral*. **Permanent FT staff budget increase of \$4,368 (projected annual)**

**\*Permanent, Part-Time Staff (1 @ .25 FTE)** = kept at <10 hours/wk ea. to reduce benefit costs, but provide consistency in helping with needed tasks at Symons. Member Services Coordinator will assist in better customer services to retail members and coordinate desk staff & training, as well as oversee insurance collections to better sustain revenue growth. 1 additional .25 FTE positions @ Grade GC (\$15.19 mid-grade) = 520 annual hours x \$15.19 = **Permanent PT staff budget increase of \$7,899 (projected annual)**

**\*Temporary/Casual Part-Time Staff** = no changes. (though it is highly recommended to increase lifeguard wages asap by least \$1-\$2 per hour to catch up to neighboring communities which average \$12.25-\$14/hr)  
**Temporary/Casual staff budget neutral (look for additional \$1/hr lifeguard increase = approx, \$4,000/annual)**

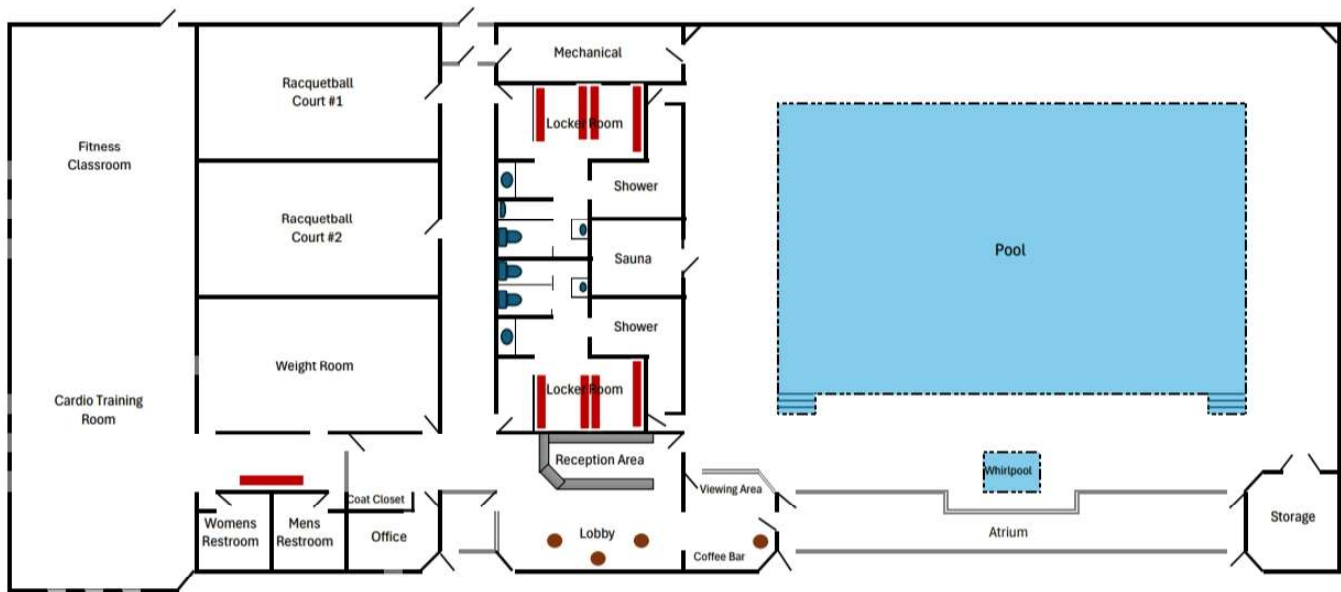
**Overall impact to budget (projected)** = FTE changes +\$4,368; Permanent PT changes +\$7,899; Casual/LTE changes (without \$1/hr. lifeguard increase) budget neutral.

***\*Increase of \$12,267 in future wages expected with this staffing reorganization proposal\****

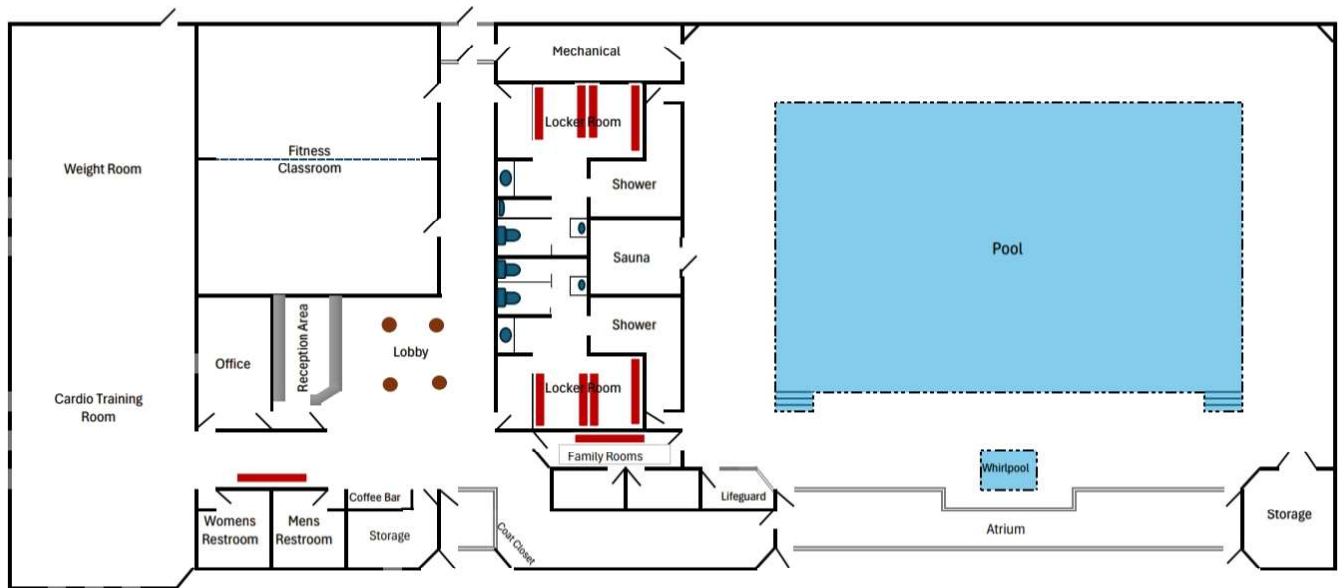
***\*This plan is budgeted in 2025 wages, due to savings from unfilled custodial positions.***

**\*\*Potential revenue increases (new program offerings w/fees, new members, more efficient billing, etc.) will offset expected increases, while providing the following improvements:**

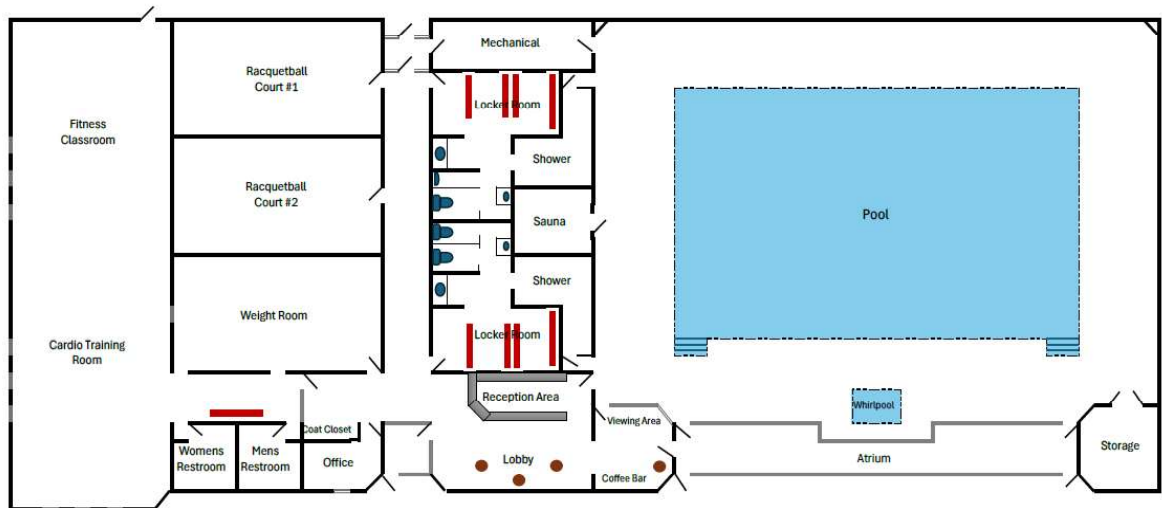
- >Addition of dedicated FTE staff to increase grant & donation revenues, capital campaigns, partnerships, etc.
- >Help for Director of Operations in permanent PT Coordinator position duties in needed areas of operations
- >Increase of \$1/hr for lifeguards (current area community market is \$12.25-\$14/hr, Symons is at \$11.81/hr)
- >Ability to take on additional tasks at City/School District to further reduce staffing costs and increase efficiencies in those organizations (i.e. combine responsibilities of Symons and Woodman pools, combine grant writing/administration for community/school recreational & athletic facility developments, etc)
- >Better opportunity for cross-training and response to succession planning with the addition of PT Coordinators to assist in delivery of member services, scheduling, communications, billing & activity programming
- >New staffing model allows for more attention on individual member services, resulting in increased revenues from new members, additional class participants, additional special events, efficient maintenance, etc.
- >Better sustainability/future revenues through more efficient programming.



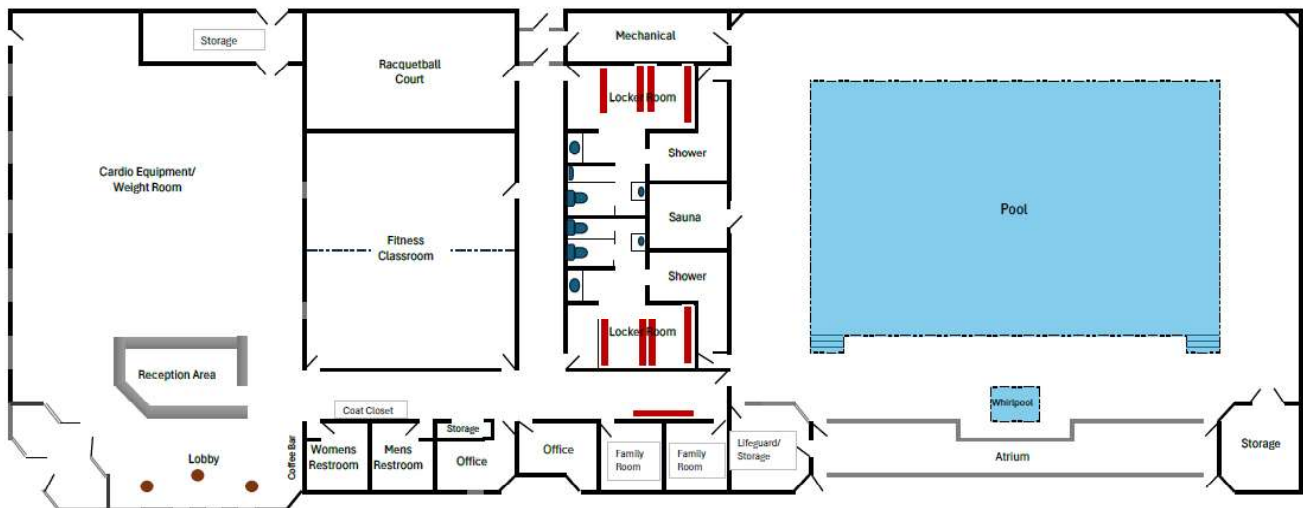
**Symons Recreation Center Floorplan**



**Symons Recreation Center Floorplan  
Renovation Option E**



**Symons Recreation Center Floorplan**

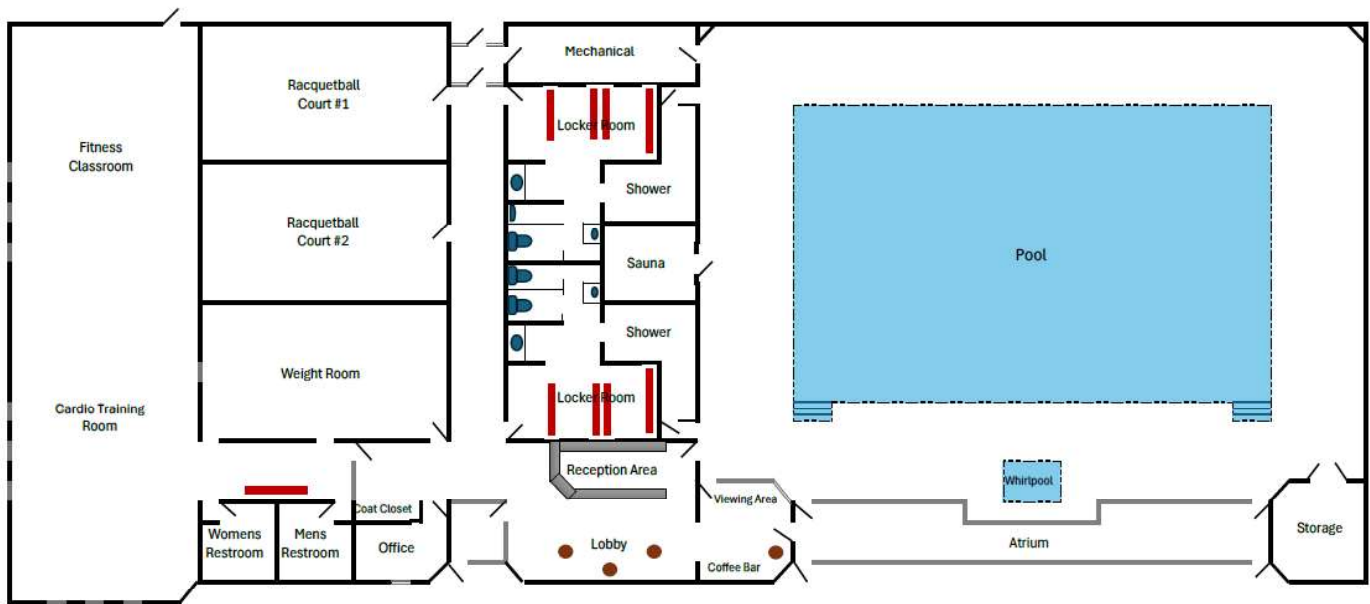


**Symons Recreation Center Floorplan  
Renovation Option G**

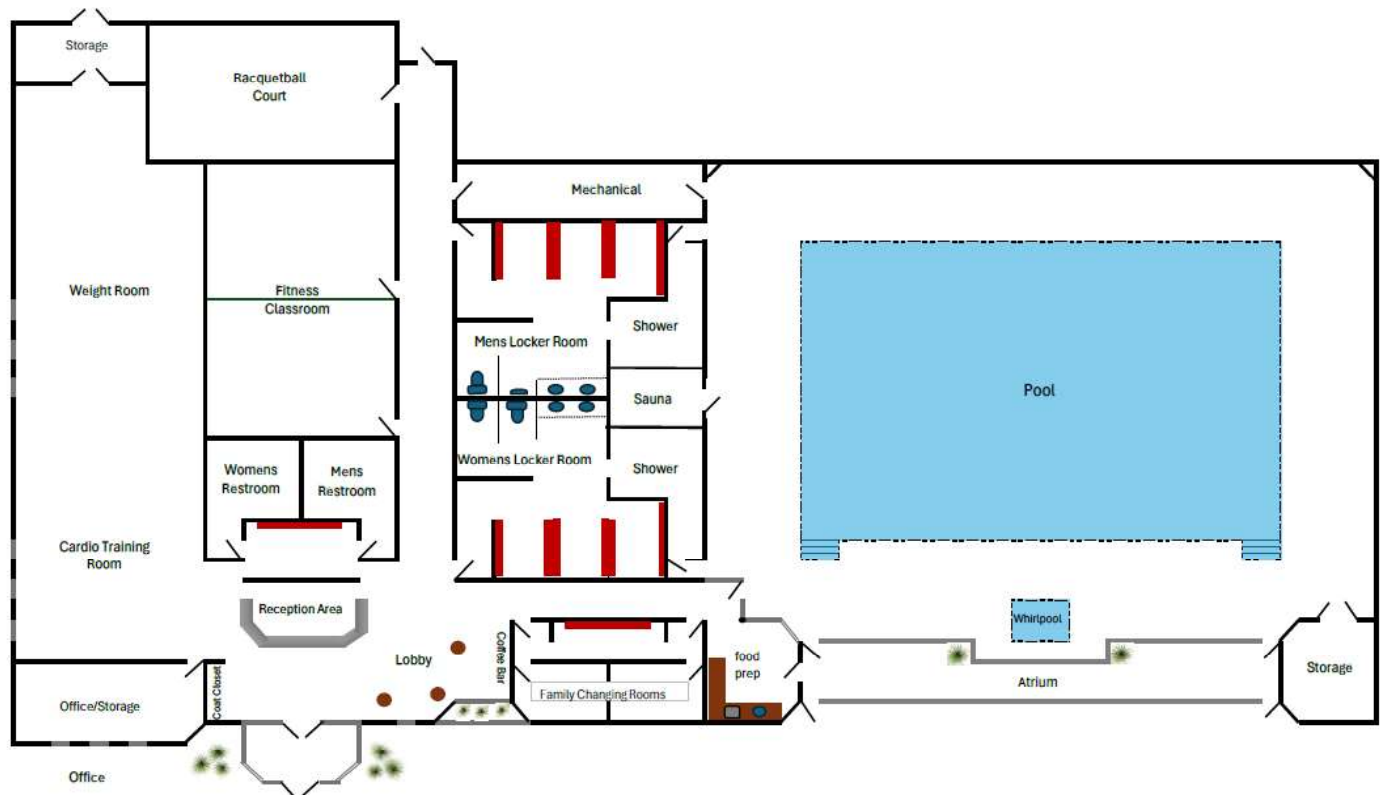


## SRC addition layout option G





**Symons Recreation Center Floorplan**



**Symons Recreation Center Floorplan  
Renovation Option H**



## SRC addition layout option H

