

BOONE COMMUNITY WELLNESS CENTER INFORMATION SUMMARY

Committee Chair: Councilmember Terry Moorman

Committee Members: Councilmember Holly Stocker, Councilmember Elijah Stines, Linda Williamson former YMCA Board, Jennifer Hanson former YMCA Board, DMACC Provost Drew Nelson, Ogden City Councilmember Brian Reimers, School Board Member Jeremy Pritchard

Mission: To build a publicly accessible facility to promote wellness, socialization and a healthy lifestyle.

Task Directive: To determine the feasibility of constructing a new Community and Wellness Center for the citizens of Boone to replace the void of services left by the closing of the Boone YMCA. It is our intent to be as transparent as possible by providing you with the information and progress of this committee in real time. No secrets, no surprises, just facts and information so you can make an informed decision.

Vision for this Space: While health and wellness is important to the community as a whole our hope is that this space provides much more than just an exercise facility. Our hope is that this will be a space for social interaction. Where everyone is welcome and can feel safe and enjoys what Boone has to offer. A place where kids can come after school and study in the resource center or swim or just hang out with friends, A place for seniors in the lounge, stay active and healthy. To socialize, have a cup of coffee visit with friends or maybe make some new ones. This is a place where families can go to play, exercise, swim and feel safe. We want it to be an intricate part of this community.

Proposed Facility: An \$8.5 million dollar facility approximately 41000 sq. ft.

The building will be a metal pole built (pole barn type) building.

\$500,000.00 of the \$8.5 million is a reserve fund for operating cost shortfalls should they occur, as requested by the city.

Proposed facility spaces includes: Full sized Gymnasium/walking track, 50' x 90' handicap accessible pool, zero entry wade pool, therapy/Jacuzzi pool, cardio fitness room, 2 individual class rooms for yoga, kickboxing and other specialty classes, a banquet facility which will also double as a 3rd classroom, a small weight room, child watch area, locker rooms, child resource center, reception, social/lounge area, restrooms, a 6foot wide exterior walking track around the building, mechanical rooms and storage.

Site location is the city owned property adjacent to and directly west of the Beckwith Center on south Marshall. This is city owned property and there is also an existing geothermal well field which can be utilized by the new facility. The plans include expanding this well field to be used by the new center to mediate utility costs. A solar array will be offered as an add alternate to the plans with the same intention to minimize the utility costs.

To date we have held 4 open forum community meetings. 3 in Boone and 1 in Ogden. The committee solicited input, ideas and addressed concerns at all of these meetings and will continue to do so going forward. Community Meetings will be scheduled on the 3rd Monday of each month or following the 2nd council meeting of each month starting at 7pm in the city hall auditorium.

In October of 2019 the City of Boone formed a partnership with POLCO ,a polling service in order to gather data and input. The cost for this service was \$4000.00 and can be utilized by any city entity as many times as we would like in the calendar year. Our first survey solicited 300 responses and a 2nd survey will be forthcoming. Here is a very brief synopsis of the survey results. You can see the entire survey and comment on the POLCO website.

- 78% believe recreation opportunities are fair to poor in Boone, in particular they are poor for young children, older adults and families,
- 56% were very supportive of this facility, 14% somewhat supportive
- Aquatics, walking track, general fitness, summer camps, child watch were very important
- 64% rated the project as a very high or high priority
- 67% said they would use the facility weekly
- 68.5 percent said they would accept some sort of property tax increase.

The core committee has formed subcommittees using volunteers from the community, they are as follows:

- Building & Design:
- Fees and Services
- Fundraising
- Grant Applications

These subcommittees are hard at work gathering data for the upcoming business plan. Data will be provided to the contractor handling this phase of the project.

The committee has met with the following entities in the community

- **Boone County Board of Supervisors** (3 times starting in November with the final meeting January 8, 2020). The results of these meetings were that the county has no interest in helping to fund this facility. The original request (starting point) was \$200,000.00 for 10 years. The final request was \$25,000.00 for 10 years. The Board of Supervisors said because of economic reasons they could not offer any support at this time. Their suggestion was to charge nonresidents an additional fee to use the facility.
- **Boone School Board Members**---The committee met with them in November of 2019. The school board is advocating a 19 million dollar new elementary school, and is in the design phase of their project. The general consensus is that a shared space would pose serious scheduling and usage problems especially during the school year. Their facility did not propose a pool and if they did it would be a competition pool where the temperature would be too cold for use by the community center demographic and again would be a scheduling problem. Both projects are too far along in their progression to start over which would extend the timelines and cost additional money for redesign.
- The committee is also exploring a partnership possibility with the high school providing internships through their job training program (EDGE) which would provide real world experience for their students and help with our employee expenses.
- **Boone County Hospital**---Terry Moorman met with Joe Smith in December 2019. The Boone County Hospital is in the infancy stages of a proposed \$10 million dollar addition and infrastructure improvements. Given that they are 2 years from beginning construction the time line would be extended to a point of a minimum of 3 years, which would be unacceptable to the community. The cost savings would be minimal given the added costs of demolition work and ground work that would be required to make the proposed site usable for the community center.
- **Day Care Junction**---The committee has reached out to Child Care Junction in January of 2020 to see if there is any interest in partnering with the community center given the close proximity of their facility and the new center. This partnership could provide a needed service for the center and reduce center costs by limiting employees for this position. It would also allow us to utilize the space designated in the center for other purposes and services. Details are being considered at this time
- **DMACC**---We are exploring the possibility of forming a partnership with DMACC providing internships for their students under their sports curriculum. This provides their students with real life experience while learning and also helps with employee costs to the center.
- Terry Moorman on behalf of the committee has also reached out to **The Strength Shop** to see if they would also be interested in forming a partnership. What that would look like is yet to be determined whether it be a combined rate to use either facilities or something similar to that. The committee assured them it was not our intent to go into competition with their business whatsoever.
- The committee met with the architect **Atura** on January 16th, to begin the finalization process of the facility. Now that the committee has a pretty good idea of the spaces we require based on the services we are offering, we can finally start this process.

Site Visits: Committee members have visited several community center sites in surrounding communities to gather information on services, fees and general information on their operational costs and sustainability.

Grants/Donations: To date we have received a \$12,000.00 grant from the Force Board, \$1000.00 gift from an individual donor in Ogden and \$1500.00 from the Fenton Trust for a total of \$14,500.00.

Architects/Consultants: The committee interviewed 4 different architectural firms in November and the committee recommended to the council to use ATURA out of Clear Lake, Iowa. Their initial fee for conceptual design, budgeting, timeline and community outreach was by far the least amount of all the firms. At the committee's recommendation we will be asking for approval of their contract on January 20, 2020 for the sum of \$9,500.00.

The committee also received a proposal from Iowa State University's business department to do a feasibility study and formulate a business plan for this project. The cost is a flat fee of \$5000.00. This study will be done in conjunction with the subcommittees as we supply them with the data they will require. Normally a study and business plan would cost an average of \$35,000-\$40,000 dollars.

Both of these contracts will be paid out of the \$14,500.00 we have on hand, thus minimizing any taxpayer monies to bring this project to a vote.

Project Timeline: **(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

- Concept drawings/virtual reality tour March 1, 2020
- Fundraising efforts underway January 31, 2020
- GRANT Applications underway January 30, 2020
- Community outreach begins April 30, 2020
- Bond referendum(if required) November 6, 2020
- If the bond passes New contract with the architect January 2021
- Construction drawings April 2021
- Construction begins June 2021
- **TARGET Completion June 2022**

FAQ:

Question: Who will own and operate this facility?

Answer: The city will own and operate this facility. We will be hiring a projected 2 full time employees. A rec Director and an assistant rec director would fill those two full time positions.

Question: What will the impact be on our taxes if this goes to bond?

Answer: It is the intent of this committee to minimize the impact of any bond issue on your taxes if any through fundraising and grants. Rest assured we will provide you with accurate data regarding any impact this may have on your taxes so you can make an **informed** decision at voting time. There is a lot of misinformation out there on the actual amount this will impact your taxes. Until the committee actually knows how much of a bond may actually be required the information cannot be accurately communicated to you.

Question: What will the monthly fees be?

Answer: Until the business plan and feasibility study is completed we cannot give you the exact numbers. Once operating costs are established and additional revenue streams locked in then we will be able to provide you with those rates. We know how important it is to have reasonable rates for everyone so that is always on the committees mind.

Question: Will there be scholarships for low income residents?

Answer: Yes eventually there will be. During the first year of operation the scholarship be issued on a very limited basis if any, until operating expenses and budget requirements are realized. It is out intent to also pursue grants that are long term yearly contributions, which would fund this program. Scholarships will be limited to the funds we raise but we would also consider reduced rates based on income and need. This program could be expanded depending on grant, endowments and donations after the facility is up and running.

Question: Will the building be handicap accessible?

Answer: Absolutely, the committee has made it clear and has emphasized to our architect that all aspects of this building are to be ADA compliant.

Question: Why are we competing with local businesses?

Answer: The committee feels that we are not based on the services and amenities this facility will be offering. Several of the businesses were in business while the Y was in operation and they were just fine. This facility will be the only facility that will offer a full range of services including a pool and therapy pool. The committee feels it's important for the citizens of Boone to have a central place where they can fulfill all of their wellness needs. It is certainly not the intent of this committee to compete with or disrupt the other businesses in this community.

Question: Is this center really necessary.

Answer: Wellness whether it be physical or mental is vitally important to any community. Right now the health and wellness options for this community and especially for our seniors, young families, and our low income residents are very limited if not nonexistent This center is designed with quality of life issues in mind. This will be an amenity that will draw people into Boone to live and work here.

Question: Will the city have to fund this facility in the future?

Answer: The feasibility study will be the deciding factor. If the study does not find that this facility can self-sustain over the long term we will not bring this to bond as it would be a waste of taxpayer money and time. Once operating costs are established and conservative projected revenue is determined we will be able to answer that question more accurately. In short our intent is to be self-sustaining.

Question: What services will you offer?

Answer: While we are still formulating that as part of the business plan and revenue stream data the following are for certain, a pool, wade pool, therapy pool, gymnasium space, banquet facility(rentable), Child resource center, day watch, lounge/reception area, cardio equipment, free weight/nautilus equip. , yoga, spin, palates, swim lessons, water aerobics, party rentals, summer camps, basketball leagues, flag football other child based activities. Senior services, a safe and inclusive environment.

Question: Why should I have to pay for something I don't use?

Answer: A great question. We consider this project a quality of life project for the community. You pay for this facility just like you pay for the parks, the pool and for the library. There are people who don't use those services and yet we all pay for them because it serves the community as a whole. Think about what kind of town we would be without all of those things, not a very inviting place is it?

Question: It would be a lot cheaper to not put in a pool, why don't we forget the pool?

Answer: while you are correct it would be a lot cheaper to build and maintain the survey and the response from the community has indicated that this is the number one priority when it comes to building this center. Without it it's a nonstarter.

Question: Why don't we use an existing building like the Old Goat?

Answer: This committee has looked extensively at all options regarding existing facilities The old Goat building has some structural and as well as legal problems which have made the building an unacceptable options both from a cost and time perspective. The cost of the structural issues, the inadequate space, ceiling height, parking issues and other issues have led us to rule this possibility out.

Question: Why don't we just renovate the old YMCA?

Answer: Given the city council seems to be against reusing this building again the costs are prohibitive. Not only is this building in need of major repairs and renovations but the costs involved in this undertaking would be in excess of 4 or 5 million dollars. The list of improvements is massive and in the end we would still end up with a 50 year old building. With that said this committee is not ruling out any option going forward.

Question: What about Eastern Star and their new facility?

Answer: I encourage you check them out. The pool is very tiny and is an extra charge above the allotted times you are given with a membership. You need to schedule your pool time and it's limited to 2 people at a time. Its designed for people over 55 and is not family friendly and services are limited. While we appreciate it being open to the public its main purpose is to serve the people living at Eastern Star. Once their new townhomes are completed the facility will be very busy.

Question: Why are we doing this the city doesn't know how to run a business?

Answer: The city is a business with employees, insurance, human resources and everything that goes along with running a business. We have everything in place that the YMCA was providing for \$100,000.00 a year.

Question: The YMCA was losing money every year what makes you think the city can do better?

Answer: You are correct the YMCA was losing money each year. While there are multiple reasons why, the main reasons were:

1. The Boone Y was sending \$90,000 to the Greater YMCA of Des Moines every year for basically payroll, insurance and the use of their name.
2. The building had been allowed to deteriorate and was bleeding money trying to make antiquated equipment run. Maintenance costs were astronomically high because of the age of the equipment, the repeated calls to fix the systems.
3. The fee structure was complicated and unfair in some instances.
4. The facility was old and was low on the priority list of the Greater Y of Des Moines. Used equipment hand me downs that were in constant need of repair and unavailable. The building was not anywhere close to handicap accessible. So yes membership was dropping because of this.
5. Their revenue streams were limited due to inadequate space and equipment.
6. They were spending a huge amount of money of utilities because of the age and energy efficiency of the existing equipment.

The Y was losing money at the rate of about \$100,000 per year according to their figures. The fact that we would have a brand new facilities with added services, modern/new equipment, additional revenue streams, no YMCA fee to Des Moines and a more energy efficient facility would more than make up the deficit the Y was experiencing.

Question: The figure of 8 million dollars has been mentioned repeatedly, and I don't believe that is near enough and will increase as time goes on. What do you plan to do to prevent this from happening?

Answer: While cost over runs or unforeseen circumstances can occur which would increase the price tag, during our interviews with the 4 architectural firms, all indicated that the proposed facility and dollar amount was very doable. If you look at surrounding areas with community center facilities you will see that the proposal is viable in relationship to what they spent on the facilities they now have.

Question: Why are we wasting money on this, we already have 3 gyms in town?

Answer: You are correct there are 3 gyms in the area and yet the consensus is that gym space is inadequate. Scheduling issues, as well as staffing presents a problem for people or organizations wanting to use these spaces. During basketball season as well as spring baseball practices these spaces are booked solid.

Question: why are we spending taxpayer money on pursuing this facility?

Answer: The committee has pursued grants, endowments and donations to pay for the initial costs of this project. The concept design drawing, 3D renderings, cost estimate, timeline, feasibility study and business plan will all be paid from the monies the committee has raised. No taxpayer money has been used other than the initial \$4000.00 for the polling service (POLCO) which will be utilized by other city agencies as well. These committees are made up of volunteers whose time is not compensated so there are no costs involved.

GOING FORWARD

The next few months will be very busy for this committee as we continue the work on this project.

- We will be signing agreements with Atura and Iowa State University for the drawing and business plan respectively upon approval of the full council.
- Grant applications are underway.
- Fundraising will begin
- The committee will be actively working with Iowa State University in formulating the business plan and participating in the feasibility study.
- The committee will continue to meet and refine the services and fee structure based on the business plan as it develops.
- Our commitment to transparency will remain paramount as we go forward. We will be holding public meetings to report our progress at 7pm in the city hall auditorium following the 2nd council meeting of the month.
- It is still the committee's intent to bring this to the people for a vote in November of 2020 during the national election. This will happen if and only if the business plan proves to be viable and the facility self-sustaining.
- We also will make every effort to post updates on the city website following these meetings so those who cannot attend can remain informed on this process.