

Meeting-Tuesday June 30th-Noon RGCC

May Minutes

The meeting was called to order by acting President Joe Powers. Other board members present: Pat Sexton, Doug Holton, Becca Tesch and Steve Strickland. Kelly Nowicki was present via phone. Director Marshall Behrens was present. Board President Chris Terry and member Chad Behnken were on approved absence. Guests present were Matt Esau (Director of Rochester Sports) and Kristine Ihrke (Rochester Sports Banquet Chairwoman and past president of Rochester Sports BOD).

Guests from Rochester Sports as noted above were welcomed to invite discussion to follow about the future of the Rochester Area Sports Banquet.

April RSF minutes, May financials and statement of activities were reviewed. Sexton moved to approve the minutes and Tesch seconded; Sexton moved to approve the financials, Holton seconded, minutes and financials passed unanimously as presented.

The board reviewed the April 27th Rochester City Council work session, including discussion of the proposed “mega bubble” at the new complex site and the shift away from RCTC as a possible improvement site. The council agreed to hold space for the bubble but delayed a final decision due to funding needs. Board members raised concerns about how the decision was made, whether key partners like RCTC were fully engaged, and the need for clearer updates from the city. The group also noted that efforts to stop regional sports complex funding will not move forward, so the project remains active despite concerns about cost increases, scope changes, and public trust as the city begins a phased approach with outdoor facilities.

The board was also updated as to news that the Rochester Honkers have announced their intent to not play at Mayo Field post 2026 citing Mayo Field infrastructure concerns as well as inability to secure a long-term lease and reap benefits from upgrades. The board expressed the importance of the Honkers to the city’s sports and entertainment portfolio and asked for discussion into the city’s decision to decommission Mayo field in 2027. Behrens is working to connect with Honkers and Park and Rec leadership to better understand as well as to investigate previous renderings of a sports and entertainment complex there.

Finally, the group discussed the Curling Club of Rochester’s proposal for a dedicated 6-sheet facility at Gamehaven Park. Rochester is described as the largest city in the region without dedicated curling ice, and the club has more than 150 active members but only gets ice two evenings per week, limiting leagues, youth programs, adaptive curling, events, and broader community access. The proposed facility would be about 31,000 square feet, cost approximately \$6.5 million, and be funded mainly through private fundraising, grants, sponsorships, and in-kind support, with CCR asking the city primarily for land access and Parks & Recreation coordination. For the board, the takeaway is that this appears to be a privately led partnership project that could expand year-round recreation and activate Gamehaven Park, while still requiring careful review of land use, city coordination, operating responsibilities, and fit within Rochester’s broader recreation planning.

Matt Esau and Kristine Ihrke provided an update on the future of the Rochester Area Sports Banquet, noting the Foundation’s long-standing role as a key partner and the banquet’s importance as a fundraising strategy for the small grant program, generating more than \$10,000 annually through the silent auction. They shared that the banquet continues to lose significant dollars each year, driven largely by rising event costs and the approximately \$15,000 average cost of a keynote speaker. They also noted concerns that athletes and teams appear less engaged, with some declining nominations, and that the event requires substantial staff time and resources. Rochester Sports plans to explore a new format for the banquet, which may reduce or remove the silent auction component. The Foundation expressed strong support for Rochester Sports and the continued success of the banquet, emphasizing its willingness to be an active partner in problem-solving, sponsorship development, cost reduction, and identifying a more local or

mission-aligned speaking message. Rochester Sports will bring this support and feedback back to its board, with decisions anticipated in late summer.

New business consisted of supporting the above initiatives, and with no further discussion or action the meeting adjourned at 1:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted-Marshall Behrens- Director