

NEWS RELEASE

YMCA Contact:

Ruth Comer
Vice President, Marketing & Communications
YMCA of Greater Des Moines
Office: 515.471.8519
Mobile: 515.868.2061
Ruth.Comer@dmymca.org

City of Indianola Contact:

Benjamin Reeves
City Manager
City of Indianola
Office: 515.962.5274
Mobile: 801.420.3052
breeves@indianolaiowa.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2023

YMCA, City of Indianola reach agreement on operation of Indianola Y facility

Indianola, Iowa – The YMCA of Greater Des Moines and the City of Indianola have reached an agreement to transition the operation of the facility currently housing the Indianola YMCA to the City.

The Indianola City Council on Thursday evening approved an amendment to terminate the existing 28-E Agreement between the City and the YMCA of Greater Des Moines and begin the process of transitioning the operation of the facility to the City, which owns the building. The Board of Directors of the YMCA had approved the transition agreement at a meeting earlier in the day. The transition is scheduled to take effect July 30.

Financed with tax-exempt city bonds, construction of the 62,000-square-foot fitness facility began in 2011. The facility opened in August 2013 as a branch of the YMCA of Greater Des Moines, a nonprofit organization.

“Many individuals and organizations in the community came together to make the vision of the Indianola YMCA a reality, and we all had very high hopes for its success,” said Leisha DeSmet, president and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Des Moines. “However, since its opening, the Indianola Y has required an annual financial subsidy from the YMCA in order to operate. While this was anticipated and planned for in the early years, the expectation was that over time, the branch would generate enough revenue through memberships, programs and charitable contributions to cover its expenses. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the Y, it’s board, staff and volunteers, this has not been the case.

“While we regret that the Y will no longer be part of the Indianola community, we remain grateful to the members, volunteers, employees and donors who supported our efforts over the past decade,” DeSmet said.

-more-

DeSmet noted that annual operating deficits at the Indianola branch were also exacerbated by the loss in membership caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which mandated the closure of the facility for two months.

Ben Reeves, Indianola City Manager, said city officials held many discussions with the YMCA over the course of the last few years, and ultimately determined that transitioning the operations of the fitness facility to the City of Indianola was the best option for the benefit of the community and its residents.

“Not only is this facility a community asset that enhances the health and wellness of our residents, it’s also a significant amenity and economic development feature that has been cited as a benefit to prospective commercial and industrial employers in our area,” Reeves said. “The welfare of the community, both immediately and in the long term, was uppermost in the minds of the City Council and staff who worked on the transition plan, and our staff are well-positioned to take over operations.”

The City of Indianola and the YMCA are working closely on the details of the transition to ensure minimal disruption for those who want to continue their membership at the City of Indianola facility or at one of the other YMCA branches in the metro area. Indianola Y members have been notified of the transition plan and will receive communication in the next 30 days with additional details, DeSmet said.

The transition is anticipated to take place at the end of July 29, 2023. The Indianola Y currently has about 1,800 membership units and 103 full- and part-time employees.

About the YMCA of Greater Des Moines

The YMCA of Greater Des Moines is an association of people of all ages and from all walks of life, united by a shared passion: to strengthen the foundations of community. The Y serves more 75,000 citizens from communities throughout central Iowa and operates five YMCA fitness communities, the YMCA Supportive Housing Campus in downtown Des Moines and Y Camp resident camp in Boone. For more than 150 years, the Y has remained dedicated to its mission of putting Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Find out more at www.dmyymca.org.

About the City of Indianola

Indianola is a city in Warren County, Iowa, located 14 miles south of Des Moines. The City of Indianola is home to Simpson College and serves more than 15,800 residents and numerous visitors who come to explore Indianola’s vibrant downtown, restaurants, shops, parks, cultural attractions—such as the Des Moines Metropolitan Opera—and events, including the National Balloon Classic and the Warren County Fair. To learn more about the City of Indianola, [click here](#).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Indianola YMCA
Published March 30, 2023

Q: What is happening with the Indianola YMCA?

A: The YMCA of Greater Des Moines is transitioning operations of the Indianola facility to the City of Indianola, which owns the building and plans to continue operating the facility. The transition is scheduled to occur this summer.

Q: Why is this action being taken?

A: Since its opening nearly 10 years ago, the Indianola Y has required a financial subsidy from the YMCA of Greater Des Moines in order to operate. While this was anticipated in the beginning, the expectation was that the Y would grow over time and be able to generate enough revenue to cover its operating expenses. Unfortunately, this has not been the case, and it is no longer feasible for the Y to continue subsidizing operations at the Indianola Y.

Q: Has the Y considered a membership drive, a fundraising drive, raising rates or other measures to keep the Y operating?

A: Memberships are just one way the Y generates income to fund operations. It also relies upon program revenue and contributed revenue from donors. Despite the organization's efforts since opening in 2013, the Y has not succeeded in generating revenue from these sources sufficient to fund operating expenses.

Q: How does the transition of the Y affect my Y membership?

A: The Y is working with the City of Indianola to provide a seamless transition for anyone who wants to continue their membership at the Indianola facility. The Y will be communicating with Indianola Y members to provide information on how to transition their membership from the Y to the Indianola facility. Indianola Y members currently using other branches of the YMCA of Greater Des Moines may choose to continue their membership with the Y.

Q: What will happen to the YMCA employees?

A: The City of Indianola plans to extend conditional offers of employment to all current Indianola YMCA employees.

Q: Will the City continue to maintain a community-driven volunteer Advisory Board?

A: Yes, the Indianola facility enjoys a robust army of volunteers who will remain an integral part of the facility's current and future success.

Q: What changes will the City make in the operation of the facility?

A: Initially, no major changes are anticipated through the transition period to ensure an uninterrupted service offering to our patrons. In the future, the

City will work with its volunteers and talent staff to ensure it is offering the best programs for our community.

Q: When will the transition take place?

A: It is anticipated that July 29, 2023, will be the last day of operations performed by the YMCA and July 30, 2023, will be the first day of operations managed by the City of Indianola.

Q: Why is it important to keep the wellness facility open?

A: The community expressed a need and desire to have a Community Wellness Facility with their passage of the bonds used to construct the Facility. Not only is it a community asset which enhances the health and wellness of its residents, it is also a significant amenity and economic development feature that has been cited as a benefit to prospective commercial and industrial employers in our area.