ARENA ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday April 7, 2026 Everett Arena 8:00 AM

Roll Call

Present: Nick Wallner; Mike Gfroerer; Councilor Stacey Brown; Dan Arndt; Tom Champagne; Joe Farrelly; General Services Director Jeff Hoadley; Public Properties Superintendent Jay Burgess; Arena & Properties Manager Jeff Bardwell; Arena Supervisor John Andersch

Absent: Jed Merrow; Claire Gruenfelder; Councilor Kris Schultz

Guest: Concord Youth Hockey Treasurer Wes Riley

Meeting called to order at 8:03 AM

Ice Season Recap

The Arena Manager briefed the committee on the 2025-26 ice season. Total Ice Rentals were 1,478 hours. Youth hockey rental hours totaled 794 hours, down 144 hours from FY25. Part of the reduction was a planned redistribution of hours to create a winter JV League and fall Monday evening Public Skating Session. High School rental hours for FY26 totaled 376 hours, up 47 hours that is attributed to the addition of the JV League. Adult League rental hours for FY26 totaled 259 hours, up 37 hours which is attributed to the addition of a Friday night group and the addition of a Thursday evening adult skills sessions. Comparing all rental groups, FY26 rental hours totaled 1,478, 21 hours less than FY25. We are still working on backfilling hours for fall usage.

For FY26, Public Skate and Stick Practice hours totaled 643 hours, up 59 hours to FY25. This is attributed to the addition of the fall Monday evening Public Session.

For FY26 Public Skate and Stick Practice attendance totaled 12,740, up 393 from FY25. The increase in attendance is attributed to the addition of the fall Public Skate session and the Olympic year bump. Considering the outside skating opportunities which were the best in over a decade, these numbers are very positive.

Dan Arndt asked about wheelchair usage during Public Skate sessions. The Arena Manager indicated that there has been a few in some sessions, mostly with school groups.

Mike Gfroerer asked about the number of ice arenas in the state, the Arena Manager said there are over thirty ice rinks in New Hampshire. Discussion took place on the number of ice rinks and the impact it has on the Everett Arena. There are eight ice rinks, two are double sheets, for a total of ten ice sheets with in a 25-mile radius of the Everett Arena. Compared to the mid-1990's there were four ice rinks with in a 25-mile radius.

Councilor Brown asked what the most noteworthy item regarding the ice-skating season. The Arena Manager said the Public Sessions attendance.

Joe Farrelly asked if there was anyway to start a house league like there was many years ago. Wes Riley explained that CYHA did try last season with a Senior Dynomites Division but sign ups were very low despite a hard push to get the program off the ground. CYHA has the strongest Learn to Skate and mite program in the state but as players move into the U12 and higher levels there is a lot of attrition to other programs in surrounding rinks.

Events: (includes: Dry Floor Rentals, Shows, Outside Lot Concessions, Roller Skating)

The last day of ice-skating operations was Sunday, March 15th, the first spring show was on Saturday, March 21st. The arena has 18 spring show dates that run through Sunday, June 7th. There is one open weekend in April that was not filled. The Arena tried to fill the open date with a Granite State Roller Derby Bout but were notified in March that they are not fielding a team this season because of membership numbers. They are planning on returning next year. Arena staff is currently working on filling the April 2027 date.

The arena co-sponsored Yard Sale took place Saturday, April 4th and had a record attendance of just over 2,300, up 700 from last year. The arena hosted 5 events this past August and anticipate the same number for FY27.

Nick Wallner asked if the line of boulders on the east end of the overflow lot could be moved further back to allow for more parking for the Kiwanis Fair. The Arena Manager will inquire with the Recreation Director.

Councilor Brown asked about the types of events at the arena and had there ever been a bicycle type of event. Nick Wallner indicated there was a bike rodeo of some type years ago. Discussion took place on hosting similar events .

Budget

For FY26 total revenue, the arena is projected to come in approximately 15,000 under the budgeted amount. This is attributed to lower amounts in ice rentals, show rentals, roller skating and Pro Shop Sales. We continue working with CYHA in fine tuning ice needs for their program.

Most expense accounts are projected to come in on budget except for overtime which will be over budget due to the coverage of shifts. Also, the arena has been without one full time position since mid-January and the technical duties have fallen back on the Arena Manager and Arena Supervisor.

The adjustments that were made in ice allocation this season impacts other revenue streams in the arena operations such as Concession sales. We are projecting the revenue in this line item to be up from the budgeted amount by approximately 6,000.

In looking at the impact the arena has on the community, we received an email from the Regional Manager at Buffalo Wild Wings. He was looking for a more comprehensive schedule of arena events, both ice and non-ice as those events significantly impact their business.

With the impact the arena has on local businesses in mind we have started an initiative of tracking the number of attendees at the arena beginning with the first spring show and will continue through the 2027 winter ice season. The arena last did this a few years prior to COVID. Industry studies have shown that it takes a population of 100,000 to support one ice sheet. The population of Concord is approximately 44,000, this demonstrates the support the arena receives from the surrounding communities.

Refrigeration Project

The arena is approaching the end of the initial engineering phase that includes: room layout; equipment layout; utility locations; parking lot impact; test borings; Hazardous Building Material Survey; Electric Service Capacity Analysis and refrigeration specifications. It is anticipated this phase will be complete in April and will move on to working with the planning department. The Public Properties Superintendent added that Milestone will be doing a detailed costing on the project once the engineering phase is complete. Discussion took place on the timing and logistics of the project. The project is currently part of the FY27 CIP and depending on funding construction is planned for the spring of 2027.

The Arena Manager briefed the committee on another project that will impact the arena, the Loudon Road bridge replacement. Staff met with the Engineering Department in January and at that time, the project was scheduled for FY28 and will be a two - three-year project. The plan calls for closing the west entrance to the arena and create a staging area in grass area and a portion of the arena parking lot. There have been no updates since January. Discussion took place on the arena operation and impacts the project will have with only one entrance/exit to the parking lot, the main entrance to the building being on the east end. Councilor Brown brought up discussion on the Greenway Trail that will bring in more bike and pedestrian activity once the project is complete.

Nick Wallner made a motion to adjourn, Joe Farrelly seconded the motion, there was no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 8:50 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey R. Bardwell
Arena & Properties Manager