



Dear YMCA Members and Families,

As the Board of Directors of the YMCA of Harrison County, we believe it is important to communicate openly with you about where our YMCA stands today, the work that has been done, and the work that still lies ahead.

Over the past several years, our YMCA has gone through a period of significant change. We have worked to strengthen operations, restructure staffing where necessary, reduce expenses, improve financial oversight, and make difficult decisions that place the long term health of the organization first.

Those efforts have made a difference. The YMCA has significantly reduced the level of operating losses we experienced in the past. At the same time, we want to be clear that we are not yet where we need to be financially. Rising costs, an aging facility, and continuing repair expenses place considerable pressure on our operations.

Our building has now served this community for more than 22 years. During that time, hundreds of thousands of people have walked through its doors. Today, nearly 6,000 members use the YMCA, along with thousands of children, families, seniors, athletes, guests, and community members who participate in programs and events throughout the year.

With that level of use comes significant wear on a facility that has many original systems still in operation.

In recent years, major investments have already been made in the building. The roof received a comprehensive coating system with a 25 year warranty. More than 650 solar panels were installed to help reduce long term energy costs. Equipment has been replaced, repairs have been completed, and improvements have been made throughout the facility.

However, there is still substantial work ahead.

The YMCA continues to deal with aging heating and cooling systems, pool mechanical and dehumidification equipment, plumbing, restrooms, locker rooms, windows, water intrusion, accessibility needs, and other building systems that are reaching or have exceeded their expected useful life. The warm water pool also remains closed while we evaluate what the future of that space should look like.

Current assessments show that the total deferred maintenance needs of the facility are significant and reach into the millions of dollars. These are not projects that can reasonably be addressed through membership revenue alone.

Over the past several months, YMCA leadership and the Board have been working with contractors, engineers, community organizations, and other partners to better understand the condition of the building and determine the best path forward. That work continues today.

Our goal is not simply to repair one HVAC unit, replace one piece of equipment, or address one leak. We must develop a responsible plan for the entire facility that protects the YMCA for the next generation.



At the same time, we are continuing to invest in the mission of the YMCA.

Our programs continue to serve children, families, seniors, athletes, and individuals throughout our community. Water safety remains a major priority. Programs such as SPLASH are teaching hundreds of local children important water safety skills. Our partnerships with schools, community organizations, health providers, and other nonprofits continue to grow. We have also strengthened our development and fundraising efforts so that membership dues are not expected to carry the entire financial responsibility of operating and improving the YMCA.

We are proud that the YMCA recently achieved Praesidium Accreditation, an important milestone reflecting our commitment to creating a safe environment for children and everyone who enters our facility.

The Board is also focused on strengthening its own leadership and bringing additional community leaders to the table who believe in the importance of the YMCA and can help guide its future.

There will be more difficult decisions ahead. There will also be opportunities.

We believe strongly that Harrison County needs a healthy and sustainable YMCA. The YMCA is more than a fitness facility. It is a place where children learn to swim, seniors find community, athletes develop, families spend time together, and people of all backgrounds have a place to belong.

Our responsibility as a Board is to make decisions today that give this organization the opportunity to continue serving this community for decades to come.

We also recognize that you, our members, deserve to understand what is happening within your YMCA. As our plans develop, we are committed to communicating with you about the condition of the facility, major projects, financial progress, community partnerships, and our vision for the future.

Thank you for continuing to support the YMCA of Harrison County. Your membership, participation, patience, and belief in this organization are what allow the YMCA to continue serving our community every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brett Stilwell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brett Stilwell
Chairman of the Board
YMCA of Harrison County