

Date: Wednesday, February 18th
Letter Delivered in Person

Subject: Response to Letter Presented by Barry Bohman at Special Board Meeting (February 2)

CYHA Board Members,

This letter is submitted in response to the letter presented by Barry Bohman during the Special Board Meeting held on Monday, February 2. At that meeting, Mr. Bohman stated that he was present on behalf of the Chippewa Figure Skating Club (CFSC).

The members of the Chippewa Youth Hockey Association (CYHA) who have proposed the rebrand project are fully aware of CYHA's current financial situation. We recognize the importance of reducing the Association's existing debt and understand the need to ensure that any proposed initiative does not interfere with current or prospective community donors, whose support is critical to CYHA's ability to meet its debt obligations.

If a rebrand were to occur, the goal would be to do so in a manner that:

- Would not result in increased dues for any members (hockey or figure skating).
- Would have the jersey renewal take place within the normal budget process and budget cycle, without accelerating or expediting any planned expenses.
- Would not require additional budget contribution from either the hockey or figure skating programs.
- Would ensure that any additional funds needed would not interfere with CYHA's current or ongoing fundraising efforts.

The letter submitted contains multiple incorrect and misleading statements and attempts to speak on behalf of groups and individuals who do not share the position presented regarding the rebrand project. We would like to provide clear information to ensure the rebrand opportunity is accurately understood.

- **The proposed rebrand project would not require replacing jerseys before they reach their full life expectancy.** Team jerseys would continue to be renewed on the normal replacement cycle and would remain part of the standard, budgeted jersey renewal process. The letter submitted suggests these expenses would occur immediately, which is incorrect.
 - As a result, this would not represent an additional expense. The \$41,040 jersey-related figure referenced in the letter submitted to the Board is therefore not applicable.
- The letter submitted claims the total cost of the rebrand would be between \$75,000 and \$100,000. There is no verified basis for these figures. These numbers are not supported by any documented estimates, vendor quotes, or formal proposals, and appear to be in line with speculative amounts stated verbally by individuals opposed to the rebrand project.

- If these figures are believed to be accurate, we welcome the opportunity to review the supporting details and documentation. Based on our research, we have identified a cost-effective approach to completing a rebrand at a significantly lower cost than what was stated by Mr. Bohman, and we would welcome the chance to review and compare these numbers with him.
- The rebrand project would be implemented over a 3- to 5-year period to ensure it does not create an unnecessary financial burden for CYHA.
- A company that has not historically sponsored CYHA has offered to supply paint at a significantly discounted rate. This cost would be covered by already identified members and supporters and would not be funded by CYHA.
 - Volunteers are in place and committed to completing the painting updates throughout the rink.
- The design for new logos is being donated and will not be a cost to include.
- The letter submitted states that the CFM Girls team's color is “maroon.” This is a misleading characterization, as red, black, and white are all prominent colors used within the program’s branding. The Wisconsin Prep Hockey website illustrates the color scheme, which is not “maroon” as stated in the letter (Click on the following link to see the current color scheme for CFM):
<https://www.wisconsinprephockey.net/page/show/9225453?subseason=953552&tab=content>
 - Furthermore, the letter submitted did not consult with or take into consideration the CFM Girls team. When asked directly about the rebrand, the Head Coach stated that she is supportive of CYHA rebranding to a color scheme that is red, black, and white for Chippewa Youth Hockey.
- The letter submitted does not mention that, within the last 10 years, the Chippewa Figure Skating Club (CFSC) underwent a rebranding process in which the youth hockey program was not consulted and did not have input. In contrast, the CYHA rebrand proposal includes figure skating families as a group to provide input. It is unfair for one group to have voting influence over both rebrand decisions, while the other group had no input in the CFSC rebrand.
 - We are thankful to have a strong figure skating community at the Chippewa Falls Hockey Rink. Their involvement is a big reason the rink in Chippewa Falls is viewed as a successful and well-rounded entity.
- While CYHA proudly serves skaters from a broader area than Chippewa Falls, the overwhelming majority of athletes who develop through the CYHA program and go on to play high school hockey ultimately play for the Chi-Hi Boys and CFM Girls programs. Both high school programs use color schemes that closely align with the proposed CYHA black, red, and white branding.
 - The rebrand initiative to gain alignment between the youth hockey association and the two teams that most kids for at the high school level is not unique to Chippewa Falls. There are many hockey programs that have alignment, which includes, but is not limited to: Hudson, Rice Lake, Superior, New Richmond, Antigo, Tomahawk, Everest, and more.
- CYHA has a long history of adjusting its logo and brand identity over the past several decades in response to the association’s needs and the program’s direction. Several

members who support the rebrand have been involved with CYHA for more than 30 years and have experienced multiple CYHA branding eras firsthand. Rebranding is not a new practice for CYHA, and with careful planning and thoughtful execution, we believe a rebrand can further strengthen and unite our community.

- Throughout CYHA's history, the following color schemes have been used:
 - Black, orange, and white
 - Black, silver, and white
 - Black, turquoise, and white
 - Black, green, and white (current)

Continued Progress and Alignment with High School Programs

For years, there have been concerns expressed regarding the disconnect between the high school and the youth hockey programs. Over the past several years, that gap has been meaningfully reduced, and strong coordination now exists between CYHA and the high school hockey programs, including:

- Boys and Girls high school players donated their time during the GOAL program to encourage new skaters.
- Boys and Girls high school players are actively volunteering their time at 6U practices to support young skaters.
- The CFM Sabres hosted a game where all River Hawk players were offered to enter the game for free, and hosted an 8U game between periods for a game.
- The Chi-Hi Boys program hosted a Youth Hockey Appreciation Day, allowing 8U and 6U skaters to attend a game at no cost.
- High school teams recognize CYHA skaters through "Player of the Game" opportunities, including participation in warmups and the National Anthem.
- The Chi-Hi boys' team, led by Head Coach Matt Lukowitz, has cleaned the bleachers at the South Rink this year.
- The CFM Sabres girls' team, led by Mikayla Hogan, has cleaned the bleachers regularly before games.

We believe rebranding is another opportunity to better align with the majority of our member community as our skaters continue to grow and advance into our high school programs.

Closing Statement

In closing, we should always remember that CYHA is, and must remain, an organization that is **#1 for the kids**.

For our hockey association to reach its full potential, CYHA must continue building a strong, cohesive community that supports our athletes and promotes a shared sense of unity. A thoughtful, cost-conscious rebrand is a meaningful step toward moving CYHA in the right

direction, not only for today's players, but for future generations who will skate in this hockey program.

This rebranding opportunity has been carefully and responsibly considered, and as outlined, it will not cause our organization to take on additional debt. While it is unfortunate that our association is currently facing financial challenges, the financial hole we must climb out of will remain a priority throughout this process.

It is disappointing that a letter containing false and misleading statements was allowed to be distributed. We respectfully request that this letter be shared with the greater CYHA community, especially given that the letter submitted by Mr. Bohman was widely distributed. It is important that our community has access to transparent, fact-based information and open discussion about the future of our program so that members can make well-informed decisions. We also believe it is critical that facts are verified before being broadly communicated. We do not want misinformation to create conflict, division, or politics. **Our goal is to build a positive, transparent community, not one marked by dissent, where only a few voices are heard.**

The newer group of members supporting the rebrand project has worked diligently over the past several years to more than double participation in our youngest skater groups and significantly increase registration revenue, both of which strengthen CYHA's financial position and will help make progress on the CYHA debt obligations. This group represents what we explicitly state on our website about our organization: "*We support teamwork and cooperation through mutual respect, sharing of skills, knowledge, and responsibilities.*" We want to provide high-quality opportunities for our kids both on and off the ice.

We look forward to a brighter future and continuing to build a strong hockey community in Chippewa Falls.

Respectfully,

Jonathan P. Ippel
Chippewa Youth Hockey Association Member