

CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION

Date: Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 8:30am
DCU Center, 50 Foster Street, Worcester, MA
2nd Floor conference room
and virtually via Teams

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees

Civic Center Commissioners

Chair Brissette, Dist. 1;; Commissioner Economou, Dist. 1; Commissioner Herideen, Dist. 1,
Commissioner McEvoy, Dist. 2 (remote attendee), Commissioner Ciuffredo, Dist. 2

City Staff

Matthew Urban - Capital Projects Manager, Department of Public Facilities

ASM Global

Sandra Dunn, Jim Moughan, Melissa Day, and Bridget Canavan.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Brissette called the meeting to order.

2. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Comm. Economou made a motion to accept the meeting minutes and Comm. Herideen seconded that motion for the meeting held January 25, 2023. Meeting approved by unanimous vote.

No minutes for the meeting scheduled in February, as the commission was not able to meet quorum.

3. Commissioner Appointments and terms

Matt Urban introduced Lenny Ciuffredo as the new Commissioner appointed by the City manager to replace former Commissioner Alexander as the Labor representative.

5. City of Worcester Project Status Update

Matthew Urban presented a summary of the projects in progress, identifying the two main projects expected to go to bid this Spring and work to start this calendar year and extend into the following calendar year. These two projects are the Convention Center Roof Replacement and the Fire Alarm system replacement of the Arena and Convention Center. An overall review of the Architect and Owner's Project Manager funding and scope was discussed to clarify what the value of those costs include. A quick review of the change order for the infill seating of the Arena Seating was provided that noted the work to be done in the summer to avoid impacting certain event schedules and work with the contractor's schedule.

A general review of the project summary was provided to explain certain line items and the estimated costs provided. This included a line item for miscellaneous repairs, as various items pop up that can range in costs between \$10,000 to potentially \$400,000. Discussed prior bidding results on certain designs last calendar year and the timeline for the bidding and the subsequent work schedule was too tight, thus resulting in high bids or no bids at all. The future bidding schedule will be created to provide more time from bid award to estimated project start to allow for better pricing and competition.

Comm. Ciuffredo asked if all work at DCU is only funded by the District revenues specific to the Convention Center. Mr. Urban indicated that the funds are only from the District revenues and that the current projection is that no additional funding from the City's general fund is likely to be added to the Convention Center capital plan due to current capital demands throughout the City.

S. Dunn also reviewed their list of capital projects (infrastructure/facility and equipment) that the City requested to be provided to use in developing their capital plan. This is not an approved capital plan but just a list of items prioritized based on ASM Global's perspective. S. Dunn also updated the Commission on the history of the master plan design of the facility that includes prior architects and efforts. This led to the most recent architect, Populous. The master plan identified a very large plan that could include a major addition, as well as, major upgrades throughout the facility. With the City capital plan, that has been reviewed and specific projects from that plan are not being prioritized and designed in pieces due to the inability to fund a much larger project.

Based on the discussion and capital plan, the Commission had discussions about how to work with the City Administration to get more funding. M. Urban suggested working with the appointing authority (City Manager) instead of through the City Council or subcommittees of the Council related to economic development or capital planning. The Commission, after discussion, decided to vote to delegate Tony Economou to represent the commission to attend a meeting with M. Urban and the City Manager to discuss the capital issues and funding questions the Commission has. M. Urban offered to receive any comments outside of the meeting from various Commission members. He can then consolidate the items without sharing them with other members, so that the items can be included in the discussion with the City manager. This was voted on and agreed to by the Commission unanimously. M. Urban will insure no item provided will be attributed to a specific Commission member outside of open meeting.

6. AMS Global Update

a. ASM Global Updates

Ms. Dunn noted that the update will be a faster high level review, as they are providing a two month update since the February meeting was not held. .

b. Community Initiatives

Mr. Moughan discussed the reuse of the old banquet chairs and ASM Global's efforts to get these to charitable organizations rather than sending them to a landfill or recycling center. Of the nearly 3000 chairs replaced, less than 100 were sent to a landfill primarily due to the quality of the chairs, not for lack of finding a new home.

c. Past and Upcoming Events Highlights

S. Dunn and J. Moughan reviewed the events held in February and March in both the Arena and Convention Center. M. Day noted the revenues are trending better than previous years in comparison to budgeted vs actual, in relation to food service revenues. Comm. Herideen asked about potential negative coverage of the Bull Riding event. The basis of the discussion was about some activists that come for this event each year protesting the care of the animals. S. Dunn noted that this does occur each year for this event. The organization that

puts on the event take steps to educate the media on how the animals are actually taken care of and that the animals are treated as athletes and given good care compared to animals that are raised for beef. Comm. Heideen noted certain countries have banned events like this and other areas have increased regulations to remove use of spurs and electrical prods. Additionally, Springfield has stopped hosting events like this. S. Dunn was not sure if they stopped having these events due to the concerns raised by the protestors or if it is based on reduced attendance. This event has been a success at DCU and therefore has been a regular event. Comm. Heideen just wanted to make sure the Commission was aware of the issues raised by the protestors and wanted to know if the Commission thought this was an appropriate event for the Civic Center. Comm. Brissette asked S. Dunn to provide a report of the information provided to media outlets to address questions raised by the protestors so the Commission can review the questions and answers provided. The Commission can then decide if further discussion on the topic of bull riding at the Civic Center should continue. S. Dunn said she would provide that information.

Both Ms. Dunn (primarily focused on Arena events) and Mr. Moughan (primarily focused on convention center events) discussed recent events, as well as events later this year, highlighting whether these events were repeat customer.

The key events to schedule seem to line up with up and coming performers. Historically, prior performers have performed at the Civic Center to then outgrow the facility and start to schedule events in stadiums like Gillette. So that fits the Cody Johnson and possible Billy Strings performances on the schedule.

S. Dunn discussed the outdoor skating rink at City Hall (The Oval) and noted that beyond just the increased numbers (~11,300) but how the larger events around the oval drew in approximately 160,000 downtown over the winter season. S. Dunn indicated that the number of sponsors that support the rink has grown and that the costs for admissions could not be kept as low (\$6) without that support. Other outdoor rinks admission prices range from \$14-\$18 for comparison.

d. Marketing and Media Coverage

Ms. Dunn said that ASM Global used their media platforms to call for people to vote in the CMT Awards, which supported Cody Johnson while he was in town. That event, plus others held at DCU on that Friday pulled in ~14,000 people to downtown Worcester, so downtown was very busy with other venues in town like the Palladium also having larger events. WWE brings a lot of attention and media attention.

Comm. Ciuffredo asked about setting time aside at the next meeting to review a survey system ASM Global is using to get feedback from attendees. S. Dunn said she would be able to do that and mentioned they have a new system that they can discuss that the Commission may appreciate.

e. Operations

Ms. Dunn indicated that ASM Global conducted a tour of the facility with the Worcester Accessibility Advisory Commission. They had several recommendations for improvements, of which some can be addressed by ASM Global and others would need to be included in the City capital plan. Part of the discussion included the age of the building compared to a newer facility such as Polar Park. The older building was built to older accessibility

standards, so it was not a surprise the Civic Center has some upgrades that would be appropriate to implement.

City Hall outdoor oval rink had a significant increase in usage this year. One issue that needs to be addressed is the old Zamboni we had for the oval rink died this year. ASM Global was able to use their back up Zamboni for the Arena and drive it over to City Hall, as needed to finish the season but a replacement will need to be figured out for next season. ASM Global is looking to see if the dead Zamboni can be rebuilt. Estimate for that rebuild may be about \$13,000 at this time.

f. Savor-Food and Beverage

Ms. Dunn noted some of the financial updates on the food and beverage sales. In response to a question, Sandy suggested the increase per capita seems to be based on added points of sale locations, changing to a credit only purchasing system, and the grab and go purchasing options to remove the wait in line.

g. Finance

Ms. Day presented financial information through January. Some of the numbers came in low due to one event being cancelled and the Globe Trotters being budgeted for January but, actually occurred in February. Revenues were lower than budgeted but not unrealistically. S. Dunn noted that the current projection of actual versus budgeted revenues is still trending well for the year and is happy to report that the overall difference is trending towards a higher actual revenue for the fiscal year than budgeted.

M. Day mentioned ASM Global was awarded a safety grant to offset the budgeted amount needed to provide proper safety training to their personnel.

J. Moughan noted that ASM Global had been waiting on a response to a few proposals to get a few events scheduled with the military organizations, specific to their return from active duty programs. ASM Global received approval and was awarded these about a week before the event, so their preparations and efforts were rewarded and a new series of events have been booked.

S. Dunn did a brief overview of the annual budget provided to the City, as required each year by February 5th. The City then uses that in preparing their next fiscal year budget accordingly.

h. Sales

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Mr. Moughan reviewed the current and future sales by events.

7. Next Meeting – April 25, 2024 8:30AM.

8. Adjourn – Commissioner Brissette motioned to adjourn, Commissioner Herideen 2nd the motion, unanimously approved.