

**CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 14, 2019**

Attendees:

CCC Members: Chairman John Harrity, Commissioner John Brissette, Commissioner Lowell Alexander, and Commissioner Jim Knowlton Absent: Commissioner Patrick Lowe

City: John Odell, Candee Raphaelson, & Tom Zidelis

SMG: Sandy Dunn, Jim Moughan, and Melissa Bishop

Guest: Mathew Hunt – CliftonLarsenAllen and Sargent Jeffrey Lenti – MA State Police

Minutes Prepared by: Paige Williamson, SMG

1. Call to Order

Chairman Harrity brought the meeting to order at 8:04 am.

2. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes – January 24th, 2019

Commissioner Brissette motioned to accept the minutes from January 24th meeting ; seconded by Commissioner Alexander. (4 yeas, 0 nays) *Motion passed.*

3. Rent Waiver Request –

Sargent Jeffrey Lenti attended the March Commission meeting in support of the rent waiver request for the use of the Arena facility for the Massachusetts State Police Graduation rehearsal and ceremony on June 26 & 27, 2019. Commissioner Harrity reminded Sargent Lenti about the prior year's event and the issues that were encountered in the downtown business area surrounding the DCU Center. Sargent Lenti stated that he was aware of the concerns from the previous event and the organization is going to do everything they can in order for the same issues not to be repeated in 2019. Sargent Lenti noted that the Governor's schedule has not been finalized yet, so that piece is still being determined. However, with the event being in June this year rather than January, the snow issues should not be a concern.

Chairman Harrity moved to approve the rent free request for the Massachusetts State Police Graduation Rehearsal & Ceremony on June 26-27th, 2019; seconded by Commissioner Brissette. (4 yeas, 0 nays) *Motion passed.*

4. Audit Report – Mathew Hunt – CliftonLarsenAllen

Mr. Hunt provided an overall summary of the FY 6/30/18 audit and reported a smooth transition had taken place over the year with the departure of Julia Iorio and the promotion of Melissa Bishop to Finance Director. The audit reported an overall good year for the DCU Center. Tom Zidelis further commented that there were no surprises in the audit and all is expected to continue towards a positive year on multiple fronts due to the efficient management SMG has provided. (Audit attached for reference) Chairman Harrity extended his congratulations to Sandy Dunn and her SMG team on behalf of the Commission.

Chairman Harrity inquired as to what contributed to the increased numbers in the Food Beverage area. Sandy Dunn replied that the benchmark had been reset and the increase is not expected for next year. There had been an increase in events including the Pirates and Rainers revenues. The repeat business events have also been spending more. Al Fera, the Director of Savor Food and Beverage has increased per caps tremendously with his efforts in providing more variety and points of purchase stations.

5. Major Ongoing Projects – John Odell

a. Capital Projects

i. Vault Improvement – Status Update

The EDM proposal review outlined four options with an expense estimate of \$34 thousand dollars; 1) repair the existing vault, 2) move the switchgear, transformers, etc. to the existing Arena vault, 3) build a new, aboveground vault or 4) no action. National Grid lines are more involved with options #2 & #3 and are therefore, expected to cost more. Mr. Odell stated that repair work can still be done and not effect the facility functions as a generator can be installed to power the convention center while the upgrades are being made. The proposal review time frame is 3-4 months to complete. Construction would be approximately 8-10 weeks for option 1-3.

Chairman Harrity inquired about where the funding is coming from and the status of hiring for the OPM position. Tom Zidelis responded that a \$25 million dollar bond is authorized through the Special District Improvement Fund incurred by the City of Worcester (this is the second bond). In total, the improvements are at \$60 million (hotel/motel tax). There is no anticipated tax levy implications for the vault or the second phase of facility improvements.

Mr. Odell added that the job description for the OPM (Owner's Project Manager) to oversee the projects is now ready. A minimum of five (5) years experience is required. The Special District Fund will be charged for these expenses, which has already been approved the City Council.

Commissioner Brissette motioned to move forward with investigating the options for the vault; seconded by Commissioner Knowlton (4 nays, 0 nays) *Motion passed*.

Sandy Dunn commented on the amount of monies bonded thus far, \$60 million, \$35 million followed by another \$25 million noting that caution will be required in determining what is funded as there is not limitless funds available. The last vault upgrade, for example, had significant cost overruns. Commissioner Brissette affirmed Ms. Dunn's statement with regard to cautiousness.

Mr. Odell stated that the final Tighe/Bond (the previous on-call engineering firm) invoice has not been received yet, but has been approved. Commissioner Brissette inquired as to why we need to take all the money out of the bond, and could a different funding option be considered. Mr. Zidelis noted that all capital funding for the DCU Center comes from the same source. Mr. Odell will keep the Commission informed as to the hiring of candidates. Once 50% of the design has been completed, the decision as to which option is best can be made.

The design work that LLB Architects was approved to complete at the last Commission meeting is expected to be completed in 4-6 weeks. This included the dasher glass system, the hockey dasher board retrofit, replacement of the ice deck seal, repainting of the exhibit hall and gallery and the parapet netting system.

ii. Master Plan – Phase 2 – Status Update

The basketball hoops and plates have been received and will be fully installed prior to the Harlem Globetrotters event. Commissioner Brissette inquired if the MIAA Basketball has any interest in returning. Sandy Dunn commented that the attendances no longer justified them being in this location.

SMG has reached out to Presidio with regard to the phone system upgrade this week. The upgraded WiFi system is very successful and was needed prior to a new phone system upgrade.

Chairman Harrity inquired about the status of the exterior landscaping. Ms. Dunn stated that this is still in discussion with the City Manager but that a plan is expected to be completed for this coming summer.

5. SMG Reporting - Sandy Dunn

a. Monthly Highlights / Financial Statements (Dec'18 – Jan'19) – *Attached*

Chairman Harrity offered congratulations to SMG on the success of the Worcester Common Oval this season along with the impressive two week February 2019 run of events which brought 50 thousand people through the facility over 22 events. A time lapse video was also taken during this extremely busy time period. Sandy Dunn also introduced Melissa Bishop as the new Finance Director with 20 years of experience at the DCU Center replacing Julia Iorio.

Chairman Harrity inquired about the use of Solar Panels and if it was ever discussed as a possibility for this facility. John Odell replied that it had been discussed previously but due to the fact that National Grid has a downtown network, it makes this problematic. Sandy Dunn credited John Odell for the solar net-metering project that was completed as the facility receives significant financial credits.

As part of MA Arts Week, the DCU Center is participating in a "Paint the Ice" event. Details will be included in the April report.

b. Sales Report – Jim Moughan

Events and proposals that were highlighted this month include Church of Latter Day Saints (their prophet event, high security), Shine 2019, Armenian Olympic Annual Event (Labor Day Weekend 2020), and the Opioid Symposium (St. Vincent Hospital). There are also a few more graduations looking to book in and have proposals out for review.

5. Adjournment

Commissioner Brissette motioned to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Alexander;
(4 yeas, 0 nays) *Motion passed.*

Meeting Adjourned at 9:07a.m.

Next Standard Meeting (unless one is needed prior):

*Thursday, April 25th, 2019 at 7:30am (Breakfast), 8:00am Meeting – DCU Center
Conference Room*