

**CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 26, 2015**

Attendees:

CCC Members: Chair Commissioner John Budd, Commissioner Lowell Alexander, Commissioner John Harrity & Commissioner John Brissette *Absent:* Commissioner Jim Knowlton

City: John Odell & Candee Raphaelson

SMG: Sandy Dunn, Julia Iorio, & James Moughan

Minutes Prepared by: Paige Williamson, SMG

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Budd brought the meeting to order at 12:18pm.

2. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes – January 22, 2015

Commissioner Harrity motioned to accept the minutes of the January 22, 2015 meeting; seconded by Commissioner Alexander. (4 yeas, 0 nays). *Motion passed.*

**3. Rent Credit Request – Central Mass Business Expo and
Mass Interscholastic Athletic Association Central Mass Basketball Finals**

Business Expo- Commissioner Harrity inquired if there were still concerns regarding cash flow, as there had been in the past, with the Chamber and whether this event is well attended. After disclosing to the Commission that she is a Board member for the Chamber, Sandy Dunn replied that payments are more timely than in the past. Last year the Expo combined with Build Northeast, which brought more to the Expo itself, but hurt foot traffic by being in September. This year, the layout will change completely. The event is scheduled for the third level of the Convention Center only and will be more a conference with multiple educational sessions rather than the exhibit hall trade show style. This is similar to the Chamber's successful Women's Conference coming up this Spring. The application is one (1) calendar day but is applied as two (2) days for space - being the Grand Ballroom and Jr. Ballroom. There is no additional impact for use of the Meeting Rooms.

Commissioner Harrity motioned to grant the rent free day spaces to the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce for their annual Business Expo event and requested that the Chamber recognize the City of Worcester as a sponsor of the event on all appropriate materials and provide appropriate benefits accordingly; seconded by Commissioner Alexander. (4 yeas, 0 nays).
Motion passed.

MIAA- Chairman Budd inquired as to why this application was received so late. Sandy Dunn responded that there had been a change of positions in the administrative offices at the MIAA and that could have led to the oversight. It was realized at a recent event planning meeting. This rent free is for one (1) day in the Arena. This event brings teams from throughout Massachusetts to Worcester, showcasing our City. Commissioner Harrity inquired about the hockey event as well. Sandy responded that MIAA Central Mass Hockey has not requested to use the facility the past couple of years.

Commissioner Brissette motioned to grant the rent free day in the Arena to the MIAA for the Central Mass Basketball Championships; seconded by Commissioner Harrity. (4 yeas, 0 nays) *Motion passed.*

4. Major Projects –

a. Capital Projects – Lighting & Revolving Door – John Odell

- 1) Lighting Project - The bid has been delayed due to the DCAM certification process for the vendor. It is now expected to be bid the first week of March. It remains a high priority.
- 2) Revolving Door – The price tag to replace the door is higher than to repair the unit. Estimated repair is \$40,000. The door currently works but would not collapse in the case of an emergency exiting requirement per code. Mr. Odell is looking at the option of pursuing a waiver from the Code Department to include the item in next fiscal year’s budget. Commissioner Harrity suggested that possibly signage could be placed on the glass as a potential sponsor to help alleviate the cost. Sandy Dunn made note of the suggestion.
- 3) Retail Space “Corner Melt” – Bids are scheduled to be returned by March 18th, and construction to begin on April 18. A Pre-Bid meeting on site is scheduled next week by the City Architectural Services. An SMG/DCU Center technician will also be in attendance. Commissioner Harrity requested that an email be sent to the Commissioners regarding the participant status at the pre-bid.
- 4) Future Projects – Mr. Odell informed the Commission that there appears to be some revenues available from the current District Financing fund that could be programmed for this next fiscal year. The estimated amount has not yet been determined but additional information should be available by the next meeting. As the projects come on line in the next model of financing (hotels), additional monies would become available.

4. SMG Reporting

a. Monthly Highlights/Financial Statements – Sandy Dunn & Julia Iorio (As Outlined in Attached Report – December Financials)

Sandy Dunn highlighted that the DCU Center has been very fortunate through this extremely hard winter to not having to postpone or cancel any major events. Chris Brown did very well with 9,000 in attendance. After announcing a date postponement, the original date occurred as planned – a school vacation week date - which likely helped attendance. She reviewed several of the items reported in the monthly highlights.

Julia Iorio reported that income was slightly down, as well as, the Sharks attendance; however their “per caps” are still strong. There is continued savings in the area of indirect expenses, but we anticipate an increase in the gas / electric numbers for January and are closely monitoring this. John Odell stated that as of January 15th, the state mandated an increase in electricity costs to incentivize renewables. The DCU Center’s increase was at 8%, in line with other facility’s its size across the State.

Commissioner Harrity inquired whether there have been any issues at all with accessing the facility due to the incredible snow amounts. Sandy Dunn reported that there have been no issues and the facility snow crew has been fantastic. Snow on the roof was removed (melted) to accommodate the additional weight for the rigging of the Chris Brown concert.

The Worcester Common Oval has finished another successful season closing this past Sunday following the February winter school break.

b. Sales Report – Jim Moughan

Monsters of Hip Hop is a return event, with participants from about seventeen different states allowing hotel numbers to be in the area of 350-400 rooms. *The Gathering (Pastor from the former Dream Center)* has booked 16-17 dates thus far until they are able to relocate to a more permanent space. *Herbal Life* is returning in October and produces a significant amount of hotel room nights. *Fire Chief Board Meeting* is

being held at the facility prior to their much larger event later in the year. *The Hot Tub Expo* was booked last minute due to the late cancellation of the annual Flower & Patio Show.

5. Additional Items

a. FYE 2016 / 1 Year Plus 5 Capital

Sandy Dunn distributed the *FYE 2016 / 1 Year Plus 5 Capital* to the Commissioners for their review. Questions can be addressed at the March meeting if necessary.

b. Junior Sharks Ice Rental – 2015/16 Season

With confirmation that the Worcester Sharks will no longer be a tenant at the DCU Center for next season (2015-16), Sandy Dunn presented to the Commission a request of the Junior Sharks Youth Skating Program. Highlights of the discussion included the following:

Running the DCU Center ice plant for the season, including making and removing the ice several times as needed, costs approximately \$116,000.00. Without a hockey team, the DCU Center would not have the ice plant running and would only do so for the specific events (Disney on Ice and NCAA Hockey for 2016).

The Junior Sharks Youth Program has indicated that they would need to significantly downsize their program if DCU Center ice is not available for their practices. They have stated that they will be willing to accept a small increase in per hour costs and will rent a maximum number of dates/times available. This is estimated at approximately \$60,000 in ice rental time (currently they book approximately \$40k).

The WBDC is in the development stage of an ice facility and the Jr. Sharks program has been actively involved in this process. If the program is downsized, this would jeopardize their ability to continue with the project. The WBDC has represented that they will assist with a \$20k sponsorship to keep the Jr. Sharks in the facility for next year as they proceed with the development.

Sandy Dunn requested, “based on total revenue of \$80,000 (\$60k + \$20), does the Commission want SMG to continue with making ice this next year, which will cost the facility \$36k+, to keep the Jr. Sharks program at the current level for at least another year? SMG will certainly pursue other potential ice activities in this case to try and minimize the cost.”

Commissioner Brissette provided additional background to the overall youth hockey program and the yearly struggles to find local ice for practices - he has children in the organization. Commissioner Brissette stressed the importance of the timing of the DCU Center’s decision to operate the ice plant for next year, allowing youth rentals to continue. If the ice plant does not operate, the Jr Sharks Organization would be forced to reduce their participants by a substantial amount of children, which would only hurt any future hockey programs down the line and jeopardize their involvement with the WBDC project.

Commissioner Harrity motioned to support the continued ice rentals of the Jr Sharks at the DCU Center facility (continuing to run the ice plant with the additional expense) for the 2015-16 season; seconded by Commissioner Alexander. (3 yeas, 0 nays, 1 abstain – J.Brissette) *Motion passed.*

6. Next Meeting

a. 2015 Meeting Schedule – Thursday, March 26, 2015 / 12pm

DCU Center Conference Room

Chairman Budd moved to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Commissioner Harrity. (4 yeas, 0 nays) *Motion passed.*

**If parking becomes available on the interior of the building on a meeting day, an email will be sent notifying Commission members the morning of the meeting.*

Meeting Adjourned – 1:12 pm