

# MINUTES

## FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

5:00 P. M., JANUARY 21, 2020

### A/V CONFERENCE ROOM

Jennifer Pharr, Chairperson, called the meeting of the Charleston City Council Committee on Facilities to order at 5:00p.m., JANUARY 21, 2020, in the Audio/Visual Room in City Hall.

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Jennifer Pharr, Chair  
Ben Adams  
Adam Knauff  
Shannon Snodgrass

The Chairperson called the meeting to order.

#### 1. Approval of Previous Minutes –

Councilmember Knauff moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on 10-21-2019. Councilmember Snodgrass seconded. There was no objection and the minutes were approved.

#### 2. PRESENTATION FROM THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE –

Councilmember Pharr introduced Susan Pierce and Jennifer Brennan. Pierce stated that since the Municipal Auditorium is listed in the Historic National Register, there are a variety of programs that may be available, such as the Survey and Planning Grant and the Development Grant. The City would be eligible for a 70/30 matching grant.

Brennan stated that the City could receive up to a 45% tax credit on eligible projects, so they could receive \$45,000 in tax credits for every \$100,000 spent. Eligible projects include: repairs to roof or foundation, painting, plumbing, electrical etc. There have been some instances in which cities have entered into a partnership in which the partner receives the tax credits. Tax credits and grants can be combined. All projects must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Registration and SHOP National Register Guidelines. Each project is assigned a monitor to work closely with the property owners. Grants are typically given for projects involving roofs, foundations, electrical updates, plaster repair, et. Pierce also informed the Committee of a grant program specifically for cultural facilities for HVAC updates, seating, etc.

Councilmember Snodgrass asked, given the magnitude of the scope of work that it is needed for the Municipal Auditorium, what options does the City have since it is on the National Historic Registry. Pierce replied that the options of repairing, selling, donating, etc. were all available to the City. The only restriction would be if CDBG funds were used for a project, which would require a review. Any demolition of a building on the Historic Registry would require a review from the Historic Landmark Commission.

Councilmember Pharr asked what elements of the Municipal Auditorium are historic and need to be preserved. Pierce answered that mostly the front façade and the lobby railings would be considered historic. Backstage areas and seat configuration for ADA compliance would be allowed.

Councilmember Pharr asked what some of the larger matching grants were that have been awarded. Pierce and Brennan answered that the top is typically \$80,000 which would depend greatly on the scope of the project. If a project can be broken up into smaller sections to be done over a period of time, then that will most likely be their recommendation. They noted that federal grants can not be used to match each other.

Pierce recommended an addition to the rear of the building to increase space for the performers. Pharr confirmed that additional bathrooms with ADA compliance were also possible. Mayor Goodwin added that when Harry Connick Jr. played at the Municipal Auditorium, he noted that the acoustics and sound were the best, but the backstage/shower area was not desirable. Brennan also mentioned that their office is available for site visits with property owners who are considering applying.

Snodgrass asked if there had ever been a cost survey on the repairs needed for the Municipal Auditorium. Acting Director of the Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center, Jim Smith, answered that they had developed a Master Facility Plan with priorities. The Roof repair estimate was around \$800,000. Councilmember Knauff asked if they had a wish list beyond the list of priorities given to the Committee. Smith answered that it would basically be everything in the Master Facility Plan.

### 3. DISCUSSION: MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM –

City Manager, Jonathan Storage, added that the operation of the Municipal Auditorium is run through the General Fund. According to City Code, a portion of every tax sale goes into a special Capital Improvement Fund for both the Coliseum and Convention Center and the Municipal Auditorium. Currently, that fund is around \$162,000. The Administration proposed that the top priority should be the replacement of the fire alarm system. The current system is not in compliance with current City code, so added fire staff/equipment are needed during events to ensure proper fire safety. The estimated cost of \$144,750 would fit within the available funds. The other proposed priorities of sidewalks, building management system, roof system, interior walls, will likely be long-term projects depending on the determined purpose of the building. Councilmember Snodgrass asked what is the current overall operational cost of the building versus the

revenue. Smith offered to create a document for the Committee that will show accurate numbers.

Storage added that the Municipal Auditorium will be an ongoing discussion for the Committee. He encouraged the Committee to consider the recommendation that the fire system upgrades be immediately done. While the purchase would ultimately go to the Finance Committee, it would do so with the approval of the Facilities Committee and the Coliseum and Convention Center Board. Councilmember Knauff confirmed that the Fire Department supports the upgrades.

Councilmember Snodgrass asked how the Board viewed the Auditorium. The President of the Board, Carrie Fenwick, said that their attitude is similar to those expressed in the meeting. Personally, she thought that if the Municipal Auditorium was closed, there should be a partnership with the Clay Center. She did agree that the fire system was an immediate need to be addressed. Councilmember Jenkins confirmed with Smith that at least a year would be needed if the Auditorium was to be closed. He added that the City is put into a liability situation without the fire system upgrades.

Councilmember Pharr proposed to take continue the Municipal Auditorium at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Councilmember Snodgrass motioned to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Minardi seconded.

Meeting adjourned.

October 21, 2019