CHARLESTON COLISEUM & CONVENTION CENTER /
MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM BOARD

Meeting Minutes: December 10, 2019

Chairperson Carrie Fenwick called the Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center / Municipal Auditorium Board to order at 4:00 P.M. on Tuesday, December 10, 2019 in the Jordon Board Room. Those members in attendance included Alisa Bailey, Kim Burton, John Cavacini, Carrie Fenwick, Bernie Layne, Belle Manjong, Ronnie Murad, Eric Nelson, Chad Robinson, City Manager Jonathan Storage, Tessa White, Interim General Manager Jim Smith, Business Manager Betty Tinney, and Sales and Marketing Manager Anna Campbell. Other members of the staff that were present included Administrative Assistant Anna Westfall and Facilities Superintendent Dan Brown.

Ms. Fenwick reported that the minutes of the Board meeting held on October 29, 2019 were distributed prior to the meeting. Ms. Bailey moved that the minutes be approved as distributed. Ms. Burton seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Mr. Nelson gave a financial report. He stated that Municipal Auditorium financial statement for June 2019 showed an income of $800 compared to $8,490 in June 2018. This is due to Chicago performing in June 2018. Expenses for June 2019 were $22,000 lower than last year. YTD expenses are $4,300 lower than last year to date.

Mr. Nelson stated that the Municipal Auditorium revenues for July through October 2019 are steady with a YTD income of $10,500, $3,500 higher than the previous YTD. Income for both 2019 and 2018 is made up of deposits for upcoming events. Expenses for July through October 2019 are also consistent with the same time last year. YTD expenses are $9,600 lower than the previous YTD.

He reported that the operating revenues for the CCCC for June 2019 totaled $471,000 compared to $463,000 in June 2018. Commissions and Advertising were the line items with the most significant increases. The increase in Commissions is from the $150,000 signing bonus from Ticketmaster. YTD operating revenues are $3,100,000, which is $900,000 higher than the previous YTD. Rent, Commissions, Distinctive Gourmet, Advertising and AV Equipment all have large increases, which are the result of having all renovated spaces available for events for most of the year and not being limited by construction constraints.

Operating expenses for June are $879,000 compared to $855,000 last year. YTD operating expenses are $438,000 higher than the previous YTD.

Mr. Nelson went on to report that the operating revenues for July and August indicated increases while September and October reflect decreases. The difference on a monthly basis in Advertising is just a reflection of the timing difference in the receipt of payments. YTD operating revenues are $123,000 lower than the last year to date.

The CCCC did not require an operational subsidy in July or August 2019. In September and October 2019, we required a subsidy of $107,000 and $67,000 respectively. In 2018, we required $75,000 in July, $25,000 in August, $206,000 in September but none was required for October. In November of 2019 we required $144,000 compared to $161,000 last November. Year to date operational subsidy at the end of November is $318,000 compared to $467,000 last year to date. Mr. Nelson moved that the financial statements be approved and filed. Ms. Burton seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Ms. Fenwick gave an update on the Food Service Contract. She stated that we are almost ready to finalize and that it has been a very smooth process. Ms. Fenwick said that Centerplate & Mr. Tinney have been very good to work with. Kevin Baker, the attorney for the City of Charleston, has reviewed the documents and we are now waiting for the Bond Counsel to approve. The contract should be completed by next week and will go into effect on January 1, 2020.

Ms. Fenwick brought up the topic of the Municipal Auditorium and reminded the board that a lot of work needs to be done. She stated that there is a very substantial list of problems and they are all very costly. Mr. Storage said that he spoke to City Council member Jennifer Pharr about the current state of the building and Ms. Pharr is going to talk to the Facility Council at their next meeting to discuss a plan of attack.

Ms. Fenwick told the board that she has been researching how other venues book events in order to come up with a plan to get more entertainment events in our Coliseum. She said that Mr. Smith is doing a good job reaching out to promoters and trying to get new things, but it is hard for us to get these bigger acts. Ms. Fenwick spoke to a rep from Rupp Arena and they use a venue management firm called OVG Facilities and have seen a 100% increase in bookings. She stated that the game of booking clients is changing so we need to explore new ways to bring events to Charleston. OVG is just an example, but this type of firm could help direct the tour traffic to us. Ms. Fenwick stated that she thinks this is something the board needs to explore because we cannot bring in bigger shows by ourselves.

Ms. Bailey stated that this would be great because if there was a third party focusing on bringing entertainment to the Coliseum that would free up sales staff and the CVB to focus more energy on convention and meeting business.

Mr. Murad moved to go forward with an RFI from marketing / booking firms to bring bigger entertainment events to the Coliseum. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Ms. Fenwick stated that she had recently met with Barry Kadel (present at the meeting) with the WV Hospitality and Travel Association to discuss possible membership. The WVHTA is one of the primary organizations that represent West Virginia’s tourism industry. They would be an important voice for us and would give us representation to state government regarding hospitality. The fee for joining is an annual fee and is based on sales. Ms. Bailey added that almost all hotels, CVBs and entertainment facilities in our state are members of the WVHTA. Ms. Bailey moved that the CCCC join the WVHTA. Mr. Cavacini seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Ms. Fenwick gave the board an update on the search for a new Executive Director. She stated that the proposal to use Searchwide Global was presented to the Finance Committee and they have approved it and the first installment has been paid. A representative from Searchwide Global is available to come to Charleston on January 6 or 13, 2020. Ms. Fenwick stated that she would work with the Personnel Committee and CCCC staff to prepare for that visit and get a job description ready. Depending on the information we receive from our Marketing Firm RFI, the job description could be different than we had originally planned. As of now, there is not a firm timeline for Searchwide Global’s process.

Mr. Smith gave an update on the elevator repair RFP. He stated that staff worked hard putting together an RFP to repair the piston issue in the Quarrier Street parking garage elevator. Responses are due this Thursday. Once we receive the bids, the chosen bid will have to be approved by the City Finance Committee and then by City Council on December 16. This repair will be paid out of Capital Improvement Funds. Mr. Minardi moved that once bids are opened the board have a conference call to vote to approve or deny the funding for the repair. Mr. Storage seconded the motion. Motion approved. Mr. Storage explained that City Council will approve the ability for us to accept the bid, but it is up the board to authorize expenditures from the CIF funds.

Mr. Smith gave a report on the Distributed Antenna System (DAS) contract that had been presented to him from American Tower. He said that the DAS would improve cell phone service inside the facility, which is very important to our customers. He stated that American Tower would invest in the equipment and then sell it to carriers. There would be no cost to the CCCC and we would share in the revenue. American Tower is in all major stadiums and arenas.

Mr. Smith gave a Point of Sale System update. He stated that our soft opening for the system will be this Friday and our first event would be the Gaither Concert. Patrons will now be able to pay with a card or smartphone at all concession stands and food stands. We anticipate a smooth transition but if there are any problems, our contract allows us two on-site visits to fix any issues that may arise.

Mr. Smith also gave a construction update. The screen wall under the ballroom is here and ready to be installed. We received a quote of $72,000 to install, so we decided that our staff would do this work in-house and the job should be completed soon. We are also doing the repairs to the AV Room in-house and are on schedule to complete this project by January 1. He also reported that we are currently reviewing the Summary Commissioning Report that was done by Newcomb & Boyd on the expansion and renovation project. Once we have completed the suggested repairs we will be eligible for LEED Silver Certification.

Ms. Campbell presented an updated sponsorship spreadsheet to the board. She reported that High Mark Blue Cross Blue Shield had recently renewed their sponsorship and signed a five-year contract for $55,000 annually.

Mr. Robinson suggested that the Promotion & Development Committee meet to discuss our sponsorship structure and to create a rate structure that is set in stone and to discuss other areas in the building where sponsorships could be available. Mr. Cavacini suggested that the committee also revisit the process that we use to secure these sponsorships to see if there is a way to increase profits. Ms. Fenwick asked Ms. Campbell to research what other similar facilities are charging to create a plan of action to present to the Promotion & Development Committee.

Ms. Campbell informed the Board that the CCCC staff will have a float in the Charleston Parade and that a Harlem Globetrotter would be here to ride on our float and promote their upcoming event.

Mr. Smith distributed an activity report for the month of November 2019 and went over some of the notable events we have recently had in the building.

Meeting adjourned.