

**CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION**

Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 9:00am  
DCU Center, 50 Foster Street, Worcester, MA  
2nd Floor conference room  
and virtually via Webex

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendees**

**Civic Center Commissioners**

*Chair Brissette, Dist. 1; Commissioner Alexander, Dist. 5; Commissioner Economou, Dist. 1; Commissioner Herideen, Dist. 1; Commissioner McEvoy, Dist 2.*

**City Staff**

Julie A. Lynch, Chief of Public Facilities

**ASM Global (SMG):**

Jim Moughan, and Melissa Bishop

**1. Call to Order**

Commissioner Economou called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

**2. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Economou requested a motion to accept the minutes of the February 23, 2023 meeting. The motion was made, and seconded. The motion passed.

**3. Community Fee Day Request – United States of Africa Consultancy, Inc.**

Commissioner Economou introduced the request for a Community Fee Day and solicited questions. Ms. Dunn noted provided a summary of the history, process and considerations regarding past and this current request for new commissioners. Commissioners have guidelines, and can approve what they want. This group is applying for four days in the building, which equates to 7 spaces or days; the Junior Ballroom for the 1<sup>st</sup> day and the Grand Ballroom Meeting Rooms and the Junior Ballroom for three subsequent days.

The Commission has the ability to approve 10 days in the Convention Center without approval of the City Manager, and can approve 6 community fee days in the Arena. The Fiscal Year resets the number of available days to be granted by the Commission. Zero (0) days have been granted to date. The Commission approve a partial request and Ms. Dunn explained that spaces have different values that can be considered with a request e.g. the Ballroom is valued at \$4,500/day and the Jr. Ballroom at \$1,500/day.

If the Commission were approving part of the request, the Commission may choose to provide the requestor with a higher value of days. For example, if they choose to use meeting rooms in addition to a large room there would be no impact to the number of days deducted. Versus someone just requesting a meeting room for less value. Ms. Dunn noted that these requests are called, "Community Fee Days", and that there are other costs in addition to the waived rent

including room set up, housekeeping, and security. In the past the Commission has noted that it may not make sense to waive the rent if the requestor is doing a food event, given that ASM Global provides a 15% rebate on the food service. For example, if the request is for the Jr. Ballroom and they do \$100,000 worth of food, they receive a \$15,000 rebate, much higher than the \$1,500 Community Day Fee waiver.

The current requestor, Ms. Dunn and Mr. Moughan noted, is not clear on their request including food service. The event is scheduled for August. The first day is specifically scheduling dinner.

Ms. McEvon asked if there was a way to net out what the donation would be as the request "crystalizes", or does it have to be wholesale? Ms. Dunn answered, "A day is a day".

In another example, sometimes the commission has chosen some organizations to receive a day in order to assist in their start up, as was the case with the Indian Festival. The first year they gave them one day, the second year 50% and told them they would not provide funding for a third year, that they were only trying to assist with getting them off the ground, and did not want to provide permanent assistance.

In other instances, Ms. Dunn noted, the commission has approved the kids fest year after year with no issue.

Ms. Dunn noted two side notes in the management agreement. 1) If the Commission does exhaust all of the available days, with the City Manager's approval the Commission could approve more. It makes an adjusting entry for ASM Global. At the end of the day it is the City's building. 2) If you give a community fee day, and at the end of the day the client doesn't pay ASM Global then the City is responsible for that. ASM Global provides due diligence when bringing in a client to insure they will pay their bills and require payments up front with a deposit schedule. Only one client has been an issue by not paying their deposits and the event went forward due to being an international event. This would require payment for the entire event.

Ms. McEvon asked how the four days in the proposal turn into seven community fee days. Ms. Dunn explained that the way the management agreement reads, the Ballroom is a day and the Jr. Ballroom is a day. The first day is one, the second day they are using the Grand Ballroom, Jr. Ballroom and all the other meeting rooms, so it becomes two on that day, or up to three. Third day same thing, we are up to five, and fourth day we are up to seven.

Ms. Lynch asked if this event is approved now, but the event falls next fiscal year, would the approval fall to this year or next fiscal year? Ms. Dunn answered that it would fall to the fiscal year when the event occurred.

Ms. Lynch asked historically, how many days has the City used? Ms. Dunn answered that it has changed. When the building opened, it was 10+, Ms. Dunn provided some examples from the Commission's guidelines regarding political conventions. If groups were out selling the building, and found an event that was going to create significant room nights for the city they would have the ability to obtain a community fee day. They did not want to be working with a client and then have to come to the commission. Mr. Economou asked if there was anything coming up for the democratic or republican conventions. Mr. Moughan answered not until 2024.

Mr. Economou asked if we were doing State Police events. Ms. Dunn answered that this would be in the arena. He noted the request seemed excessive. Mr. Moughan noted that originally it

was estimated at 500 people per day. That overnight stays are anticipated to be high due to international guests from the African continent for this sales conference.

Ms. Dunn noted that the client's event is not funded yet, that funding would need to be raised. Ms. Dunn clarified that if the event doesn't happen, the days would not be returned to the City.

Ms. McEvoy asked for additional information in order to estimate costs. What would the cost for a dinner for 500 be? Mr. Moughan answered it would be \$45 to \$50/person. Estimating 350 x \$45, not including tax and gratuity, with a \$2,400 credit on \$15,000, which would cover the Jr. Ballroom. Ms. Dunn noted that you cannot fit 350 people in the Jr. Ballroom. Ms. McEvoy noted she understood, but could offer as part of the contingent the Jr. Ballroom as part of the approved day. Ms. Dunn noted they could not do an event in the Ballroom and have that catering applied to the Jr. Ballroom. The catering credit only applies to the room where the room is held. The rental for the Grand Ballroom was reiterated at \$4,500/day. Ms. Dunn noted that day to day costs are transacted, not cumulative over multiple days. 8/16 Jr. Ballroom event dinner credit could not be applied to the rent on subsequent days.

Mr. Economou asked if additional information was pending. Mr. Moughan answered yes. Mr. Economou asked how this effects the deposit schedule. Mr. Moughan noted that if approved and went to contract, AMS Global would ask for a major deposit with or without the Commission's approval.

Mr. Economou noted that additional information was required. Ms. Dunn noted that the requestor is petitioning the commission to know if he should move forward. Mr. Economou suggest a partial approval could be made, but that he didn't have enough information to do so now. Ms. McEvoy suggested supporting the requestor, but need additional information, can they do so in the next month so the Commission does not lose days? Ms. Dunn suggested a discussion with them to support a few days, and that they could come back and ask for additional. They could submit on the higher price day. Ms. McEvoy agreed. If there are community needs, they would have to use this space, since the arena is closed for improvements. Ms. Herideen noted this was a great resource, and support of the local community makes this an important new event. She noted we should extend an opportunity and find a way forward. Ms. McEvoy liked the idea of offering 4 days even, and they need to tighten their request and schedule, in order to not waste time and space, we could look to accommodate any additional request.

Mr. Economou agreed with Ms. Dunn's offer, and that they could come back and ask for additional days, understanding the days may be lost and the arena is not available. Two ballroom days would be offered with all adjacent meeting room space. Additional information would be pending. Mr. Alexander agreed to the importance of this event and noted they may have their own security.

Ms. Lynch asked the cost for support services. Ms. Dunn noted it hinged on occupancy, security, etc. Security is never part of the rental. Setup and cleaning would be part of the additional cost. Ms. Lynch asked for this number of rooms is it \$100 or \$5000 on average. Mr. Moughan answered for an event of this type it could be a few thousand dollars to put everything. Change order may affect cost. Ms. Lynch agreed with Ms. Herideen's point to encourage this event. Ms. McEvoy suggested they offer two days and be open to an additional request.

Ms. Dunn noted that an understanding of catering credits was needed in order to understand the best path forward. Ms. Lynch offered that the City could hold, collect additional information,

and redo the request for Community Day forms. Ms. Dunn did not want budget or individual event data. Ms. Lynch agreed, and will share the Ballpark request for an event day.

Mr. Moughan noted that if someone comes forward during the next month and puts a challenge on those dates, it could be an issue if not approved now.

Mr. Economou suggested approving the two ballroom days with the caveat that if they bring us more information that we could possibly move forward at our meeting next time. Ms. McEvoy noted it would give them something to work with, that if the budget were cut the first thing to be cut would be the number of days and meals and scale. Ms. Dunn noted the two dates do not have to be selected, but that they could select.

Mr. Economou led a rollcall vote. The motion passed. Mr. Moughan clarified that the Commission was granting two ballroom days.

#### **4. Project Status Updates – City of Worcester**

Ms. Lynch summarized the status of capital projects and repairs at the DCU facility.

- a. Ms. Lynch requested a vote for the disposition of banquet chairs, which are being donated to 501C3 organizations. ASM Global has finalized the list of recipients. Ms. Dunn noted that the Commission need to declare that the chairs are not salvageable in order to vote to dispose of them. Mr. Economou motioned that the arena and ballroom chairs were trashed and could be disposed of to 501C3s. The motion passed.
- b. Arena Seating – Contract with Hussey Seating is complete. The demolition/installation bid closed and Stutman was the low bidder, a city vendor. Ms. Dunn noted they partnered with Hussey.
- c. Convention Center Electrical Vault Upgrade – Fire Alarm inspection and punch list items to be completed. Certificate of Occupancy is pending.
- d. Telephone/Camera System – Cameras and phone infrastructure complete. Presidio is prepared to perform the installation of new switches with coordination from ASM Global.
- e. Controls Upgrade for HVAC – Pending install of new network switches.
- f. Ballroom Chairs – P.O. was just approved. There is a 14 week lead time. July delivery date.
- g. Phase II Master Plan: The City is contracted with Populous Architects for the masterplan. Arcadis is the Owner’s Project Manager. Jim Swords the Architect is scheduled to provide an update at the April meeting.
- h. Domestic Hot Water Heater is a deferred maintenance item and is in design with NV5.
- i. DAS – Distributed Antenna System – Mobilitie is the successful proposer and is currently in negotiations with the Law Dept. to complete their contract.
- j. Arena Freight Elevator – The City is working with VDA consultants to identify the required improvements. They will be evaluating all elevators and the escalators.

#### **4. AMS Global Reporting**

##### **a. Monthly Event/Arena Highlights**

- I. Ms. Dunn reviewed the Arena highlights, beginning with conference highlights including sustainability.
- II. The contract extension with Railers was completed and ASM Global has partnered well with the Railers. She noted the CM met with ASM Global and the Railers prior to this renegotiation. The Railers had a 5 +5 contract. The new contract is a 5 year with an option for an additional 5 years. The first 5 years included the start up year.
- III. Corner retail update: Glazy Susan vacated their space. 12 potential tenants walked through, and have narrowed down to 2.
- IV. Worcester Common Oval was successful with 25% increase in rental skates, attracting new people who don't usually skate. BCBS was a naming rights sponsor and supported free skate. DCU, Holy Cross and the City all sponsor the rink.
- V. New seat announcement was successful with old arena seats to be donated.
- VI. Arena events were successful with sold out events. Monster Jam also had good attendance with 28,000 people. Pit party was a highlight.

##### **b. Convention Center Highlights**

Mr. Moughan noted Convention Center highlights including the Fire Chief's Association, which has become a great annual event. 500 attendees/day for a 3 day event. Biomedical conferences are picking up. The RV Show had good attendance. Ms. Dunn provided upcoming events include the Pirates opening. 7 games are anticipated this summer. Hotwheels Monster Trucks in October is family oriented and different from Monster Trucks, geared to smaller children. Mr. Moughan noted additional upcoming events, including a sold out dance competition, and Boston got Sole.

##### **c. Marketing Update**

Ms. Dunn noted the biggest announcement was for Monster Trucks.

##### **d. Community Initiatives**

Ms. Dunn noted community events and coordination and participation by ASM Global staff with City initiatives.

##### **e. Operations Update**

ASM Global's Operations did circles in white with pink ice, and pivoted with 88 dump trucks of dirt for Monster Trucks. Arena and Convention Center stage Monster Trucks and both are impacted. New phones are installed with Windstream. Switched from Spectrum to Windstream was a 6 month process. Demolition of wires is pending. Design was done 5 years ago and delayed due to covid. All involved were gone at construction start. New staff were introduced, with many positions opened for a significant amount of time.

##### **f. Food and Beverage**

Last month announced Sous Chef onboard. Grab and Go continues to expand. Low impact on staffing. It has not generally worked for the Railers and will be redesigned.

##### **g. Finance Update**

Ms. Bishop noted that ASM Global's January activity, 7 months into the fiscal year, resulted in a net income \$351,000. Due to 26 more event days than anticipated. AGI \$333,000 ahead of budget. Ms. Dunn will provide comparisons on revenues and expenses. The impacts of the arena closing will impact next years budget, but it is during the slow period. Lost two concerts and a wrestling event.

#### **h. Sales Update**

Mr. Moughan noted a number of upcoming proposals and contracts including a 3 day conference during Labor Day weekend. A flurry of agencies is anticipated, as well as N&T Bank and the Shine Initiative Youth Summit in April. Three Cannabis Conferences are coming up as well. The Exhibition Hall construction is impacting events on the first and second floor. Ms. Lynch noted the demolition portion of the events is the worst of the work. DPF noted ASM Global in last month's meeting that eight weeks would be available for this work. Mr. Moughan noted that the last week in June through last week in August should be available. Ms. Lynch suggested ASM Global and DPF could meet and discuss dates.

#### **6. Adjourn**

Mr. Economou thanked all for their input and noted the success of the ice rink. Ms. Dunn questioned who should follow up with the requestor for the Community Fee Day. Ms. Lynch suggested that ASM Global should follow up for additional information. A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Economou and was seconded.

**Next meeting: Scheduled on May 25, 2023 at 9am**