



City Commission Fact Finding Subcommittee Minutes

1/25/2024 - Minutes

Call to Order

Commissioner Cleary called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM on January 25, 2024. Members present included Commissioner Cleary, Commissioner Connelly, and Gordy Smith. Also present were Jason Tomanek and Leanne Schmidt with the City of Bismarck and Attorney Amy Oster with Crowley Fleck.

1. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Connelly motioned to approve the minutes as presented and Gordy Smith seconded. Upon a roll call vote, all voted aye. M/C.

2. Status Report and Update

Commissioner Cleary provided an update regarding IT improvements relating to the alcohol vendor which would facilitate a secure means for electronic payment.

Gordy Smith shared that he has met with unsuccessful vendors of the alcohol contract and reviewed the concessions operations and process with Anthony Volk, food and beverage manager. Mr. Smith mentioned that the alcohol vendor has begun utilizing cash registers but still relies on the cup count to reconcile alcohol sales.

Commissioner Connelly suggested a third party management and operations company could be a possible solution. The committee discussed this as a consideration for further discussion.

Mr. Smith noted that he reviewed the alcohol RFP scoring and questioned how some of the scores were determined by the selection committee. He noted similar vendor answers to the same question were scored differently by multiple committee members leading to the appearance of subjective reviews and scores. Mr. Smith closed by saying that the unsuccessful bid vendors he spoke with seemed convinced that the process was predetermined in favor of the current vendor.

Commissioner Cleary stated that she has been reviewing contracts for similar events to compare and contrast consistencies and differences. She noted the desire to establish a policy that addresses maximum and minimum fees to help with consistency between events and for the customer. Commissioner Cleary also noted that the policy should address which Event Center staff have the ability to approve changes to contracts or fees once they have been established.

Commissioner Cleary suggested one recommendation to the Commission could relate to

Event Center activities where a loss of money is anticipated, these contracts could be considered by the Commission to allow for justification of the loss of revenue. She closed by noting there are times where an event may be good for the community, but it could cause a loss to the Event Center.

3. Continued Discussion on Determination of Performance Issues and Recommendations for Event Center Operations

Mr. Smith noted that there is a need to establish policies and procedures relating to safety and emergency response. Mr. Smith suggested the Event Center managers should be responsible for training all staff relating to safety and emergency protocols. HR Director, Leanne Schmidt, explained that training practices are the responsibility of each Department Director, which include planning and developing policies, training, and safety protocols. The consensus of the group is to prioritize safety training for all Event Center staff.

Mr. Smith commented that his interviews with staff have highlighted a division between the office staff and operations staff, which he noted is a problem and will likely cause performance issues. Mr. Smith remarked that in his experience, Event Center employees have very different opinions of Director Charlie Jeske's ability to lead and manage.

The group will meet at 10:30 AM on Thursday, February 8, 2024, in the Mayor's Conference Room.

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:18 AM.

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