

**ENTERTAINMENT AND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

January 27, 2015

A regular Board meeting was held on Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. in the Senator Sam Solon Board Room. In attendance were David Ross, Mary Finnegan-Ongaro, Gregory Fox, Carrie Heffernan, Deb Messer, Crystal Pelkey, and Karen Pionk. Staff members Dan Russell, Caty Kaups, and Chelly Townsend were present.

Ross called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m.

Ross asked for a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Business Meeting, December 16, 2014. Messer made the motion to approve, and Pionk seconded the motion. December's Minutes were approved unanimously.

Communications

Russell presented the Board with a piece on the City of Duluth Tourism Taxes and mentioned that the bonds used to build AMSOIL Arena are on schedule to be paid off early.

Old Business

Russell met with members of the Curling Club board of trustees, and mentioned that they realize the serious need for replacing the ice floor. The Curling Club board asked Russell if the DECC would be a partner in helping to fund the project. The DECC could offer a loan from the operating reserve and be paid back through increased rent revenue. The bid season to have the ice floor replaced has passed and there are events booked in North Pioneer, so it would be too late to pursue replacement this year. Russell plans to draft a letter stating that the Curling Club lease would not be renewed until the ice floor is replaced; the current lease ends April 1, 2016. There is currently not a clause in their lease that states the notification period for non-renewal.

Heffernan arrived at 4:20 p.m. Finnegan-Ongaro arrived at 4:22 p.m.

Townsend reported that the Northwest Passage project, as a part of the Multimodal Transit Center project, is on schedule and budget at this time. Glass was recently chosen and approved for the south windows of the skywalk to allow for solar energy to power the lights in the passage. There's a slim chance that the "pod" where DECC cleaning and maintenance materials will be replaced, but plans are made to add a kiosk at the north end where spectators gather to watch the construction take place. The overpass will be closed for renovation June 22nd through September 16th, with a busy summer here, and all cables in the vicinity for phone and internet have already been moved or replaced to avoid malfunctions during construction.

New Business

Russell has been working with the VP of Ticketmaster closely on a contract renewal. The contract will be renewed for a minimum of 5 years, to begin on July 1, 2015 and run through June 30, 2020. Several new access points and additional ticket scanning equipment has also been negotiated for the building.

Ross asked for a motion by the Board to approve the new Ticketmaster contract. Pionk made a motion, and Messer seconded the motion. The contract renewal with Ticketmaster was approved unanimously.

Staff Reports

Russell gave his Event Recap and stated that Celtic Thunder is selling well for their March performance, and John Prine ticket sales are already above 1,600 and it is expected to sell out. Little Big Town was recently announced for a March 26th performance in AMSOIL Arena and their ticket sales are already over 2,000. Russell is looking to book one or two big acts for the summer at Bayfront Festival Park, and pending shows include a Last Comic Standing tour in September and the Counting Crows for a mid-September date. An offer has been made to the tour.

Kaups gave the Finance Report, and noted that the December numbers are still preliminary with the auditors here at the beginning of the month. We had one convention here, along with Enbridge which was not budgeted for, and the Ice Fishing Show was well done, which helped offset the fact that we only had one Men's Hockey series for the month and no Women's Hockey. We also hosted four weddings, the DSSO, the MN Ballet's Nutcracker, and the Spirit of Duluth Hockey Tournament which had good parking and ice rental numbers. Building Services was over budget from rent from Enbridge and the Ice Fishing Show, and we were over budget for exhibits and electricity rental. Catering was over budget due to Enbridge, but liquor sales and concessions were under budget with only one hockey series. Parking was over budget due to the Ice Fishing Show, the hockey tournament, and also in part by Bentleyville. On the expense side, property maintenance was over budget due to old bills coming through for the ice sheet painting and ice plant repairs in September. Catering was over budget, and parking was over as well because the November snow plow bill wasn't received until late December.

Ross asked for a motion to approve the Operating Fund Check Registers. Fox made a motion, and Finnegan-Ongaro seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Sue Ellen Moore was not present, so Townsend gave the Sales and Marketing Report in her absence. Conventions booked this month include a late booking for the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless in September of this year with 500 guests, the MN Association of Alternative Planning for February 2016 with 650 guests and exhibits, and Kwik Trip, Inc. for two days in November 2016 with 800 guests.

Townsend gave her Operations & Upcoming Events Report and commented that February is very busy this year. The month starts off with the Northland Figure Skating Competition and the Gun and Knife show here the same weekend. The following week will be busy with the MN Operators of Music and Amusements (MOMA) Pool and Darts tournaments, with this year being the first time both tournaments are played in conjunction. We also have the MN Power Employee Credit Union Dinner, the International Ship Masters' Association (who were the first event when we opened the Harborside Convention Center in 2001), UMD Men's hockey vs Northern Michigan, a JAMAR hosted game night reception, and the Denfeld Sweetheart dance all here that week. MN Power is back for meetings on the 9th and 10th, and the MN Association of Alternative Programs arrives right after. The weekend of Valentine's Day holds a new Maurices Winter Party on Friday afternoon, UMD Men's hockey vs St. Cloud, the Northland Foundation Child Care Meeting, Christ Lutheran Church's Husband & Wife Dinner/Dance, and a Harbor City Roller Dames double-header. Another new event is here with the Minnesota Wildlife Society, and then we have the annual Shamrock Sports Show, as well as UMD Women's hockey ending their regular season with Ohio State, a large wedding reception, and four games of high school hockey in one day with the 7A and 7AA Semi Final playoff games. The month keeps going with MN Power returning once again for their annual Design and Energy Conference & Expo with 700 guests, and the DECC Board Meeting will be in the Symphony Hall Mezzanine as MN Power will occupy both Cityside and Harborside Convention Centers. The 7A and 7AA Final games will be played in AMSOIL Arena that week. The final weekend of February is jam packed with the Lake Superior FIRST

Robotics Regional Competitions, a DSSO Young People's Concert and a Masterworks concert, and both UMD Women's playoffs if they earn home ice advantage and the UMD Men vs Nebraska Omaha.

Russell made the Attractions Report and reported that the Blue Bridge contract has been renewed for 2015 with a 2% increase over last year, and the Bayfront Festival Park operations contract has been completed.

The next regular meeting is on February 24, 2015 at 4 p.m. in the Symphony Hall Mezzanine.

Ross adjourned the meeting at 5:26 p.m.

Submitted by:

David Ross, President

Mary Finnegan-Ongaro, Secretary