

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 24th, 2013
Chairman Jaclyn Hotard
Vice-Chairman Art Smith

Members: Lucien Gauff, III, Jaclyn Hotard, Art Smith, Ranney Wilson, Lennix Madere, Marvin Perrilloux, Michael Wright, Larry Snyder, Cheryl Millet

PRESENT: Lennix Madere, Art Smith, Marvin Perrilloux, Lucien Gauff, Ranney Wilson, Jaclyn Hotard, Michael Wright, Larry Snyder

ABSENT: Cheryl Millet

BID OPENING REPORT/AWARDS:

Jaclyn Hotard - (Carry Over 8-27-13) Authorization to solicit proposals for facility management of the St. John Civic Center

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I actually see that we have some representatives here from the Tourist Commission. I would like to see if you have any updated information."

Jo Banner, Communications Manager Tourist Commission, stated, "I actually do have some updated information I will go ahead and pass around."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "Do you plan on going over the information that you just passed out? I was going to say in the interest of time since we just received it you may want to give the council the opportunity to review the information if you want to do that."

Jo Banner stated, "I can just explain what we have compiled for you guys and if you have any questions you can always call or email me. What you received in front of you is a rate comparison that we have from several different centers and it outlines the charges our rates compared to their rates and what you also see is the different fees that they have included for that price structure and in comparing the centers they all have a different pricing structure so some centers charge for some things and other centers don't. So it is kind of hard to put it all together but what I did was looked at what the St. John Center offers and kind of limited it to what they offered as well but if you want more information about that I certainly could give it to you but I just kept it somewhat brief based on what we offer at the St. John Center."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Thank you I also did forward some information I know Kenner actually just renegotiated their contract with the Pontchartrain Center."

Jo Banner stated, "I have that included in the packet but looking at the rates if you notice although the St. John Civic Center may have

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higher room rates that includes a lot of amenities. The other centers that you see will charge for different things like staffing, amps that are used even for water. So if you look at those and you kind of add that together the St. John Center seems to be in line with the pricing of the other centers and that is before the non-profit discount."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "Is there a possibility just in your comparisons I know at one time when we actually utilized the Pontchartrain Center depending on how long you book the event for or how many hours they actually negotiated some of the other items. Is there any way that you guys in the course of your fact finding that you can find out how they go about doing that because they do offer that with some of the other items with renting of different things that need to go in the rooms."

Jo Banner stated, "I think that is specific per every contract that they receive but I do know from examining other centers is that they usually charge like for example if you have an event they charge for a move in day and a move out day and it is usually 50 or could be up to 75% of the initial rate and that is something that if you want that rate it should be done the same day as the event. So if you do it a day before there is going to be a charge. It isn't just a block for 24 hours that you could spread throughout if it is not done on that date then you will get a charge."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Okay I don't have any questions at this time because obviously I did just receive the information I don't know if the council has any questions but I would definitely like an opportunity to look at it and if I have any additional information I can give you a call and I have made some contact with those folks as well just to get some additional information to add to this."

Councilman Snyder asked, "Where did we come up with the \$6,000.00? Did it just come off of someone's head or what? I don't think you had anything to do with it Mrs. Banner but it just seems like it came off of the top of someone's head at \$6,000.00. We started off with \$6,000.00 before we even put a chair in there and that scares a lot of our people off especially our high schools and people that want to do weddings in there. I would like to know what is the significance of that particular number and the thing I also mentioned last week is that we have an opportunity to do some things with that Civic Center if we are really sincere about making it more applicable for people in our area we have an opportunity coming up and we need to take advantage of it. I am speaking to this council now and in that with \$6,000.00 if I want to have a graduation in there it is going to cost me another \$3,000.00 just for chairs and tables too but if we take this opportunity and we stack that thing with our own tables and chairs and things of that nature we might have the finances to do that sometime in the near future and then maybe we can come down on some of those prices

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and then maybe our people might have a better chance of using that facility because I still hate to see our high schools, we have four of them in the parish, go somewhere else to have their graduation. I think we have an opportunity here to help out. Now where did the \$6,000.00 come from?"

Jo Banner stated, "That is something that we do not know I cannot answer that for you but I do know just for all of the rates \$6,000.00 is for the entire facility. It is broken up into different rooms as well so you have a room that for example the smaller room is \$3,400.00 so it is for the entire facility not just for one room and I think most of the graduations could probably fit in one of those rooms but those are the rates that we were given and I cannot answer that."

Councilman Snyder stated, "I can understand that. I just have this vision you know when I go to Pontchartrain Center they have bleachers on the side where I sit all the time and they have chairs in the middle. You could put bleachers in that place and they can fold up and not be far from the wall and when you open it they may hold 2,000 people you know things like that we need to look at that we are really sincere about getting that price down a little bit so that our people can use it. It is sitting over there. We voted it in and we can't use it."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We think that is a great opportunity ahead of us and just to reiterate the response from the question last week the \$6,000.00 wasn't the original fee the rooms were priced based on actual rooms and each room the atrium was a set fee, room A was a set fee and room B was a set fee. Initially when the center opened the total of all three of those rooms was in excess of \$8,000.00 so when the \$6,000.00 was created by then President Hubbard it was actually a reduction for the entire facility because previously when the center first opened each room had a value and that value was based on similar size rooms at other facilities. So when the center opened the work that Jo is doing now was done before the pricing structure was put into place and it was just basically to cover the cost of the use of the center and not to make any money but again because it was excessive the rate was reduced to \$6,000.00 and this council has reduced it now by 20% as well. I would love to sit with you we do have historical data on rentals as well as rentals that were paid for by this parish that some of our local schools actually did access the Pontchartrain Center and some of the facilities in New Orleans and what those rates are. We would prefer to have them stay here and be safer in St. John Parish but I can show you some cancelled checks on what is typically paid by our school systems when they either elect to or not for whatever reason use the facilities in New Orleans and what those cost is and what they are paying for some of those facilities and what you will find is our rates are already cheaper than that. So we have to look at some other reasons as to why they are not using our facility in addition to the non-profit

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rate making sure that everything that is available is there. We do think by utilizing the center and renting it we can purchase the kind of things that you are talking about as we have started to do. I guess since 2010 the center no longer runs a deficit so we are putting things back into the center. There were more chairs and tables then they are now but they have come up missing so those are things that we have to put in place and to not allow them to walk but have them available for whoever is utilizing the facility so we are not having to rent them every time there is an event. So we will be glad to work with you but I also would like to share some of the information that we have on the historical costs and perspectives around this center as well as some of the other sites that are being used by our locals outside of the parish."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Ms. Banner I didn't see the rates on here for a movie production are they in the packet?"

Jo Banner stated, "No this was strictly for events. I think we provided the movie rates but I can also send you a copy."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I think the day rate is a little less for a movie rental and a weekly rate is a little bit less but maybe just to add them parallel to the individual rates then you could get a better picture."

Councilman Madere stated, "Just taking a look at some of the rate comparisons and I see there are three different places and the rates are cheaper than ours and I am going to need some more time to look over it but I think there is room for us to even come down some more on those rates if we want to be compatible with some of the ones that I am looking at. So I think it would be in our best interest to come down a little more but I think there is some room for improvement with our rates which would encourage the people to use it instead of going to the other three that I am looking at right now."

Councilman Wilson stated, "I would also like us to consider that the people of St. John Parish are paying for this building. So I think they should have a better rate than anybody because they are paying for it with their tax dollars."

Jo Banner stated, "If you look at the chart and the different rates what you will see is that although the room rate is higher it includes all of the amenities so we are not charging for staffing, amps or parking and when you put all of those prices in we are actually very much in line if not cheaper than some of the other centers. So just take that into account when you are looking at that and I have it outlined as well so that you will see when you start adding everything up we are pretty much in line with everybody that is out there most of them actually require you to use their caterer and they are getting

some money off of that some even charge by person they might charge \$1.00 or \$2.00. If it is a ticketed event they might take 10% of the proceeds from that so they all have a different pricing structure that is included above the room rates that they are paying right now."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I just wanted to add to that about the food, I know we keep saying that but when we talk about it you can't just put everything into that one box because when you do have an event at the Pontchartrain Center and you do start to purchase food they actually negotiate the room rate it goes down and depending on what other amenities you are adding your room rate could be nothing so we can't just say they make you buy the food, yes they do but then at that point a lot of the other things go down. So I don't want to just make it seem like we are comparing apples to apples when we are not we would almost have to have at least five different scenarios of a booking and get a sample rate."

Jo Banner stated, "During the previous meeting I mentioned that exact same statement because every center has a different pricing structure and I could give you a million different scenarios and different rates based on that so what we did was tried to make something that was based on the rates that we have. Now I can't tell you what every individual has for their contract because the Pontchartrain Center or whoever would not release that specific information."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I guess that was the purpose of this fact finding is to find out what are the options out there? What are other centers doing? What is working? What isn't working and try to put together the best practices. We don't want to just say okay if you rent the Pontchartrain Center for \$39 or 1,600.00 then you pay that rate and are forced to buy all the food because really that isn't the case. You can see some reductions and some other items based on the total value of your booking. I am glad that we are having the conversation because it is opening up the dialogue to really see what is working in other places and what isn't working here."

Councilman Gauff stated, "I think as you can tell everyone is just looking to get the parish more utilization of the facility. I also think though the parish president made a comment about the schools and maybe some invoices that we haven't seen yet it depends on what the schools actually want. I think sometimes the kids want to go to New Orleans or they want to take a road trip they want to get out of the parish sometimes. So we have to look at all of that and we have to consider all those things when we say we want to make sure that they utilize our facility. Yes that is our goal to make sure we give them the best opportunity but sometimes they want to go on that road trip to New Orleans or they want to go somewhere else to say they went to a different facility. It is just like a hotel if they say they went to the hotel in LaPlace there is a great Hampton Hotel in LaPlace but they

A handwritten signature or set of initials, possibly 'JH', located in the bottom right corner of the page.

would rather go to the Hampton in New Orleans. So I think we as council people we have the opportunity to make sure that we give them the best opportunity and give them a competitive price but then again if they don't want to use it because it sounds like they have spent quite a bit more sometimes then our facility is warranted because they wanted to go elsewhere. So we do have to look at all those things and I think right now we are hatching back and forth and having good communication which is great but I think the choice is the schools and sometimes they just decide that they don't want to use our facility so I think we are on the right path with this."

Councilman Wright stated, "I agree with you 100% Mr. Gauff and also to add to that some of the centers out there have more to offer just like our civic center is more of a warehouse. I think like Mr. Snyder said we are missing bleachers and a lot of them utilize it because of that. Ms. Banner just a quick question a lot of these rates are they based on I know Pontchartrain does more seasonal rates, but a lot of these are they year around or based on the season as of now?"

Jo Banner stated, "This is year round and some of the centers actually go to their parish council and they have those rates set for them in fact only one of the facilities that I have checked is privately managed so the council comes up those prices and as a tourist commission we are happy to implement whatever you guys suggest. If you should have any questions please feel free to email me or call me."

Lennix Madere/Marvin Perrilloux - (Carry Over 8-27-13) Authorization to enter into a one year contract with Eliza Eugene Enterprises to include the same terms and conditions of the most recently executed contract

Councilmen Madere and Perrilloux ask that this item be removed from the agenda.

Randy Vincent - Authorization to enter into an amended agreement with Eliza Eugene Enterprises, LLC for a period of one year to provide small business and career solutions

Randy Vincent, CAO, stated, "Administration requests authorization to amend the scope of this contract to focus on Small Business Outreach Services through New Business Welcome/Outreach, Microenterprise Development, Business Retention and Expansion, and Technical Assistant Training Referrals. This contract is for one year and an amount not to exceed \$75,000."

MOTION: Councilman Gauff moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to enter into an amended agreement with Eliza Eugene Enterprises, LLC for a period of one year to provide small business and career solutions. The motion passed with Councilwoman Millet absent and Councilman Snyder abstaining.

Kia Price - Authorization to extend the contract with Providence Technical Services, Inc. through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program

Kia Price, Director of Purchasing, stated, "This and the next four contract extensions are needed to complete the final stages of the Minor Housing Repair Program."

MOTION: Councilman Madere moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to extend the contract with Providence Technical Services, Inc. through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program. The motion passed with Councilwoman Millet absent.

Kia Price - Authorization to extend the contract with Affordable Residential Modifications, LLC through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program

Kia Price stated, "All of the remaining ones are the same."

MOTION: Councilman Wright moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to extend the contract with Affordable Residential Modifications, LLC through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program. The motion passed with Councilwoman Millet absent.

Kia Price - Authorization to extend the contract with Chatmon Construction, LLC through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program

MOTION: Councilman Gauff moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to extend the contract with Chatmon Construction, LLC through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program. The motion passed with Councilwoman Millet absent.

Kia Price - Authorization to extend the contract with Family Homes by Tommy and Sheila, Inc. through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program

MOTION: Councilman Madere moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to extend the contract with Family Homes by Tommy and Sheila, Inc. through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program. The motion passed with Councilwoman Millet absent.

Kia Price - Authorization to extend the contract with E&L Construction and Real Estate, LLC through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program

MOTION: Councilman Gauff moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to extend the contract with E&L Construction and Real Estate, LLC through May 31, 2014 for the continuation of the Minor Housing Repair Program. The motion passed with Councilwoman Millet absent.

Stacey Cador - Authorization to advertise for proposals for the Parish's life insurance coverage

Stacey Cador, Director of Human Resources, stated, "Administration requests authorization to advertise for proposals for group life insurance coverage. The current plan expires on 12-31-13."

MOTION: Councilman Wright moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to advertise for proposals for the Parish's life insurance coverage. The motion passed with 7 yeas, 1 absent (Millet) and 1 abstaining (Hotard).

Stacey Cador - Authorization to advertise for proposals for the Parish's health insurance coverage

Stacey Cador stated, "Administration requests authorization to advertise for proposals for group health insurance coverage. The current plan expires on 12-31-13."

MOTION: Councilman Snyder moved and Councilman Gauff seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to advertise for proposals for the Parish's health insurance coverage. The motion passed with 7 yeas, 1 absent (Millet) and 1 abstaining (Hotard).

Stacey Cador - Authorization to advertise for proposals for the Parish's dental insurance coverage

Stacey Cador stated, "Administration requests authorization to advertise for proposals for group dental insurance coverage. The current plan expires on 12-31-2013."

MOTION: Councilman Snyder moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to advertise for proposals for the Parish's dental insurance coverage. The motion passed with 7 yeas, 1 absent (Millet) and 1 abstaining (Hotard).

Adjournment

MOTION: Councilman Madere moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed with Councilwoman Millet absent.