

Minutes: Meeting of the Metropolitan Government Board of Fair Commissioners

Date: October 13, 2020 8:00 a.m. (Electronic Meeting)

On the above referenced date, the October meeting for the Board of Fair Commissioners was held electronically. Those in attendance were Chairman Erin McAnally, Vice-Chairman Jason Bergeron, Commissioner Caleb Hemmer and Commissioner Sheri Weiner. Also present were Fairgrounds Executive Director Laura Womack, Finance and Administrative Manager Satrice Allen, and Corporate Sales Manager Scott Wallace. Metro Attorney's Alex Dickerson was also in attendance. Ron Gobbell and Tim Debus with Gobbell Hays Partners (GHP) were present, as well as, Ed Henley with Pillars Development. Mary Cavarra with the Nashville Soccer Club and the Ownership Group was in attendance. Bob Sargent with Track Enterprises and Randy Dyce with DD Events were present as well. Councilman Colby Sledge and Bill Phillips with the Mayor's Office were also at the meeting.

Chairman McAnally took attendance and then announced that the public could call in with their comments to the live call-in line and announced the live call-in line phone number. Chairman McAnally then made a motion stating, "*The proposed agenda constitutes essential business and meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and well-being of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.*" Commissioner Weiner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was passed. Chairman McAnally called the meeting to order and then read the legal notice. She then moved to the approval of the August meeting minutes. Commissioner Hemmer made a motion to approve and Commissioner Weiner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were passed. At this point, Metro Attorney Alex Dickerson explained that the new Executive Order from the Governor stated that as of October 1<sup>st</sup>, anyone speaking must identify themselves for the record. Chairman McAnally then moved to Public Comment Time.

There were no public comments. Chairman McAnally then moved to the Financial Report.

Ms. Allen did a brief report and finished by stating that the books for the last fiscal year still had not closed. She added that she would provide an update to the Board once those had been finalized. There were no comments or questions from the Board so Chairman McAnally then moved to the Executive Director's Report.

Director Womack reported that a few outdoor events had been scheduled and had taken place and thanked staff for all of their hard work. She stated that they had been processing refunds for the Flea Market vendors (that did not want to roll over their booth deposits until reopening) and wanted to announce publicly to any vendor(s) that needed to request a refund, please contact the Flea Market Office. She stated that they were also polling the vendors to see about interest for an outdoor only market, which would also be limited to 500 people, and she stated that she would share those results once received. She reported that the Tennessee State Fair and Exposition Commission had met the day before and they decided to move the Tennessee State Fair to Wilson County. She stated that they would need to make plans at some point to move forward to host a divisional fair and just wanted the Board to be aware that this was going on. She added that she hoped to present a recommendation/plan to the Board at the November meeting. She reported also that they were having discussions with the Office of Emergency Management and Social Services about the status and future plans of the shelter.

Director Womack also wanted to address the proposed referendum concerning cost reduction opportunities throughout Metro. She explained that, in light of the proposed referendum, they had been asked couple of times from Metro Finance and the Administration to project what their budget would look like with such a reduction and, with the Fairgrounds being "very lean" already, she stated that some difficult decisions could be around the corner-not only operational but also capital impact as well-and that such a reduction would deeply impact the Fairgrounds. She stated that with no revenue coming in from events and with having to rely on a Metro subsidy this year, a further reduction would be difficult. She added that things like additional work to the expo, the stadium project, speedway project, etc. could be affected as well. She also went over some things that they were already doing to cut costs such as using full time staff instead of contracted or temporary staff for events. Councilman Sledge then gave a brief overview of the current status overall across Metro due to the Pandemic and stated that there was language in the proposed referendum that could drastically affect the Fairgrounds, as well as many other Metro departments. He explained that projects such as Phase 2 of Fair Park would not even be on the table anymore, especially with so many Metro departments depending on subsidies this year. He added that much of this, though, was still up in the air. Chairman McAnally then moved to the Fairgrounds Improvement Project item under Old Business.

Mr. Henley went over the financial numbers and gave a brief update on each project. Mr. Gobbell gave a quick update on the Infrastructure Project and stated that they hoped to start construction in early 2021 and complete the project about the same time as the stadium. He also briefly went over the components of the Infrastructure Project to remind the Board. Chairman McAnally then moved to the MLS Stadium Update item on the agenda.

Ms. Cavarra gave an update about the team. She also gave an update about their current community projects and added that they continued to have regular communication with the neighbors closest to the stadium construction. She reported that the stadium project was going well. There were a couple of questions and comments from the Board. Chairman McAnally then moved to the Bylaws item on the agenda.

Director Womack stated that she had received several suggestions from the Board and thanked Mr. Dickerson for helping her with the draft that was enclosed in the Board packets. Since there were many questions and comments from the Board about some possible changes, it was decided that the Board would defer this issue until the next meeting and Mr. Dickerson could get with members individually about their concerns and bring another draft before the Board at the next meeting. Commissioner Weiner then stated, *"I move to defer."* Vice-Chairman Bergeron seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was passed. Chairman McAnally then moved to the 2020 Racing Season Update item on the agenda.

Mr. Sargent gave a quick recap of the season and events and stated that all went well considering all of the challenges they faced with the Pandemic. Mr. Dyce added that the sound reports had been sent to Director Womack and that she would forward those to the Board. He stated also that all went well and that they were looking forward to 2021.

Director Womack then stated that there was a draft amendment in the Board packets with some changes to the Speedway contract. She explained that the contract was done before the Pandemic hit so there were some changes that needed to be made concerning certain things due to COVID and that the Board had taken a vote at the last meeting to renegotiate some of those terms/issues. There were no questions or comments from the Board and Commissioner Hemmer made a motion to approve. Commissioner Weiner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was passed. Chairman McAnally then moved to the 2021 Racing Season item on the agenda.

Director Womack stated that it was time to look at the racing season for 2021 and beyond and that she was recommending to the Board today to contract with Track Enterprises for 2021 and perhaps beyond. She then gave the floor to Bob Sargent.

Mr. Sargent gave a little background about scheduling needs and factors that were needed at this point for a 2021 season and therefore requested a longer term for their contract into 2021. There were some questions about the type of racing that would be scheduled. Commissioner Hemmer asked if they needed to do an RFP process and Director Womack stated that it was not required. She added that with the ongoing discussions with SMI there would need to be very specific language in any contract going forward to address any improvements to the track so there would be some flexibility. Mr. Sargent added that he was in constant communication with SMI and NASCAR both and that they were aware of what Mr. Sargent wanted to do moving forward. Director Womack then suggested that if the Board agreed to move forward then they could elect a member to work with Mr. Sargent on negotiations for a draft to present at the next meeting for approval. Vice-Chairman Bergeron stated that he would be glad to work on this project. Commissioner Weiner then stated, *"I move that Commissioner Bergeron be appointed to work through the contract to bring the contract back to the Board."* Commissioner Hemmer seconded the motion. Commissioner Bergeron stated that he was interested in a multi-year contract to add long term stability to the speedway and wanted to know if other members of the Board were interested in that as well. Chairman McAnally stated that she was interested but still wanted to be open to continuing communications with SMI (as well as any other entities) and requested that the contract state those flexibilities. All were in favor and the motion was approved. Chairman McAnally then moved to the Event Update item on the agenda.

Director Womack stated that they had been working closely with the Office of Emergency Management and the Metro Health Department to plan some outdoor events and that Metro Health had put together a temp plate for events to complete. She added that as promoters developed their protocols for COVID, Metro Health would then approve or disapprove each event. She then gave the floor to Mr. Wallace to go over the events planned for the next few weeks. Mr. Wallace gave a brief review of some of the upcoming events already booked and other events that staff was working on trying to get scheduled. He added that they were getting inquiries for 2021 and that some of the promoters that usually booked in the early months of the year had requested to book a little later in the year to make sure their event could take place. Director Womack reported that they should know in a couple of weeks the plans concerning the shelter for the next few months and reminded everyone that once the shelter did move out, staff would need about 4 to 6 weeks to properly sanitize and make any repairs to the buildings before events could start happening again inside the buildings.

Commissioner Hemmer made a motion to adjourn. Vice-Chairman Bergeron seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was dismissed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Erin McAnally, Chairman

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Laura Womack, Executive Director