



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

TRANSIENT GUEST TAX COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: July 7, 2020

Time: 10:30am

Location: Holliday Building 1st Floor Conference Room; 620 SE Madison

Committee members present: Councilmembers Spencer Duncan (Chair), Christina Valdivia-Alcalá, Michael Padilla

City staff present: Brent Trout (City Manager), Jessica Lamendola (Budget & Finance), Alyssa Warner (Budget & Finance)

1) Call to Order

Chairman Duncan called the meeting to order at 10:30am.

2) Approve minutes from February 24, 2020 meeting

Committee member Padilla made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee member Valdivia-Alcala seconded. Minutes approved 3:0.

3) Agency Updates and Committee Questions/Answers

a. Jayhawk Theatre

Jeff Carson with Jayhawk Theatre provided an update for the theatre.

- Revenue from rentals, merchandise, concessions and ticket sales was roughly \$40,000 in 2019. Anticipating closer to \$10,000 in 2020.
- Applied for a State KCAIC grant to purchase video equipment which will allow for presentations of live concerts, comedians, plays, etc to perform to virtual audiences to help make up for not being able to have in-person gatherings. Mr. Carson stated that with this equipment, there would potentially be six to eight of these virtual events held by the end of the year.
- Mr. Carson provided the committee with safety guidelines and protocols that are in place or will soon be in place for all volunteers, staff and performers to account for the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Mr. Carson shared a Patron Statement document which will continue to evolve. [This letter can be found on the Jayhawk Theatre's website].
- Mr. Carson is hopeful that once the pandemic has passed, guests will be able to continue growing the

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala commended Mr. Carson for the creativity shown with the creation of the virtual events, and will be interested to see what the numbers show in the months to come.

Committee member Padilla also commended the Theatre for taking the best opportunity to push forward with staying active in the community during this pandemic time, rather than just staying still.

Chairman Duncan inquired where the TGT funds for 2020 have been used. Mr. Carson stated TGT dollars have been spent on architectural fees to continue working toward completing the timeline of work that was laid out by the architect firm. There is a \$24,000 installment due at the end of 2020 and that payment received by TGT will be put toward that. Mr. Carson has not been informed what the amount of funding will be, however realizes that with the current situation, it will be substantially less, and is continually working toward creative ways to fundraise in order to make up for the shortfall.

b. Downtown Evergy Plaza

Kurt Young, Lodging Association, presented on behalf of Vince Frye. The Evergy Plaza is mostly up and running. John Knight has been working closely with the Shawnee County Emergency Manager to ensure safety measures are adhered to.

The crossroad water fountain is not entirely operational yet, due to restrictions with Covid-19 pandemic. All of the TGT funding is being spent toward paying off the debt services on the real estate. Once that has been paid off, the funding will be used for operational and capital improvements. Although many of the large events have had to be cancelled, there have been a number of smaller events happening. The message board has also been used to highlight a number of things to include high school graduates and athletes.

Chairman Duncan inquired about the reasoning for the water feature work being behind. Mr. Young stated most of this work is being held up or slowed down due to the restrictions with Covid-19 including travel restrictions

between Canada and the United States. The manufacturing partners have staff who will need to come in from Canada.

Chairman Duncan inquired about the responsible party for maintaining the Everygy Plaza. Mr. Young stated DTI is funding maintenance and operations.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala inquired about the role of Spectra. Mr. Young stated Spectra is in charge of managing, planning, coordinating, staffing, generating and overseeing the events.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala would like to see diversity in the arts and culture presented at Everygy, once pandemic restrictions have been decreased. Mr. Young agreed. Mr. Young stated diversity was a key target.

c. Constitution Hall

Chris Meinhardt, project manager, provided an update of the project design work.

- Late 2016 - current: Architectural and historical design work, followed by state and federal review and included lengthy delays brought about by the pandemic shutdown. It was found that the first floor needed to be raised by ten inches to achieve authentic historical design of the original façade. This process required additional planning in order to achieve this.
- Fall 2019: Prep work began for the outside of the building. Removal of the former façade began in March of 2020, and required qualified contractors.
- April 2020: Excavation for concrete footings and foundations.
- June 2020: Structural steel framing was installed. The façade wall has been framed and sheathed to prepare for the exterior installation of stone to be placed.
- Mr. Meinhardt provided photographs with descriptions.

Grant Glenn added that the rotary part has remained open throughout the pandemic and construction process. It is still open to guests. Mr. Glenn is also the president Trustees of the Freedoms Frontier National Heritage Area. Work is being done to develop a new application for travel which will link various travel sites along certain themes. Freedom Frontiers has a theme of

pioneer progress and the cost to the American Indian Nation Communities. The Boarder War and Bleeding Kansas are included in a second theme. The enduring struggle for freedom, of which Topeka's Brown vs. Board site is included, is a third theme. With this application, which covers 41 counties in Kansas, cover many sites. Topeka is the site of a half dozen historical organizations that have partnered with Constitution Hall to provide virtual tours via the website.

Chairman Duncan inquired about the current work being completed with the façade. Mr. Meinhardt stated the masonry work is in the bidding process currently. It may be late fall/early winter before masonry work can begin.

Chairman Duncan inquired about the total cost associated with the project. Mr. Meinhardt stated the budget is on track and the budget that had been established within the contract is about \$355,000 has been spent. All funding has been spent on architectural design and construction of the façade, as allowed within the contract.

d. Evel Knievel Museum

Bruce Zimmerman, Director of Evel Knievel Museum stated the museum has been in operation for three seasons. The hope was to see a large increase in this third season, however due to Covid-19 that has not happened. The museum was completely closed for two months. Once reopened, there have been about half of the usual number that had been previously seen. There continues to be a large number of outside visitors, however many have been from within Kansas. This has been a positive outcome from the pandemic. Initially, the assumption was most of the attendance would be from motorcycle riders due to Evel Knievel performing stunts on a motorcycle. However, there have been more families, school groups, and non-motorcycle riding visitors.

The TGT dollars have been spent. The museum has an interactive virtual reality jump experience that was purchased through a loan from a local bank. The TGT dollars that are received are put toward paying that loan. The jump experience has not been able to be used during the pandemic do to the close nature of the experience.

Chairman Duncan inquired if museum staff had applied for the PPPE loan. Mr. Zimmerman stated that had not been pursued.

Chairman Duncan commented about the silver lining of the pandemic with more visitors from regional and local attendees, noting that hopefully it has allowed people to experience things in their own backyard and share how great those have been to generate more business.

4) 2021 TGT Fund Budget Review

Chairman Duncan stated the committee is not seeking to cut any current allocations, however, conversations will take place to see about future funding and how some of the contracts may, or may not be, restructured to allow for the same funding to be provided in the same amount of time but to also allow for additional funding for new dollars that are in the program.

Jessica Lamendola, Finance Director, stated that the 2021 Preliminary Budget along with a memo. Finance does not have any unique or additional information regarding revenue projections. At the state-level, projections showed about 30% of revenue received for the months of April and May, compared to those same months in 2019.

Chairman Duncan inquired if a timeline could be established to make a projection in early August to provide a baseline for the current agencies. Ms. Lamendola stated that currently, an estimation could be made with that 30%, however if there are further losses due to the pandemic, that percentage may change further. Ms. Lamendola stated additional assistance could be provided to help establish numbers as close as possible. The overall growth economic projections are much less than typical.

Chairman Duncan inquired about the contingency line. Ms. Lamendola noted this is the fund balance and agreements were build up and that the fund will come down at the end of 2020. Those numbers are a reflection of money coming in and being used for debt service. An arrangement was set up between the City and County based on special assessments.

Chairman Duncan asked for clarification on the Admin Fees. Ms. Lamendola confirmed those fees account for the dollars that go back to the City to account for staff time and resources.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala made a motion to approve the recommended funding allocation for the 2021 TGT Fund. Chairman Duncan seconded the motion. Motion passes 3:0.

5) Other Items

Last week of August, first week of September for next meeting. August 31st meeting. 10:00am.

Chairman Duncan called on Matt Pivarnik, GTP President. Mr. Pivarnik informed the committee that a new president, Sean Dixon, for Visit Topeka has been made and he will begin working at the end of July.

6) Adjourn

Chairman Duncan adjourned the meeting at 11:25am.

Meeting video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/0B645pGJPeA>