



CALLED City Commission Meeting Highlights

Monday, July 23, 2018, at 5 p.m. at McCracken County Courthouse

Meeting Between Paducah Board of Commissioners and McCracken County Fiscal Court Regarding Convention Center

The Paducah Board of Commissioners and McCracken County Fiscal Court met together in a workshop at the Courthouse to hear a presentation from the Paducah-McCracken County Convention Center Corporation (CCC), a volunteer board, regarding the CCC's efforts to add a full-service kitchen to the Julian Carroll Convention Center and hire a third-party company to manage the operations of the Julian Carroll Convention Center, the Schroeder Expo Center, and the Dome Pavilion.

CCC Member Drew Hulette explained that the Convention Center complex currently has two full-time employees who are assisted by part-time staff. During the last fiscal year, the Convention Center had 105 events and used local caterers to offer food and beverage services. The CCC and the Convention Center's staff have learned that offering food and beverage service is extremely important to attract conventions. Therefore, the CCC is working toward the construction of a full-service kitchen at the Julian Carroll. The project is expected to be placed out to bid in September with the kitchen to be completed by February or March of next year. CCC Member Scott Taylor said, "Food and beverage is key for event planners...It is also the cost, the wildcard."

The CCC also has solicited proposals for a third-party management company that would manage the kitchen facility and the events. The Board has reviewed several management proposals and has selected the following two finalists: Spectra of Philadelphia, PA, and VenuWorks of Ames, IA. Hulette said, "We are stretched to the end of our ability without third-party insight and expertise." Both companies project to significantly increase the number of events and revenue. However, the CCC Board wanted the City Commission and Fiscal Court to be aware that there could be up to a two year lag before the third-party management company could generate a profit. This could open up the government bodies to financial exposure to temporarily assist the Convention Center.

Several of the elected officials asked questions and voiced their support of the kitchen and a third-party management company. Mayor Brandi Harless encouraged both governing bodies to submit their questions to the CCC Board so that they can be brought before the two third-party management companies as the CCC works toward making their selection. Mayor Harless also encouraged the CCC Board to include items such as performance indicators and performance targets in the contract.

The joint meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

###

