



SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE

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Committee Date: December 21, 2023
Present: Mayor Pulice, Treasurer Porch, Alderman Messina,
Alderman Woods
Absent:
Also Present: Janelle Silva
Meeting Convened at: 6:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

1. Mayor Pulice
2. Treasurer Sandra Porch

DISCUSSION:

The Committee discussed the challenges of securing a carnival this year in detail. Noting that our carnival revenue numbers are too low for Windy City to continue to prioritize coming to Prairie Fest on our usual dates. Our gross revenues have historically been around \$80,000, which would be roughly \$70,000 under ideal revenues and \$30,000 under minimum revenues. These numbers have also made it difficult to secure future carnival providers on our dates. Compounding our carnival issue this year is that there is one less weekend in July, which is prime festival season, making those fests that make more revenue, higher priority. In addition to our current carnival contacts, staff has contacted OABA (Outdoor Amusement Business Association) and the Illinois Department of Labor (who manages registration and inspections for carnivals and amusements in Illinois) for a list of current and registered carnivals. Unfortunately, all who have responded have stated that they do not have availability to host a carnival from July 25-28. There is a slim chance that a carnival we've reached out to may be available for our original dates, but it appears to be a shot in the dark. We are not the only festival looking for a carnival that weekend (DuPage County Fair, as an example, is still looking).

Janelle presented two options to the Committee:

- Option 1 - Eliminate carnival portion of the festival and keep same dates.
- Option 2 – Change the dates of the festival (this will likely need to be permanent switch, as we've historically had issues with carnivals on these dates over the years)



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There are three carnivals that have offered to provide a proposal for service if we can change the dates of Prairie Fest:

- [Windy City Amusements](#) - June 27-30
- [Fantasy Amusements](#) – June 27-30 (a proposal is in hand)
- [Alpine Amusements](#) - July 18-21 (a proposal is in hand)

Staff suggested to avoid this issue in the future, we should consider entering into a longer-term contract of 5+ years starting in 2025 and potentially look to change the dates of Prairie Fest permanently.

The Committee discussed and chose to move the dates for Prairie Fest permanently to the last weekend in June. The benefits include being one of the first fests in the area which could mean increased gross carnival revenue, it may not be as hot, Fireworks on Saturday night will take place before the Fourth of July weekend, bringing more excitement. The carnival was discussed. The date of Prairie Fest was agreed to permanently change, and it was decided to complete a contract with Fantasy Amusements. A motion was made by Alderman Messina and seconded by Alderman Woods. This was passed and will be brought to the Council for approval following the Committee meeting. As there is a section under the Mayor's Report that lists Prairie Fest as it was anticipated changes would be made.

The Committee then began to discuss musical entertainment options for Prairie Fest. The Committee discussed mixing up the lineup and adding the headliner band on Friday or Sunday.

Alderman Artie Woods who was present in the public meeting suggested a couple of bands that would draw a younger age demographic such as Alien Ant Farm, and Gin Blossoms. He also provided a chart of proposed band options with total estimated band costs. Janelle is to confirm the availability of Gin Blossoms for Friday evening as a headliner and Alien Ant Farm for Saturday night. The Committee also discussed the cost for entertainment and the deficit of revenue for the 2023 Prairie Fest. Some members of the Committee and of the sitting public, suggested that if we hosted bigger, more popular bands, it would draw more people and increase revenue for beverage sales and bring more people for the carnival. The Mayor stated that he has concerns about the increased cost of the festival. After more discussion it was decided that the Committee would request an increase in the entertainment fund to the Council, in the amount, not to exceed \$120,000. Last year the entertainment cost was \$84,000. A motion was made by Alderman Woods and seconded by Treasurer Porch. This was passed and will be brought to the Council for approval following the Committee meeting.

The Committee moved onto discussing Beverage Vendors at Prairie Fest. The suggestion came with the intent to draw more people to the Fest, provide relief of volunteers, efficiently serve the crowds and provide beverages that are local and more enjoyable to a diverse taste palate. Breweries discussed were Maplewood,



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which Alderman Artie Woods shared that he knew who the owner is. The Committee went on to state that ideally there would be more than one or two beverage vendors present. Janelle provided a draft Beverage Agreement drafted by the City Attorney. The Committee discussed what the charge would be for a vendor to serve beer. It was discussed that the Vendors should also be required to check ID's, accept payment, provide wristbands, and conduct their own Bassett training. What is the minimal fee? Would the City also require a percentage of the total beverages sold? It was decided that because this is the City's first year going in this direction, the fee would be a flat rate of \$3600.00. This flat fee stands if there is a weather-related cancelation or delay and includes the tent and electricity. The City would recommend the Vendors to get their own weather insurance. The City will not provide compensation. Janelle will reach out to the VFW to also provide them the opportunity to participate independently. She will also contact Church Street Brewery, Maplewood and Lynfred Winery. A motion was made by Alderman Woods and seconded by Treasurer Porch. This was passed and will be brought to the Council for approval following the Committee meeting

A motion was made by Mayor Pulice and seconded by Treasurer Porch to adjourn.

Ayes: Mayor Pulice, Alderman Woods, Alderman Messina, Treasurer Porch.

Nays: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Whereupon Mayor Pulice declared the motion to be carried out and the meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.