



SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE

SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee Date: August 15, 2024
Present: Mayor Pulice, Treasurer Porch, Alderman Artie Woods,
Alderwoman Ames
Absent:
Also Present: Janelle Silva, EMG Group – Kitty Weiner, Murray Weiner,
Jake Weiner
Meeting Convened at: 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

1. Alderwoman Aimes
2. Treasurer Sandra Porch

DISCUSSION:

Janelle began the meeting by introducing guests, Kitty, Murray and Jake Weiner of EMG (Entertainment Management Group). They have been contracted with the City for many years. Because there are several new members of the Special Events Committee, she thought it was important to introduce the EMG team.

EMG is a family business. Murray and Kitty have led the company for over 50 years. Each business partner has a hand in providing the City the service that we have utilized at Prairie Fest. EMG is present provide a rundown because even though I've been with the city for about 6 years now, Janelle stated that she is learning something new every year. This is an opportunity for the Committee to better understand the process, but also approach planning decisions from a new angle. Our current goal is securing the bands earlier than we have in the years past. Janelle handed off the meeting to EMG.

Kitty Weiner described their longstanding work in the entertainment industry. The longevity of the work as a family and how long it's been part of their lives and in many communities. Murray Weiner co-founded the company in 1986.

Murray Weiner described the process of how they approach their planning. They consider the demographic, median age, income and racial make up of the City hosting. What genres of music we think would be best for that demographic? All things will not work in all situations, so they pay attention to that. based on the budget that we have available. They create a lineup that fits with the budget and also the demographic of the community. They also try to take a look at what the goals of the event are, what the City is hoping to achieve. They are not considered a booking agency because they don't have a roster of bands that depend on them for their livelihood. He stated that sometimes there's a tendency for companies to do that and it's their obligation to keep those bands working. However, in doing that Booking Agencies don't put the right band in the right situation.



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They're just looking at keeping their band working. They have compiled over the years of lists of bands and all different genres, and they can reach out to the bands that they feel fit the particular situation without being obligated to them to find specific bands work. EMG also provides the service of managing the entertainment portion of the event.

Mayor Pulice wanted to discuss the budget. The Mayor relayed the history of Prairie Fest and how the City used to manage the stage, and sound. Because of this, the City had a better idea of how the cost breakdown. The City managed everything but the entertainment and backstage costs. While the City has approved a total cost of expenses, he stated that we no longer know what the cost breakdown is between the total cost. He stated that the City started Prairie Fest and spent about \$25k in bands. We are now spending \$85k on bands and we need to know how that is broken down. The Mayor stated that we want Wood Dale to become more recognizable and bring more people to the area. We haven't had any issues with your business or how you assist with management of the event, but we do need to be accountable.

The group discussed space capacity of prairie Fest and how that compares to Elk Grove's two event locations. Kitty stated that comparing Elk Grove and Wood Dale is tough in terms of occupancy because you're looking at 2 totally different types of budgets. First of all, what Elk Grove brings in is the higher acts, but the spatial concern. In Elk Grove, there is nothing encumbering seating areas other than trees and there's no structures. Unlike Prairie Fest there is fencing, and other structures.

EMG shared that they are a full production service for Wood Dale and manage the bands hotel reservations, ground transportation, food needs, general hospitality and backstage hospitality. This level of service is reserved for the National Bands. The local bands do not need hotels, etc.

Alderman Artie Woods expressed a desire for music geared towards people who are 30-50 years old. Jake Weiner acknowledged there's a transition occurring with a move to the 90's and moving away from the 60's and 70's music genres. Alderman Woods further expressed that even with a budget increase, we were not able to secure the band we wanted last year. The EMG team further explained their service and that it includes management of various contracts and adherence to riders, such as National band requirements for certain food and instruments. To have someone manage this without experience means that something would fall through the cracks.

EMG expressed that it was important for them to know the budget that the City has to spend on entertainment for Prairie Fest so that they are not wasting anyone's time. Alderman Woods expressed that he was very pleased with this last year's Prairie Fest on Saturday night. He stated that he realizes that Sunday will always be a slower day, Saturday a strong day no matter who is playing because of the fireworks but would like to build Thursday and Friday.



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EMG stated they placed an inquiry on the City's behalf to the Gin Blossoms. They responded with interest. The cost will range from \$75k plus, plus. So it means it's \$75k in addition to hospitality needs. Mayor Pulice stated that by passing a budget allows staff to move forward with direction.

Alderman Woods asked about the Band Everclear and their estimated cost. EMG stated about \$45k.

Mayor Pulice stated that we would like to settle and secure the bands for Prairie Fest 2025 by September 2024. The Committee discussed the capacity of Prairie Fest and concerns about safety with a large band present.

Mayor Pulice also stressed that Prairie Fest is a family event.

Alderman Artie Woods asked if EMG worked with municipalities that changed an entrance fee for the fest. EMG stated that none of their municipalities charge an entrance fee, but that the non-for profit run fests do, like Rotary Fest and that is \$5. Murray stated that the goal is also bringing the community out and they stop to pay for gas or groceries or dine.

Alderman Woods expressed a need for music to be played when the bands are not playing. Especially on Sunday when the bands start later. He also stated some concern with sounds equipment for some of the bands and a contrast of quality of band equipment.

Janelle recapped the discussion, stating that the next Committee meeting is on September 12 and the goal will be to have a lineup proposal to review and settle on the band selection. And secure a budget from the Council. Alderman Woods stated that \$120k is not enough for the bands. Mayor Pulice stated that he does not want to ask the Council multiple times for an increase. Jake stated that we should also consider that we may not increase revenue after hiring more expensive bands. By raising the amount spent, it does not always mean that you're going to sell more beer, more people, more carnival, more food. It's always the case.

Alderman Woods asked in EMG's opinion, would we be better off looking at two of the 25,000 to cover the Thursday Friday, vs hiring the Gin Blossoms? Jake suggested that could be very successful. Woods requested an expanded list of National Bands that cost \$25k.

The Committee thanked EMG for their time and explanation, and they departed the meeting.

Janelle reminded the Committee of upcoming events like the City-Wide Garage Sale and signs available for pick up at City Hall, including a limited supply of small signs that can be detailed with addresses. She also presented samples of promotional materials to be inserted in water billings to promote programs, and special events.



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Janelle confirmed that the Special Committee of the Whole takes place on September 5 and will include the topic of purchasing/renting equipment for special events and Prairie Fest.

Mayor Pulice stated that a Prairie Fest Budget for Entertainment will be on the September 5 Council meeting for approval.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Ames and seconded by Mayor Pulice to adjourn.

Ayes: Alderman Artie Woods, Alderwoman Ames, Treasurer Porch.

Nays: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Whereupon Mayor Pulice declared the motion to be carried out and the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.