

MINUTES
WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PRESENTORS LIAISON COMMITTEE / SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, July 8, 2021

The Presentors Liaison Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met remotely at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 8, 2021, Chair Bechtle presiding.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present:	Chair Bechtle, Trustee Lui, Trustee Moscone President Horn, <i>Ex Officio</i>
Committee Members Absent:	Vice-chair Shultz and Trustee Wilsey
Non-Committee Members Present:	Trustee Levin, Trustee Pelosi (arrived 1:10 p.m.)
Staff Present:	John Caldon, Managing Director Jennifer Norris, Assistant Managing Director

REGULAR ITEMS

Global Gourmet Catering Report:

Chair Bechtle stated that on March 7, 2020, War Memorial venues were closed by Order of the Health Officer to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and that with performances now resuming in venues, it is time to decide when and how to resume providing concessions and catering services.

Before hearing a report from Global Gourmet Catering on its plans for reopening food and beverage services related to performances in War Memorial venues, Chair Bechtle requested that Managing Director John Caldon provide a high-level review of the food and beverage concession agreements, as well as an overview of how COVID-19 has impacted our concessions and catering services.

Director Caldon reported that the Agreement between the War Memorial and Global Gourmet Catering was signed in 2018. The term of the Agreement is August 1, 2018, through July 31, 2023, with an optional renewal term of five years. Per the existing Agreement, Global Gourmet Catering is to notify the War Memorial by January 2022 if it desires an extension, at which time both parties would discuss renewal.

Director Caldon noted that prior to COVID-related venue closures, Global Gourmet provided contracted food and beverage services for nineteen months. It has now lost sixteen months of work under the Agreement. He noted that the Agreement specifies service levels for various areas of the venues and requires Global Gourmet receive approval for menu items and price changes from the War Memorial.

Director Caldon further noted that the Agreement includes a capital investment commitment by Global Gourmet of \$750,000 to be invested in the venues over the ten-year term. He noted that \$60,000 was approved for Opera House Lower Lounge improvements prior to pandemic closures but that those improvements have not yet been made. He stated that the Agreement should have an Exhibit D attachment that reflects Global Gourmet's Investment Schedule for capital upgrades, but that the Investment Schedule has not yet been submitted.

Following Director Caldon's report, Chair Bechtle welcomed Garo Eldemir, Director of Concessions for Global Gourmet, and Melissa Gartner, General Manager of Global Gourmet, to speak regarding Global Gourmet's plans for resumption of food and beverage service at the War Memorial.

Mr. Eldemir stated that Global Gourmet plans to approach reopening with a good deal of flexibility to meet the needs of patrons as expectations evolve following the pandemic.

Ms. Gartner reported that Global Gourmet plans to begin food and beverage service at the War Memorial Opera House for San Francisco Opera's performance of "Tosca" on August 21, 2021, and at Davies Symphony Hall for the September 22, 2021, screening of "The Princess Bride" film with live orchestra, which will be San Francisco Symphony's first presentation with an intermission.

Ms. Gartner further reported that Café Valor will reopen with the return of workers to City Hall and the Veterans Building, but no later than August 21, 2021. The first Herbst Theatre performance that will have beverage service and grab-and-go food offerings has not yet been identified, as Herbst Theatre service is highly dependent on the specific needs of the licensee in the venue for each individual performance.

Regarding menu offerings, Ms. Gartner stated that Global Gourmet will begin at the Opera House with full bar service and grab-and-go packaged food offerings. Global Gourmet also hopes to open the Lower Lounge Café at the Opera House, though the buffet presents challenges due to possible patron expectations regarding sanitation, so Global Gourmet may change the restaurant format or resume buffet with staffed service stations in place of the previous self-service format. Ms. Gartner stated that Global Gourmet may choose to operate the restaurant with reduced capacity depending on what feels safe for patrons.

Ms. Gartner stated that adaptability is important, and that Global Gourmet will monitor patron purchasing habits. Mr. Eldemir stated that Global Gourmet will seek to understand if patrons are returning primarily to hear the music, or to have the full opera-going experience complete with champagne and other concessions.

Ms. Gartner noted that when guests pre-book tables and place reservations for food and drink in advance of a performance, it helps Global Gourmet anticipate service levels. She noted that Global Gourmet also receives ticket sales information and is working closely with the marketing departments to ensure messaging aligns well and that patrons will know what food and beverage offerings will be available.

Ms. Gartner assured the Board that the food service and bar staff are excited to return. Much of Global Gourmet's staff have worked in the venues for many years and are very committed. She reported that Global Gourmet is currently negotiating with UNITE HERE Local 2 regarding vaccination status requirements for union employees. She further noted that Global Gourmet would prefer for all staff to be vaccinated.

Mr. Eldemir stated that Global Gourmet is exploring the use of Quick Response (QR) Codes for intermission pre-ordering and considering how pre-orders might be delivered to specific locations in the Opera House.

Chair Bechtle asked how the Board could assist Global Gourmet and Mr. Eldemir mentioned that it is likely Global Gourmet will need to revisit pricing to account for the increased cost of products and for delivery service if pre-orders are numerous and required to be delivered to multiple locations within the venues. Mr. Eldemir asked that the Board be prepared to receive requests for new pricing in the future. He also mentioned a desire to align menu items and delivery method with patron desires.

Ms. Gartner stated that Global Gourmet intended to have new menus developed by August 1, 2021, and that she and Chef Alphonso would be working onsite full time starting Monday July 12, 2021.

In response to a question from President Horn regarding decoration plans, David Ashley, Chief Operations Officer for Global Gourmet, stated that Global Gourmet is still in operation due to having received federal funding through the Payroll Protection Program. Its goal is to start generating earned revenue before moving forward with capital investments, as Global Gourmet exhausted its financial resources during the pandemic.

President Horn asked that capital investments be revisited soon, as Global Gourmet's interest and ability in investing in improving food service areas was an attractive part of Global Gourmet's response to the War Memorial during the Request for Proposal process.

Director Caldon requested that Global Gourmet draft an Operator's Investment Schedule for review by War Memorial Staff and prepare any requests for price increases for submission to the Board.

In response to a question from Director Caldon regarding pre-order apps, Ms. Gartner mentioned two options, including SmartTabs and Open Table, both of which have strengths and weakness as applied to intermission pre-orders.

Chair Bechtle thanked Global Gourmet for their report and stated the Board’s support and interest in seeing food and beverage service fully restored to War Memorial venues as soon as possible.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Bechtle called for public comment on items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee, but which did not appear on the agenda. There being none, public comment was closed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Bechtle adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

Jennifer E. Norris
Executive Secretary

DRAFT