

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

**Thursday, September 9, 2021**

The Presentors Liaison Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met remotely at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 9, 2021, Chair Bechtle presiding.

**ROLL CALL**

Committee Members Present: Chair Bechtle, Vice-Chair Shultz, Trustee Lui, Trustee Moscone, Trustee Wilsey, and President Horn, *Ex officio*

Committee Members Absent: Trustee Lui

Non-Committee Members Present: Trustee Gatti, Trustee Pelosi

Staff Present: John Caldon, Managing Director  
Jennifer Norris, Assistant Managing Director

**REGULAR ITEMS**

**Proposed Renewal of Agreement between the War Memorial and City Box Office for Herbst Theatre Box Office and Ticket Sales Services:**

Chair Bechtle reported that in advance of the meeting, Committee members received a letter from Lauren McQuade, owner of City Box Office, proposing a three-year renewal of its agreement with the War Memorial to provide box office and ticket sales services for the Herbst Theatre. Chair Bechtle stated that the previous agreement with City Box Office expired in August 2020 and was not renewed at that time due to uncertainty stemming from Covid-related venue closures.

Chair Bechtle further stated that the agreement, if renewed, would continue to grant City Box Office the exclusive right to provide box office and ticket sales services to licensees of the Herbst Theatre with some limited exceptions. It is proposed that the Agreement provide that the War Memorial may, at its sole discretion, exercise options to extend the Agreement for additional periods of no less than one-year and no more than five-years, upon substantially the same terms and conditions set forth in the Agreement, subject to mutual agreement of the parties.

Chair Bechtle called on Lauren McQuade, President of City Box Office, to address the Committee on the proposed renewal.

Ms. McQuade stated that City Box Office is requesting a three-year contract renewal, beginning retroactively from September 1, 2021, through August 31, 2024. She stated that over the last eighteen (18) months, City Box Office has tried to be helpful by reaching out to regular Herbst Theater licensees and offering ticket services and marketing tools for free. To accommodate socially distanced ticket sales, City Box Office created a ticketing program for in-person events that allowed guests to select their own and then automatically removed the surrounding seats from sale.

Following discussion, on motion of Trustee Wilsey and seconded by President Horn, the following recommendation was unanimously adopted:

RECOMMENDED, By the Presentors Liaison Committee of the War Memorial Board of Trustees to recommend to the full Board approval of a 3-year renewal of the Agreement between the War Memorial and City Box Office from September 1, 2021, through August 31, 2024, with substantially the same terms and conditions as set forth in the Agreement.

**Proposed Revision of Per Ticket Service Fees Charged to Ticket Buyers:**

Chair Bechtle reported that Committee members also received from City Box Office a proposed revision of per ticket service fees for patrons buying tickets for performances in the Herbst Theatre. She noted that the proposed revised fee schedule creates additional fee tiers that preserve the per ticket fee at the lower price scale and increase the per ticket fee for higher priced tickets. Chair Bechtle noted that City Box Office is not proposing any changes to its Licensee Fees and Expenses.

Chair Bechtle called on Lauren McQuade, President of City Box Office, to address the Committee on the proposed revisions to its per ticket service fees.

Ms. McQuade stated that City Box Office is proposing a change to customer service charges, which she noted have not changed in 13 years. The new customer service fee charges are scaled proportional to the ticket price. Ms. McQuade noted that business costs have been increasing. She noted that passing on the additional cost to the ticket buyer, rather than the licensees, made sense as many arts organizations are still struggling financially.

Ms. McQuade stated that the average ticket price at the Herbst Theater ranges from \$40.00 – \$50.00 so the proposed service charge was based upon tickets in that price range. City Box Office understands that there are events with lower ticket prices and those audiences may only be able to attend based on the lower ticket price, so the service charges on ticket prices will remain unchanged. She noted these are not large increases and are consistent with industry standards.

Following discussion, and on motion of Trustee Wilsey and seconded by President Horn, the following recommendation was unanimously adopted:

- RECOMMENDED,     By the Presentors Liaison Committee of the War Memorial Board of Trustees to recommend to the full Board approval of City Box Office’s proposed per ticket service fees.
- \$1.75 per ticket for tickets priced \$0.01-\$14.99.
  - \$2.75 per ticket for tickets priced \$15.00-\$24.99.
  - \$4.75 per ticket for tickets priced \$25.00-\$49.99.
  - \$5.75 per ticket for tickets priced \$50.00-\$99.99.
  - \$6.75 per ticket for tickets priced \$100.00-\$149.99.
  - \$7.75 per ticket for tickets priced \$150.00-\$199.99.
  - \$8.75 per ticket for tickets priced \$200.00 and up.
  - In addition to the per-ticket service charge there will be a \$1.00 per order service fee.

**Global Gourmet Catering Request for Food and Beverage Price Increases:**

Chair Bechtle reported that Trustees received a letter from Global Gourmet Catering requesting consideration and approval to update the pricing of concessions items. Price increases were last approved by the Board in January 2020. Trustees also received a “Food and Beverage – Pricing” chart, which reflects the history of concessions pricing back to 2016, as well as Global Gourmet Catering’s new proposed pricing.

Chair Bechtle invited Melissa Gartner, General Manager of Global Gourmet Catering, to present the request.

Ms. Gartner reported that Global Gourmet Catering is proposing a 10% price increase across the board on concession food and beverage items. She noted all pricing includes tax. Global Gourmet Catering has seen an increase in taxes, labor costs (minimum wage increases and staffing costs due to COVID safety measures), and costs of goods across the industry. She stated that the 10% increase across the board will accommodate these increased business expenses.

President Horn stated that he went to two performance of “Tosca” and reported that the food service was sensational. He stated the buffet is now staffed with servers who are serving to individual patrons, which he found to be more elegant and efficient than the previous self-service model. He stated his support of Global Gourmet’s price increase request.

Following discussion, and on motion of President Horn and seconded by Trustee Wilsey, the following recommendation was unanimously adopted:

RECOMMENDED,     By the Presentors Liaison Committee of the War Memorial Board of Trustees to recommend to the full Board approval of Global Gourmet Catering’s proposed pricing increases.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Secretary Norris noted that Global Gourmet Catering has been a good partner while reopening and that Opera House patrons appear pleased these services continue to be provided during COVID. The current health order requires vaccination checks, which has made patrons feel more comfortable with food and beverage service.

Director Caldon reported that City Hall has not fully reopened to employees and that the deadline for all City employees to be vaccinated is November 1, 2021. War Memorial staff is working with Global Gourmet Catering to establish a timeline for reopening Café Valor with the return of City employees to the surrounding offices near the Performing Arts Center and will report back to the Presentors Liaison Committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Bechtle adjourned the meeting at 1:46 p.m.



Jennifer E. Norris  
Executive Secretary