

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

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

The Presentors Liaison Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met at 1:40 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, in the Trustees' Board Room, War Memorial Opera House, Chair Horn presiding.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken. A quorum was not established. Per prior guidance from the Office of the City Attorney, Committee Members could hear "information-only" items outlined on the Agenda, but could not vote on any issues. Discussion of these items was permissible, as was Public Comment, but action could not be taken.

Committee Members Present: Chair Horn, Trustee Wilsey, President Bechtle, *Ex Officio*
Committee Members Absent: Trustee Lui, Trustee Moscone and Trustee Shultz
Staff Present: John Caldon, Managing Director
Jennifer Norris, Assistant Managing Director

REGULAR ITEMS

Global Gourmet Catering request to invest up to \$100,000 for food and beverage related facility improvements in the War Memorial Opera House and Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall as part of its contractually required investment for improvements:

Chair Horn stated there were two items on today's agenda of the Presentors Liaison Committee. He added that these were somewhat complicated issues and it was not his intention to take action on them today. Chair Horn further stated his thought that other Trustees will want to have input on to be discussed, and that his plan was to proceed with the presentation from Global Gourmet Catering, but to hold the items in Committee.

Chair Horn stated that at the November meeting of the Board, Trustees received a letter from Global Gourmet Catering requesting approval to invest up to \$100,000 in contractually required facility improvements in the War Memorial Opera House and Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall. He continued to say that in advance of today's meeting, Trustees received Global Gourmet's "Proposed Opera Bar Redesign" presentation prepared by Scott Fairbanks and Garo Eldemir. The presentation included three potential designs for the Opera House Lower Lounge bar, including floor plans and images of possible furnishings.

Chair Horn stated that today's first agenda item would have two matters for consideration: 1) consideration and approval of a proposal by Global Gourmet to redesign the Opera House Lower Lounge bar area, and 2) consideration and approval of \$25,000 in fees related to a redesign of the Tuning Fork café in Davies Symphony Hall, which was ultimately deemed unfeasible. Given the lack of a quorum, Chair Horn confirmed that the Committee would hear the presentation, but would not vote on either of the requests.

Chair Horn invited Global Gourmet's Creative Director, Scott Fairbanks, and Director of Concessions, Garo Eldemir, to make their presentation. Mr. Eldemir stated that the concept is to start transitioning the Opera House Lower Lounge bar area to provide a guest experience separate from that of the adjacent restaurant. Mr. Eldemir shared that while the restaurant attracts long-time patrons, it is Global Gourmet's hope that the redesigned bar will attract a newer audience. Mr. Fairbanks said that the main objectives are expanding patrons' experiences and increasing sales in the bar by making it a more vibrant place, and that he wanted to update the bar to a more modern contemporary look and feel with elements and pieces that complement the restaurant.

Mr. Fairbanks stated he would like to transition from linen covered tables to wild oak tabletops made from wood

harvested in northern California. He went on to recommend replacing the existing bar stools, and to add seating at high tables designed to join together as a communal table, but which could also stand well on their own. Mr. Fairbanks stated that moving away from offering only low seating would help separate the bar area from the restaurant. One of the three options included the possible addition of small banquettes along the walls of the outer two alcoves between the bar area and restaurant to create intimate booth style seating.

Mr. Fairbanks stated that Global Gourmet would like to change the color of the paint within the bar to a slightly darker color to give it a separate look from the restaurant. Mr. Fairbanks' presentation showed renderings of the new look. Trustee Wilsey expressed concerns about having only high seating as they are more difficult for older people to navigate. Mr. Eldemir pointed out a layout option in Global Gourmet's presentation that included both high and low seating options in the bar area. Jennifer Norris stated that low seating options would be necessary to be ADA compliant.

Chair Horn stated that he feels the concept as presented is good. President Bechtle and Trustee Wilsey agreed with Chair Horn's statement, and further stated they liked the concept. President Bechtle said she likes to sit at high tables, but understands we need to provide options for a variety of patron preferences. President Bechtle shared that she feels it's time to activate the bar area. Mr. Eldemir agreed with the Trustees, and said that the redesigned bar area would be an active space for pre-show and intermission, with patrons being better able to have conversations between those who are standing and those who are seated at the high tables.

President Bechtle requested confirmation that patrons could still enjoy the buffet while being seated in the bar area. Mr. Eldemir confirmed that enjoying the buffet while seated in the bar area would be possible, though patrons would not be able to reserve tables in the bar area online in advance. Ms. Norris asked Mr. Eldemir if there would be a special menu for patrons seated in the bar area, and if there would be food service at the bar. Mr. Eldemir responded that patrons enjoying the buffet is a simple matter, but that due to union rules prohibiting bartenders from serving food, and prohibiting food servers from preparing drinks, having a special bar menu would be somewhat complicated. Mr. Eldemir stated his hope that following the redesign patron use of the bar area would grow to the point of necessitating a cocktail server in the bar area.

After the design presentation Chair Horn asked about the budget for the project. Mr. Eldemir stated that the final budget would depend on final choices made about the exact furnishings to be included. President Bechtle asked about the design and cost of the proposed booth seating. Mr. Fairbanks stated that the cost of the booth seating would total approximately \$8,000 for all four units. Mr. Eldemir explained that one of the challenges with separating the bar area from the restaurant was the large alcoves that adjoin the two rooms. Mr. Eldemir offered that the booth seating would serve to encourage patrons to use the center alcove. President Bechtle and Trustee Wilsey stated they thought this was a good idea. Trustee Wilsey asked how close an individual booth would be to the booth across from it. Mr. Fairbanks said the alcoves are approximately twelve feet across, and the space between two booths would be four feet, which complies with ADA guidelines.

Chair Horn asked about the \$25,000 being requested for Tuning Fork café upgrades. Mr. Eldemir explained that those funds have already been spent on design services to investigate the possibility of redesigning the Turning Fork to have more grab-and-go services in hopes of serving patrons more quickly. Mock-ups and tests of various lay-outs failed to deliver on the promise of higher patron satisfaction, so the project will not be pursued further. Ms. Norris added that it had been the War Memorial's desire to increase the speed of service and decrease the time patrons spent waiting in line, but it was determined the design would not accomplish this goal. Chair Horn stated that this project had not been approved in concept by the Board before design fees were expended. Mr. Eldemir stated that this was a lesson being learned, and that in the future Global Gourmet would request permission from the Board to explore projects prior to expending funds. Chair Horn asked Global Gourmet to discuss these design fees with staff before bringing them back to the Board.

Chair Horn continued this item to a future meeting.

Global Gourmet Catering request for approval of updated pricing schedule:

Chair Horn stated that at the November meeting of the Board, Trustees received a letter from Global Gourmet Catering requesting consideration and approval to update the pricing of certain concession items.

Chair Horn stated that in advance of today's meeting, Trustees received two pricing charts. The first of the two charts highlighted beverage items for which Global Gourmet would like the Board to approve updated pricing. The second chart is a comparison of Global Gourmet's proposed prices against the prices of similar beverage items at other San Francisco performing arts venues. Global Gourmet General Manager Melissa Gartner was present and available to answer questions from the Trustees. Ms. Gartner stated that due to increased labor costs an adjustment in pricing was necessary to meet Global Gourmet's budgetary and revenue needs.

Chair Horn stated that he has been managing food and beverage contracts at the War Memorial for 38 years and understands the difficulties concessionaires face. He shared his concern that a glass of house wine could cost \$19.00. Ms. Gartner clarified that the \$19.00 glass was a double pour of 9 ounces, and that the standard 6 ounce pour would increase in price by \$1.00 to \$13.00. Trustee Wilsey asked for clarification of the difference between "cocktails" and "cocktails – premium." Ms. Gartner stated that the difference between the two items was based on the quality of the product being used in the cocktail. Trustee Wilsey asked for clarification of the amount of liquor being used in mixed cocktails, and stated that there seemed to be a large difference between the cost of 1.5 ounces of liquor versus 9 ounces of wine. Mr. Eldemir stated that wine is the most expensive beverage to provide patrons, due to the waste caused by wine going bad after being opened, as opposed to liquor, which has a longer shelf-life.

President Bechtle asked about the \$19.00 cost for a children's Sunday brunch buffet. Ms. Gartner stated that it was her understanding there had not previously been a Sunday brunch buffet price. Ms. Norris stated that prior to Global Gourmet assuming the role of concessionaire, the price for a Sunday brunch buffet had been the same as the dinner buffet price, and that Global Gourmet had created a lower cost Sunday brunch buffet price to increase value for patrons. President Bechtle stated she felt the proposed Sunday brunch pricing was acceptable.

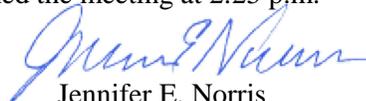
Following discussion, Chair Horn deferred action for Global Gourmet's request for approval of an updated pricing schedule to the full Board at the Regular Board Meeting on Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Horn 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 Horn adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.



Jennifer E. Norris
Executive Secretary