

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2011**

Members Present: Chair. Martin, Ald. Stellato, Monken, Carrignan, Payleitner, Turner, Rogina, Krieger, Bessner, and Lewis

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Chris Aiston, Peggy Forster, Chief Mullen, Kathy Livernois and Brian Townsend

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was convened by Chair. Martin at 8:24 p.m.

2. Omnibus Vote

Transfer Resolutions (4)

Motioned by Ald Krieger, second by Carrignan to approve the omnibus vote as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Martin did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

3. Recommend waiving the bid procedure for the purchase of a 2011 John Deere 410J-TMC backhoe and a 2011 John Deere 544K loader from West Side Tractor of Naperville.

Ross Wiegert: This was actually better than the state bid and we have a guaranteed trade-in for both with the opportunity for me to sell them online for more money than the trade-in. It's a win/win situation.

Motion by Stellato, second by Rogina to waive the bid procedure for the purchase of a 2011 John Deere 410J-TMC backhoe and a 2011 John Deere 544K loader from West Side Tractor of Naperville.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Martin did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

4. Recommend proposal from CCMSI in the amount of \$27,775 for third party administration services for workers' compensation services for fiscal year 2011/2012.

Kathy Livernois: As you know we are self-insured with our worker's comp and CCMSI is our vendor. We have had a great partnership with them. We've not only been able to

decrease claims but also our costs over the last few years as noted in the summary. They have also decreased their costs as well. They are on our timeline to do an RFP for the FY13/14; however we start that a year in advance. So for next year we will be going out for RFPs not because we are unhappy with what they do but because we have a responsibility to insure we are providing the best vendors at the best cost and best service.

Motion by Carrigan second by Turner to approve recommendation of proposal from CCMSI in the amount of \$27,775 for third party administration services for workers' compensation services for fiscal year 2011/2012

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Martin did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

5. Recommend approval for the St. Charles Cultural Commission funding request for FY11/12.

Ald. Stellato abstained from this item since his company rents the storage space to Steel Beam Theatre.

Chris Minick: A portion of the Hotel/Motel tax revenue, on an annual basis, is allocated to the Visitor's Cultural Commission for the promotion of arts and culture to the City of St. Charles. The Commission solicits funding requests from interested parties on an annual basis and hears presentations from these groups regarding the program and events they want to promote in culture for the City. The Cultural Commission then recommends funding allocations on an annual basis to the City Council. For FY11/12 \$89,400 is available to allocate to the nine groups that have applied to receive that funding for this fiscal year. Recommendations of funding allocations are enclosed in the packet and staff is recommending approval of those allocations. Cultural Commissioner Chairman Anne Becker is here tonight as well.

Anne Becker, 1312 S 3rd Street, St. Charles. Tonight I would like to introduce one of our new, young rising stars that is bringing some of the arts to St. Charles.

John Gawlick, Fox Valley Repertoire Company, 5525 N Winthrop, Chicago, 60640.

Thank you City of St. Charles for supporting the arts. It's tough and hard to find money and put it aside. Last year was the first year that we received funds and that money went to begin to developing the first ever St. Charles Summer Theatre Fest that is going on July 14 – 31. The City and the Mayor were helpful in getting it off the ground and there are several different cultural and business organizations involved in this too. The money went to starting that up as each venue starts to have projects and shows going on there; as well as we began a new play project that promotes playwrights to develop work that comes out of St. Charles. Someone had to take a chance on a play to bring it to life. So St. Charles is not only a place where you can come to see great art, but it is also a place that can create great art. Since we have launch the Fox Valley Repertoire, we have seen a huge outpouring of people who have come to our theatre, come to the Performing Arts Academy to see what we do. Recently we held a Letters Home Memorial Day concert where our expense over the

last 12 months was spent on afternoons at the Heritage Center looking up letters from servicemen from as far back as the Civil war. We took letters from Civil War, WWI, WWII and backed by the Fox Valley Concert Band, had a performance where our actors read those letters from servicemen to their families and friends back home with addresses right here in St. Charles from that timeframe. It was a wonderful experience and that is what we are here to do – is to tell stories in many different ways. It could be a comedy, musical, or a program that has a lot of depth and power to it as well. I thank you for recognizing that they are important year in and year out.

And, to sympathize I have a letter from a woman who is a playwright and asked what is Y Theatre? Why is Y Theatre important? Robert Redford head lined an American National Summit last year. They both instill the power, vitality, and fundamental importance of the art in this country, even in recession, even in environmental disasters. Despite that why is art important to us? Why is theatre, one of the most ancient art forms, still here? With every kind of digital distraction and cheaper and more convenient ways to entertain ourselves, what is theatre still doing here? Why does it do more successful than TV, movies, or video games? So why theatre? Going to theatre is more than just watching a story. It's being in it. By sitting in a theatre with live actors you become part of the drama or comedy; you're in the moment with real live human beings. That's primal attention getting stuff. That's projections that affect the soul. It's just not live, it is alive! Any given performance of a live play, of being in that moment, people like it. When the vibrations from an actor's throat hits your ear, a unique moment comes into being and you share that with the entire audience. It's not just a story that entertains and inspires us, it is experience and I think we recognize that here where we have seen our success grow with people coming to our theatres to hear different stories being told.

So theatre isn't something that is dying and neither is art because it does reflect who we are and things that are difficult to discuss and things we celebrate at that same time. I know there is a ton of issues going on out there, but thank you for supporting this year in and year out. We really appreciate it and what you do by giving us those funds and help us to bring in something like this first ever Summer Theatre Festival which we plan on making it an annual event; not only to bring people here on an economic level, but by bringing in here to see that St. Charles can be a national leader in the creation of art. Thank you.

Anne: In your packet is a spreadsheet, thanks to the Mayor who almost a year ago met with a group of us, and suggested we look at a way to assess the effects that the groups have on the City. We embraced that and thought it a good idea in terms of the assessment mode. We then developed a survey that we sent to all of former recipients of these awards and asked anyone who was new joining us to fill out this survey. This survey asked several questions and we are going to tweak them some because we received some narratives that were hard to quantify. I extracted some of the key points that I thought might be helpful for you.

First one is “how many people attend a particular venue during a year?” The second one is “how many non-St. Charles people attend their performances/events?” And last is “what

kind of education venues do they offer in the City of St. Charles for our students and young people?" This particular chart gives you an idea of the number of people in St. Charles who benefit by the organization, the people outside of the City who are coming here and participating and hopefully adding revenue, and, for me the most important part, is the kinds of things they do for the students and young people in our city in terms of education. You can see that every group has wonderful venues for the children in our city. Next year we are going to add a little more data after we tweak it this summer and add it on to our packet we send out to the people who would like to submit a grant. So, you have the budget, are there any questions?

Ald. Carrignan: One thing I think is important is to bring in new blood, new life to the organization and maybe keep some small percent of your budget (5-10%) to use for people who haven't received grants before or maybe in the past five years. I understand some of your concerns about organizations or groups that don't stick. With the small percentage maybe that is where the risk is involved and we can take that risk on something. Just something to consider.

Anne: Yes and in our conversation I said that when the group was first organized by Mayor Norris, the guidelines we set up were to show some longevity, that the group might stay in existence, because that would benefit all of us. I certainly will bring back the suggestion about the percentage, but every year I end my spiel up here and ask you for more money next year, because our original budget was \$325K a million years ago when Arthur Anderson was here and then we plummeted to \$25K. We have tweaked our way back up again graciously through your generosity which I definitely appreciate. Sometimes 5-10% is quite a bit of money for a group that is in existence that we might have to take that away.

Ald. Carrignan: Perhaps spread it over 2, 3 or 4 groups; but take a percentage of your budget and say let's look for new groups or organizations.

Anne: Yes, the way Chris does it is every April he sends out press release to the newspaper stating that whoever would like to submit a grant, here is the application form, please do that. Then we send a letter to the people we funded before and so we'll take anybody who is willing to try something. We give the guidelines and we are open to new blood. I think John is a great example of that. They've been working very hard at Pheasant Run and have truly brought that venue around. He and Scott both work tirelessly in bringing theatre into St. Charles.

Ald. Rogina: I really appreciate the spreadsheet here. My disappointment is that Sculpture in the Park did not complete the form. I'm looking at the budget and it seems that their budget allocations increase over a 100%. I suppose it bothers me a small bit that they wouldn't take the time to respond to provide the Council with some information. The rest of it is "A Number 1."

Anne: Actually that was Don's idea and I thought it a good idea. To be honest with you the arts have to be funded. They are not the kind of thing that self-sustain themselves. I

wish I could tell you that they were a money making item, but they're not. They have the potential of raising us above the ordinary. They really enrich our lives. When you look at the strategic plan, and many of you were there, the top three things the people in this city want are the arts. I was incredibly impressed that our community feels that is an important thing for us to generate with our young people for our whole culture in this particular city. To go back to the Sculpture in the Park, indeed we were all disappointed in that.

Ald. Rogina: They do impressive work. I don't want them to read the wrong message.

Ald. Martin: I have watched your committee for so long and your committee does so much with so little applause and recognition. Let it be publically recognized that you are terrific in it.

Motion by Carrignan, second by Turner to recommend approval for the St. Charles Cultural Commission funding request for FY11/12.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Abstain: Stellato. Chair. Martin did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

6. Additional Items

None.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Carrignan second by Turner to adjourn meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Martin did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

:tn