

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BASEBALL/CIVIC CENTER

April 1, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Chairman Morgan called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Morgan, Vincent, Kantor, Fajardo

Absent: Alderman Goonan

Messrs.: T. Bechert

1. Update on Phase I of the SNHU Arena Capital Improvements.

Chairman Morgan called Tim Bechert forward. Thank you for being here. Please give us an update on how things are going.

Tim Bechert, General Manager, SNHU Arena, stated in general there are 27 items that are involved in Phase I. I am happy to report that we are at about 41% complete to date. The original bond amount was \$3,646,000. Total complete spend to date is \$1.4 million. The balance to finish is just over \$2 million. A large portion of that, in excess of \$1 million, is attributable to the video board. We have some of the items like the marquee and ribbon boards and software programs to run them but a lot of the video components themselves are on a very slow boat from China. We are hopeful they will be here sometime in June. That is the big bulk of what is remaining in Phase I from a money standpoint. I can quickly go through the 27 items just to tell you exactly where we are with each of them and if you have any questions, I will do my best to answer them as long as they are not engineering or technical in nature. We did complete 100% of our roof refurbishment so that is completed and paid for. We have replaced and are continuing to replace some couplings, which are attributable to our heating and water pipes. We still have a way to go on that. Suite renovations are completed. We have done eight of those suites so they are all done and being used. Parking lots is a job that is going to happen in the spring so that is on hold until the spring dates. The same goes for doors and hardware. That is another spring project. The air handler refurbishments are about 33% complete. The blower assembly has been repaired. We are going to be doing the valves this coming summer. Boiler controls. We have cancelled that project. When we got the final returns on potential savings, originally it was supposed to be around 10% but it came out to be about 5% and that did not justify the expense of \$111,000 so we took that one off. There is a bit of a savings there. It just didn't make sense to go forward because the savings were miniscule. VFD retrofit. That is scheduled for the summer. Those are our chilling and hot water pumps and tower fans in the building. General light fixtures. That represents \$43,000 of the project. We just started that and it is happening every day. There are a lot of light fixtures that need to get fixed and it is happening as we speak. As for the A/V control room, which is part of the video board, materials have been ordered and we are waiting for complete installation on those. Again, they will only be effective when the video boards themselves are up but the control room is in good shape. Concrete repairs are this spring as well and that is \$77,000 of the project. Ice plant. We are at 66% complete

with those repairs. The brine leaks have been corrected and the valve bonnets have been installed and additional ice floor repairs have been completed. Chillers. That is \$47,000 and will happen later in the summer. Refrigeration leak detectors which go into our ice plant and our boiler rooms will happen this summer as well. Kitchen equipment has all been purchased. That was \$145,807. It is 100% done and complete and everything is working great. We have a functioning kitchen again and stands, which is fantastic. Chair replacement will be done this summer as well. That is for the custom brown chairs that you will see on our floor that gang together. The video board, as I told you, is on a slow boat but all the other pieces have arrived. We will have the marquee and a lot of the cabling done hopefully within the next month. That project is moving forward. Security system update. We purchased some new cameras. We are still pulling some fiber optics to get everything in place to where it needs to go. The security gate has been replaced and updated. We are at about 30% of that project being completed. HVAC server and IO cards. They have been ordered and are scheduled to arrive this month. We did receive our skid steer. That was \$107,000. The final cost actually ended up being less. With our corporate buying, we were able to save \$23,720 on that piece of equipment. It has arrived and just got used for the first time this morning helping us take the ice out. Fork lifts have been ordered. They, too, seem to be on a slow boat from somewhere. We do expect the delivery time for them in June. We are still renting one to get through the events that we have and we have another one that is on life support but we are able to use it. Pipe we will get later this summer. The walk-in freezer, which totaled \$114,620, came in and is installed fully at \$104,000. Our staff was able to work with the engineers and installers to figure out a different place to put our compressor so we didn't have to bang out walls. They ended up mounting it on top of the freezer which was unused space and that yielded a savings of just under \$10,000 which was a good thing. The portable concession stands have all been purchased. We had \$41,000 budgeted and it came in just under at \$40,000. UPS protection is being done by Summit. That is estimated to be at \$22,696. It is 69% complete and we anticipate it will cost only \$15,000 so another savings of about \$7,000. Our two-way radios, which represent \$150,000 of the project, has come in at \$129,923. It is being installed as we speak. That was another savings of just over \$20,000 on that project. That is where we are to date.

Chairman Morgan asked can you send us an updated list.

Mr. Bechert responded I can make a copy of this or you can get it from Josh Gagne. We are working on the same spreadsheet. This is my dumbed down version. The official one is at DPW.

Alderman Vincent stated thank you for the update. I appreciate it. There are a lot of savings that you made so great job on that. Were there any projects more than what we expected?

Mr. Bechert responded the video wall is going to come in more.

Alderman Vincent asked a lot more.

Mr. Bechert stated the tariffs haven't hit us yet. I think we will be in a good place. That one you are kind of playing roulette with.

Alderman Vincent stated well it works out because right now you are in the plus almost \$200,000 so you have some wiggle room as they say.

Mr. Bechert stated there is a built-in contingency anyway of 10%. I don't think anything is going to be an overrun.

Alderman Vincent stated these projects that are going to take place this summer like the paving, do you expect it to cause any delays on any events.

Mr. Bechert answered we won't let that happen. That is our life blood.

Alderman Vincent asked so you are doing it around the scheduled events.

Mr. Bechert replied absolutely.

Alderman Vincent stated I just wanted to make sure. Thank you.

Alderman Fajardo stated for clarification, you said it is just the video monitors that are potentially subject to the tariffs.

Mr. Bechert responded it is our center hung basically, not the light bright or scoreboard. It is that four-sided video wall.

Alderman Fajardo asked and so far that is the only thing that could be subject to additional tariffs.

Mr. Bechert answered yes. It is coming from China as most of those components do. The pushback on the start of the project date just put us in a bad spot. We couldn't order anything until we had the final approval. We just got caught in a time web that we didn't have any control over. We are not worried about it. It is just not here when we hoped it would be here.

Chairman Morgan asked with all of these improvements, has there been a buzz amongst promoters nationwide on getting more events.

Mr. Bechert replied they know it is happening for sure so yes. The short answer to your question is yes. It is also going to enable us to do some other projects that aren't necessarily huge money grabs. We are working with a couple of folks in the city to do some things for the school system. As I told you in the earlier days of the presentation, the enhancement to graduations I think will be noticeable immediately. I hope that we have them up for this year's but it is going to be right on the bubble to be honest with you. It gives us so much more flexibility with what we can do. Again, we won't have to rely on a scoreboard, that center hung, that can only go up and down. We can take these screens and move them to at least eight different places in the arena to enhance events.

Chairman Morgan stated you had a great weekend.

Mr. Bechert responded yes we are having a great year. Last weekend was fantastic. It was the NCAA hockey tournament. It is always good. We had a good draw with the teams that we got. Denver never draws because they are a geographical location but BC stepped up in the championship. Bentley definitely drove the bus in the Friday afternoon game. We were a little concerned when they lost that the building would be empty but the fans stayed for the second game and Sunday night's game did extremely well also. There were over 14,000 people here over the course of Thursday through Sunday night. We had a live broadcast for a couple of hours on Friday and on Sunday we had national exposure which was great. The compliments from the teams and players was fantastic. We did have an issue in the first game with one of our goal pegs, which is related to one of the leaks that happened to us unknown and unannounced. It took us the better part of a day to figure it out but we were working with something that could have been a lot worse to be honest with you. We pulled it off and everyone was grateful. I don't want to say it is part of college hockey but it is part of our industry and fortunately we had the people on hand, staff and old staff, to figure it out and MacGyver it to a place that allowed us to continue to get the games going and do what we do.

Chairman Morgan stated congratulations on a great weekend. It was very exciting to see that. You have a big announcement on a concert today that you would like share.

2. Update on the upcoming event schedule for SNHU Arena.

Mr. Bechert stated I can tell you since the beginning of the year we have had 159,202 people through our doors with 40 events. Sell-outs that we just had were Sebastian Maniscalco, Rascal Flatts, Jeff Dunham, Dancing with the Stars, and Duran Duran. Today we announced Creed. Tickets will go on sale to the public Friday I believe. That is huge. A few weeks ago we announced three shows with Phish. They will be here all week. They have a load in at the beginning of the week, two full rehearsal days and then three shows that sold out in minutes. Manchester will be a little bit different that week. There will be a lot of hungry people and it will be fun. We have our SNHU commencements coming up and inauguration coming up. Monster Jam is making another return. We have Sessanta, another concert with three bands. I don't know how savvy anyone is but Maynard, the leader of the band Tool, which is an iconic band, these are his pet projects. That is a big show coming up. Matt Rife the comedian will break Elton John's attendance record at the arena. He has over 11,555 tickets sold, which is phenomenal for a comedian. Combat Zone is doing well, our MMA events that are locally produced and organized. Comicon will be back. Boston Pops will be coming back. We have Jim Gaffigan, another comedian, coming back. He has been stupendous this year. We have two more comedy shows that I can't talk about and a couple of more surprises that I am not at liberty to say right now. I can tell you that this is shaping up to be financially one of the best years we have had in the history of the building. It is fun and we are having a good time doing it.

Chairman Morgan stated that is great. So with the capital improvements obviously that is going to increase the awareness and expectations of the artists coming through and bookings right?

Mr. Bechert replied yes. It is little things too. We have this big mural wall about the size of the back of that wall right in our loading dock that is proudly announcing you are in

Manchester, NH, 603, and it gives some highlights of the local community and it is what every artist walks by and every hockey player walks by. They are not at a loss when they hit the stage and see people and think they are in Topeka. We are trying to embed it in their brains.

Chairman Morgan stated I know the Mayor is a big rock fan and excited about Creed coming.

Alderman Fajardo stated I have received a couple of phone calls and emails about bull riding. Can you just speak to that?

Mr. Bechert answered I don't know what I can say. Not because I don't want to say it but we went through the same thing when we opened up and were dealing with the circus. People are entitled to their positions. It is an event and it is an event that we are going to continue to book.

Alderman Fajardo stated I guess that was my question.

Mr. Bechert stated we will keep doing it until it is not legal to do so.

Alderman Fajardo asked it has a decent draw I assume.

Mr. Bechert responded it sells out and it is nationally televised. It is two nights and coast to coast. It is a world renowned event and a well-respected event. Like the circus used to do, which some believe and some don't, they pay very close attention to the animals that they have in it. They are probably taken care of better than a lot of domestic pets. That is not my place to say. That is not my gig. We have been doing it for a while. Some of those people had a presence at our last event and hijacked the side of the arena with some projectors and put their messages up on the side of the building.

Alderman Fajardo asked and you wouldn't block that right.

Mr. Bechert answered we can't but if I could, I would because it was interrupting the flow of traffic and the sidewalk. We deferred to the police. That is their place and they weren't concerned.

Alderman Fajardo stated thank you. I appreciate you giving some commentary on that.

Chairman Morgan stated thank you Tim. It sounds like things are going great and I appreciate everything. We look forward to having you back in a few months with another update.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Vincent**, duly seconded by **Alderman Fajardo**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clerk of Committee