

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF
STAFFORD CENTRE COMMITTEE
Monday, April 11, 2022, at 12:00 p.m.
Stafford Centre
10505 Cash Road, Stafford, TX 77477**

The Stafford Centre Committee met on April 11, 2022, at 12:00 p.m., in said City. The following were in attendance: Chairperson Virginia Rosas, Mayor Cecil Willis, Susan Ricks (Director of Recreation), Rebecca Hathorn (Assistant General Manager), Bryan Blaum (FMsquared), Katie Rutherford (Attorney, Olson & Olson), Naqib Dhukka, and Darryl Austin. Absent: Councilmember Wen Guerra.

1. Call meeting to order.

Chairperson Rosas called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

2. (a) Discussion and consideration regarding the request by Sugars Restaurant LLC to receive HOT Funds Grant from the City of Stafford to hold Fort Bend Funkfest at Stafford Centre on September 17, 2022.

Mr. Blaum introduced Darryl Austin who has submitted a HOT Funds Grant Application for a Funkfest event. Mr. Austin has asked for \$100,000.00 and has provided all the requested information. Mr. Art Pertile's recommendation, as it relates to the City's funding (a plan of attrition), is to start at \$100,000.00 and tie it to hotel nights. A valuation of \$200.00 per room for double occupancy, or \$100.00 per person, is reasonable. Mr. Blaum will provide a list of hotels and group sales people to Mr. Austin who in turn will block rooms at the different Stafford hotels. Guests will sign up by using a code, such as "Funk", so the hotel rooms that are used can be verified. If Mr. Austin books (500) rooms, that would be \$100,000.00; 250 rooms, \$50,000.00; 100 rooms, \$20,000.00. The numbers will be reconciled 30 days after the event concludes.

Mr. Austin gave background information on his experience with concerts. He now is focused on his restaurant business. For this event, he would bring in national, Grammy-nominated artists that would put "heads to beds". He proposes the VIP experience; that is, you can't get a ticket unless you get a hotel room. He is very confident that the event will attract people who want to be around artists. He does not do anything like rap that will attract the bad element. It will target people in their 30's who have careers and can spend money. It will bring a lot of attention to the City and be a good look for the City. Stafford will be on the national itinerary. It could become an annual event. Sounds, lights, and production will be top notch. Mr. Austin plans for 1,000 VIPs. He has already blocked the date with popular artist, Anthony Hamilton, who attracts crowds.

There will be food trucks, vendor booths, porta-potties, generators, and fencing – everything that’s expected at a festival. There will be the major act plus local jazz bands, zydeco, DJs, and radio stations. Stafford’s Health Department, Police Department, and Fire Department will be involved, and meetings will be held with them. Ms. Ricks noted that permits are required for sided tents. Chairperson Rosas asked what the vendors would sell. Mr. Austin responded that they would sell t-shirts, jewelry, and CDs. Chairperson Rosas asked if he had ever promoted such an event. Mr. Austin responded that none like this outdoors, but he has done big indoor events from Miami to Oakland. This one he could do in his sleep.

Mayor Willis asked about Festival Field 4. Mr. Blaum said it’s the 12 ½ acres shared with HCC. The property will be fenced because alcohol will be served. All the activity will take place outdoors. Mr. Austin will have insurance in case of a weather event. Usually, these events take place rain or shine. If necessary, it will be rescheduled. Mr. Blaum pointed out that the Centre will be the ticket provider. The sales tax of 8.25% (\$19,053.12) will be deducted from the gross sales (\$250,000.00). Mr. Austin stated that the gates will open at 3 p.m., and the shows are from 4 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. or 10 p.m. Setup time will be two hours before the gates open, and it will be another hour or two for vendors and others to clear out afterward. The stage will be removed the same night and the fence the next day. There will be a range of ticket prices. Discussion followed on collecting the sales tax from the vendors. Mr. Blaum added that the Centre will collect rent and also \$2 for every ticket sold. This event will have economic impact – restaurants, hotels, shopping, gas stations. Chairperson Rosas stated that we have a lot riding on this – that both he and the City are successful - because he is the first to apply for this grant. She asked about a non-refundable deposit. Mr. Austin said that a deposit is in the contract. Again, the \$100,000.00 does not come into play until 30 days after the event. Chairperson Rosas asked if April 25 was a reasonable date to expect the deposit, and Mr. Austin responded, “sure”.

Mr. Blaum said that this is a major undertaking, and Mr. Austin has the background. He wants to be cautious and comfortable and plan accordingly. Mr. Austin has a lot riding on this, too. He wants it to be great and have people talking about it so he can return in the spring.

Mr. Blaum asked for Ms. Rutherford’s assistance in creating a template, for anyone that comes here, that includes language in the lease agreement about promoters providing hotel information. It was noted that this item will go before Council on April 20. Mr. Austin was advised to prepare his presentation. Mr. Austin asked if there was an incentive if he did more than 500 attendees. Mayor Willis responded that we would think about it. Mr. Blaum recommends the cap be 500 this time, because only \$100,000.00 was budgeted.

There were no public comments.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Mayor Willis made a motion to proceed with the HOT Funds Grant Application from Sugars Restaurant LLC, as outlined in the packet, and to include the \$5,000.00 non-refundable deposit by April 25. Chairperson Rosas seconded the motion, and it carried 2-0.

Mayor Willis made a motion to move to Item 9. Chairperson Rosas seconded the motion, and it carried 2-0.

The Stafford Centre Committee went into Executive Session. Ms. Hathorn was excused.

9. (a) Discussion and consideration regarding the FMSquared LLC annual incentive.

The Stafford Centre Committee went back into Open Session. There was no discussion.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Mayor Willis made a motion to proceed with FMSquared's annual incentive fee, as outlined, per the eligible amount of 20% (\$39,338.18). Chairperson Rosas seconded the motion, and it carried 2-0.

The Stafford Centre Committee went back to Item 3.

3. (a) Discussion and consideration regarding the request by Fort Bend County Women's Center for the City to co-sponsor the FBWC Gala at Stafford Centre on October 13 & 14, 2022.

The Gala event is on a Thursday and Friday. The Girlfriends Giggle is on a Wednesday and Thursday. Mr. Blaum noted that renting for a Friday night is no problem, and Wednesdays are flexible. He is trying to be consistent regarding requests. The Stafford Centre's out-of-pocket cost for the Gala is \$56.00. Mr. Blaum suggests accepting the Gala's request. The Girlfriends Giggle's direct expense is \$3,477.00. Mr. Blaum recommends splitting that amount 50/50 (\$1,738.50 each). Ms. Hathorn said that the Fort Bend Women's Center has scaled back the size and will use the Ballrooms and Suites and not the Theatre as they did before. The Fort Bend Women's Center has asked for the reduced rate of \$9,650.00 for the rent, the same as was paid in 2019. That amount is higher than our out-of-pocket expense. All our hard costs are covered. It was pointed out that the Fort Bend Women's Center had to get three bids, and there may be certain reasons they chose the Stafford Centre. For instance, they can bring in their own caterer. Mayor Willis said that Safari Texas is our competitor.

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Chairperson Rosas thinks the rent is low considering everyone else is raising rates on everything. Mr. Blaum said he evaluated it and moved forward with it. It's good business. Mayor Willis said that this event and the Nutcracker are the two largest in Fort Bend County.

There were no public comments.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Mayor Willis made a motion to accept the proposal of a co-sponsorship with the Fort Bend County Women's Center for the Gala event at the Stafford Center at a cost of \$9,650.00. Chairperson Rosas seconded the motion, and it carried 2-0.

4. (a) Discussion and consideration regarding the request by Fort Bend County Women's Center for the City to co-sponsor Girlfriend's Giggle at Stafford Centre on February 22 & 23, 2023.

Discussion for this item was included in item 3.(a).

There were no public comments.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Mayor Willis made a motion to accept the proposal of a co-sponsorship with the Fort Bend County Women's Center for the Girlfriend's Giggle event at the Stafford Centre at a cost of \$9,007.50. Chairperson Rosas seconded the motion, and it carried 2-0.

5. (a) Discussion and consideration regarding TXDot's request for the City to co-sponsor their November 15, 2022 banquet at Stafford Centre.

Ms. Hathorn said that TXDot has held its annual banquet at the Stafford Centre for many years. They took time off during Covid. They have requested that we accept their budget limit of \$2,753.00, the amount they paid previously. Mayor Willis thinks they will ask for the same rate next year. So, this should be discussed with them before their next budget cycle. Chairperson Rosas asked for the true cost. Ms. Hathorn responded that this was the true cost as of March 11. Mayor Willis would like to know how long they've been doing this.

There were no public comments.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Mayor Willis made a motion to accept the proposal of a co-sponsorship with TXDot for their banquet at the Stafford Centre at a cost of \$2,753.00. Chairperson Rosas seconded the motion, and it carried 2-0.

6. (a) Discussion and consideration regarding the request by Naqib Dhukka to transfer his deposit for June 10 & 11, 2022 to November 18, 2022, due to his recent diagnosis of cancer.

Ms. Hathorn reported that Mr. Dhukka had scheduled a wedding in June. In November, he was diagnosed with cancer and planned to cancel. His health is improving, and he feels he can have his wedding in November. It will be toned down from multiple days to just one day.

There were no public comments.

- (b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Mayor Willis made a motion to accept the staff recommendation for the Naqib Dhukka wedding event at the Stafford Centre on November 18, 2022. Chairperson Rosas seconded the motion, and it carried 2-0.

7. (a) Discussion and consideration regarding the City's Independence Day Celebration.

Ms. Ricks said this item was placed on the agenda in case there was anything to report, and there is nothing. Their next meeting will be held at the end of the month.

There were no public comments.

- (b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

No action was taken.

8. (a) Discussion and consideration regarding the HOT Funds Grant Application.

This item was a placeholder.

There were no public comments.

- (b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

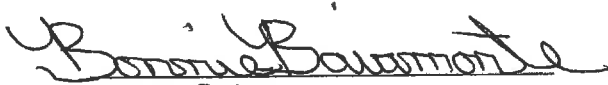
No action was taken.

10. Adjournment.

Mayor Willis made a motion to adjourn. Chairperson Rosas seconded the motion, and it carried 2-0.

The meeting adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

ATTEST:



Bonnie Balamonte
Acting City Secretary



Virginia Rosas
Committee Chairperson