

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Monday, 24th January, 2022

MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST WATERFRONT
AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McCabe (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Alderman Haire;
Alderman Copeland; and
Councillors Bradley, Cobain, Matt Collins,
Flynn, M. Kelly, Kyle, Magee, McAteer
Mulholland and Newton.

In attendance: Ms. J. Corkey, Chief Executive, ICC Belfast
(Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.);
Mr. I. Bell, Director of Finance and Systems, ICC Belfast
(Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.);
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December.

Declarations of Interest

No declaration of interest were recorded.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following 3 items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Performance Report Quarter 2 YTD 2021/22

The Chief Executive of ICC Belfast/BWUH Ltd. provided the Members with an update on Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.'s (BWUH Ltd.) performance for Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD) covering the period 1st April to 30th September 2021.

The Members were provided with the challenges and the opportunities which the business faced.

She explained that, as the venues had been mandated to close from 16th March 2020, and remained closed throughout most of the current financial year, there continued to be a major impact on sales revenue, overall financial results, and the majority of KPIs. However, as restrictions had been lifted, she explained that there had been an increase in activity with ticket sales for entertainment events now on a par with October 2019.

The company Training and Development Plan continued to offer a range of courses for all team members, with the first National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) course attendees having passed their assessments. She explained that additional members would commence NEBOSH training in January 2022 to ensure that the level of Health and Safety knowledge within the company was enhanced. In addition, and to ensure the seamless restart of events, all the Events Team had attended training covering health and safety, Covid risk assessments and safe operating in a Covid environment.

The Chief Executive provided the Committee with the risks and opportunities for the company.

The Director of Finance and Systems presented the Committee with an overview of the conference and delegate targets against the actual numbers.

A number of Members congratulated the team on hosting a very successful premiere for the film "Belfast" in recent weeks.

In response to a Member's question in respect of apprenticeships, the Chief Executive advised the Committee that they were planning on bringing on an intern and two apprenticeships.

In response to a further question regarding the company's significant loss of income due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Director of Economic advised the Committee that the Council had provided the company with deficit funding and that the Council had subsequently submitted a claim to the Department for Communities for a loss of earnings.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Draft Business Plan 2022/23

The Committee was provided with the Draft Business Plan for 2022/2023, which had been approved by the BWUH Ltd Board.

The Chief Executive of ICC Belfast provided the Members with the key achievements and accomplishments of 2021/2022 as well as an analysis of the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The Committee was advised that the business had adapted in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and hosted a number of socially distanced, hybrid and digital events across the venues.

She advised the Members that the ICC Belfast had been awarded the Most Innovative and Tech Friendly Venue title at the Event Technology Awards for a second consecutive year. The Committee was also advised that the venues won Best Response to Covid -19 at the Covid Response Awards.

The Chief Executive of ICC Belfast provided the Committee with an overview of competitor analysis and a list of potential future projects. She also advised the Members of the importance of stakeholder engagement.

The Director of Finance and Systems provided the Committee with a forecast of economic impact targets for the next five years and the sale pipeline.

The Committee was provided with an update on the strategic risks and how they were being managed.

A number of Members asked for further information in respect of the company's agreement with National Merchandise, given the recent articles in the press regarding the impact that it was having on artists.

In response the Chief Executive of ICC Belfast explained that they were aware of the concerns which had been raised and that they were reviewing the issue and, in terms of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility, she believed that the company should support artists and that it should not be about maximising income. The Director of Economic Development added that, while the data had shown that merchandise sales had increased five fold since the implementation of the agreement, they were looking at options. They agreed to provide the Committee with information relating to the issue at its next meeting.

After discussion, the Committee:

- noted the Draft BWUH Ltd Business Plan and recommended and approved it; and
- that an update would be provided to the next meeting in respect of the company's contract with National Merchandise.

Maintenance Update

The Director of Physical Programmes provided the Committee with an overview of a number of ongoing capital projects which were taking place within the Waterfront Hall/ICC Belfast.

The Committee was advised that the six escalators were on track to be replaced by the end of February 2022.

She explained that the current chiller units with the Waterfront Hall had been in place since the buildings construction and had reached the end of their economic life. The Committee was advised that they needed to be replaced with high efficiency equivalents to improve performance and resilience and she provided an update in respect of that process.

The Members were advised that a number of roof repairs were scheduled to take place and that the works had been coordinated to take place alongside the escalator repairs in order to minimise disruption within the venue.

The Director provided the Members with the details of further maintenance works which were scheduled to take place, including upgrades to the main auditorium smoke curtains and to the fire alarm system.

The Committee noted the update which had been provided and particularly noted the significant milestone which had been achieved with the commencement of the escalator replacement works.

Chairperson