

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Monday, 19th February, 2018

MEETING OF BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Copeland); and
Councillors Attwood, Campbell, Dorrian,
Graham, Johnston, Mullan and Nicholl.

In attendance: Mr. D. Durkan, Director of Development;
Ms. C. Toolan, Managing Director, Belfast Waterfront
and Ulster Hall Ltd;
Mr. I. Bell, Business Support Director, Belfast Waterfront
and Ulster Hall Ltd; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Haire, Councillor Hargey and Councillor O'Donnell.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd January 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 February.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

RESTRICTED ITEM

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

Performance Report – Q3

The Managing Director of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. (BWUH Ltd.) provided the Committee with an overview of the Company's performance during October, November and December 2017, of the year to date performance and analysis of actual performance against the budget for the financial year 2017/2018.

She outlined to the Members that it was the third quarter of the second year of operation for the new company, with the new Belfast Waterfront venue having been operational since the end of April, 2016.

She explained to the Members that the third quarter had been very busy, as expected, with a number of high profile events such as the BBC Good Food Show, the 2017 Northern Ireland Open in Snooker and JD Parties Christmas events.

The Members were advised that, for the year to date, BWUH Ltd. had delivered 37 conferences, generating 63,711 delegate days, which had delivered an economic impact of £35.5million for Belfast.

The Business Support Director advised the Shareholders' Committee that 49% of the company's net income for the third quarter had come from room hire, with a further 25% having come from ticket sales and additional sales costs.

The Members were advised that the Company's sales income for the year was 6% above target.

In relation to overall financial performance for the company, he advised the Committee that the income was forecasted to be ahead of plan and that he expected that the year-end budget target would be met.

The Managing Director provided the Committee with information on a number of proactive sales meetings which had taken place over the quarter, including a number of 'familiarisation trips' for key agencies working in the conference and events trade.

The Committee was advised of the new marketing materials, which included the new Belfast branding, and was given an update on the advancement of plans to create two separate streams through the BWUH Ltd's website, with a clear demarcation between the entertainment side of the business and the conference side.

She highlighted to the Members that work was ongoing in relation to the realignment of the Belfast Waterfront as an International Convention Centre.

The Committee noted that, while BWUH Ltd. was still working towards recruiting an appropriately trained electrician in order to provide an apprenticeship opportunity, the company currently had two placement students working within the business.

In response to a Member's question regarding the catering within the business, the Managing Director provided the Committee with an update on a number of issues which had previously been raised.

A number of Members congratulated the BWUH Ltd. team on the success of the recent Gradam Ceoil concert which had been held in the Belfast Waterfront and broadcast live on TG4.

The Managing Director addressed a Member's question regarding the Lanyon Place carpark behind the Belfast Waterfront, which was privately owned, in relation to its operating hours and its relationship with BWUH Ltd. management.

She provided the Members with an update on the organisational change within BWUH Ltd. and advised the Committee that she hoped to announce a new Director of Events Operations within the next few weeks.

She advised the Committee that Mrs. Laura Jackson, Audit Partner in BDO Northern Ireland, had been nominated to be appointed as a Non-Executive Director to the BWUH Ltd. Board. She advised the Members that Ms. Jackson had significant audit experience and had been an active Member of the company's Audit and Risk Committee since May 2017.

The Committee noted that a further meeting would be required, at a future date, in order to ratify a second Non-Executive Director appointment.

The Chairperson thanked the Managing Director and the Business Support Director for the update which had been provided and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee:

1. approved the appointment of Mrs. L. Jackson as a Non-Executive Director to the BWUH Ltd. Board; and
2. noted the Performance Report Update for Quarter 3 of 2017/2018.

Chairperson