

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF THE
SPORTS & EXHIBITION AUTHORITY OF PITTSBURGH
AND ALLEGHENY COUNTY
SPORTS COMMISSION
HELD FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2022
REMOTELY VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
COMMENCING AT 2:05 PM. E.S.T.

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County Sports Commission (the “Sports Commission”) was held upon proper notice on Friday, March 4, 2022, commencing at 2:05 P.M. E.S.T. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and guidance from public health experts, the meeting was conducted remotely via the online conferencing platform Zoom.

Members of the Commission present:

Sen. Jay Costa, Chairman
Sen. Wayne Fontana, Member
Tracey McCants-Lewis, Member
Michael Quatrini, Member
Sala Udin, Member

Also Present:

Rosanne Casciato, Mary Conturo, Paul McDonald Jr., Courtney Stoots, Doug Straley, and Rhea L. Thomas of the SEA; Morgan Hanson, Solicitor; Clarence Curry, CFC-3 Management Services; Matthew DeSantis, AC Sports; Sean Logan of the Convention Visitors Bureau of Greater Monroeville; Jennifer Hawkins, Rugby Sevens; John Bonassi, America’s Regatta; and User Names Tmanos and Philip.

Senator Jay Costa called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Mary Conturo followed with a roll call of the board members and advised that a quorum was present.

Beginning with public participation, Senator Costa asked if any members of the audience would like to address the board. Members of the public were offered participation by email, telephone, or the Zoom chat function. Mr. Paul McDonald Jr. stated that the Sports & Exhibition

Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (“SEA”) had not received any comments via email, no one registered to speak via telephone, and no comments were submitted via the Zoom chat function thus far. Seeing no request from the public to address the board, Senator Costa moved to the next item on the agenda, approval of the minutes from the meeting of November 16, 2021. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Senator Costa continued to the next item on the agenda, Report of SEA Chief Financial Officer regarding 2021 Annual Report – Activity of Restricted Account and each Subaccount.

Ms. Conturo stated that pursuant to Section 27.4 of Pennsylvania General Assembly Act 42 of 2017 (“Act 42”), an annual allocation has been made of funds from the Pennsylvania Gaming Economic Development and Tourism Fund (“EDTF”) for use by the SEA for the establishment, administration, and maintenance of a regional sports commission. In accordance with Act 42, the SEA deposits the funds received into a Restricted Account.

Pursuant to the programs and procedures adopted by the SEA and the Sports Commission, by January 31 of each year, the SEA is to provide the Sports Commission with an annual report of the activity of the Restricted Account and each subaccount, including but not limited to receipts and revenues, expenditures, outstanding obligations, and authorizations. The annual report shall be reviewed at the Sports Commission Board meeting held in the first quarter of the year.

Ms. Rosanne Casciato stated that the SEA received two payments of \$1.7 million-plus interest and currently there is \$3.4 million in the Restricted Account. Ms. Casciato stated further no expenses have been paid from the account so far. The SEA’s 5% portion has been allocated to its operating budget and of the remaining money, \$2,380,259 is allocated for sporting events and

\$850,092.57 is allocated to the four facilities (Heinz Field, PPG Paints Arena, PNC Park and David L. Lawrence Convention Center).

Ms. Conturo stated that these dollars comply with the programs and procedures in that 70% goes to the Sports Event Funding (“SEF”) Program, 25% goes to facility maintenance, and 5% goes to expenses.

Senator Costa asked if this was the extent of the report.

Ms. Casciato confirmed that is correct.

Senator Costa continued to the next item on the agenda under new business, recommendation of an SEF grant to Basketball Stars of America LLC for 12 weekend youth basketball tournaments to be held from March 4 – May 29, 2022, at various locations in Allegheny County.

Before continuing onto the first grant, Ms. Conturo provided background on the application process. Ms. Conturo stated that these grants are with respect to the 70% of the funding allocated to the SEF Program. Under the programs and procedures, the applications are first reviewed by the Sports Commission, and then the Sports Commission makes a recommendation to the SEA Board with respect to funding. In this round, four applications were received. If the Sports Commission votes today to recommend one or all of the applications, the recommendation would be submitted to the SEA Board. The SEA Board would then vote whether or not to authorize the grant and the entering into a grant agreement. Ms. Conturo further stated the programs and procedures provide that this funding program only provides funding on a reimbursement basis after the event has happened and a final report has been provided with respect to the event.

Senator Costa asked if there were any questions from the board.

Mr. Quatrini asked how the program was published and how these four respondents found out about this funding.

Ms. Conturo stated that a list was developed with organizations and media outlets to distribute a press release to. A press release was issued in December 2021 and again in early January 2022. The press release provided a general outline of the program, where the application can be found, the objective of the program, and how applications would be evaluated. Ms. Conturo further stated the application asks how the organization found out about the program. Two organizations mentioned they learned about the program through media/news articles, one found out via email, and the other learned about it from VisitPittsburgh.

Senator Costa asked if there were any questions, hearing none, Senator Costa asked Ms. Conturo to continue with the first applicant.

Ms. Conturo stated that Basketball Stars of America (“BSA”) is requesting funding to support its 2022 Spring Basketball Tournament Circuit to be held at various Allegheny County locations over 12 weekends from March 4 through May 29, 2022. This is an established event, and BSA believes it has the potential to grow larger. The budget for the event is \$350,000.

Ms. Conturo further stated the 12 weekend BSA tournaments planned for 2022 include boys and girls teams ranging in age from 2nd to 12th grade. It is projected that the event will generate approximately 41,000 visitors, 16,200 from outside of Pennsylvania, with approximately \$7.5 million in visitor spending, including 19,307 hotel room nights.

If approved, the \$50,000 SEF grant funds will be used to pay rental fees for basketball courts at municipal or publicly owned facilities in Allegheny County (\$10,000) and to provide tournament fee discounts to teams that might not be able to afford the trip or pay the registration fee otherwise (\$40,000). The reasons the grant would be recommended to the SEA Board for

funding include economic impact, the potential for the event to grow and expand, and the use of the funds to provide discounts to the deserving teams.

Senator Costa asked if there were any questions from the board. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve. On a motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was approved:

RESOLUTION NO. SC004

RESOLVED that in accordance with the ACT 42 EDTF Restricted Account Programs and Procedures the SEA Sports Commission hereby recommends to the SEA Board that a \$50,000 SEF grant be provided to Basketball Stars of America LLC for its 2022 Spring Basketball Tournament Circuit (12 weekend youth basketball tournaments to be held from March 4 – May 29, 2022, at various locations in Allegheny County), pursuant to a grant agreement substantially in the form provided; and further that the proper officers and members of the SEA Sports Commission are hereby authorized to do all acts as may be necessary and proper to carry out the intent and purpose of this resolution. All resolutions or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this resolution are hereby repealed or rescinded, cancelled or annulled so far as the same affects of this resolution.

Senator Costa continued to the next item on the agenda, recommendation of an SEF grant in the amount of \$75,000 to the Convention Visitors Bureau of Greater Monroeville in support of 13 weekend youth baseball/softball tournaments to be held from May 30 – July 31, 2022, at various locations in Allegheny County by Atlantic Coast Baseball LLC (“AC Sports”).

Ms. Conturo stated that the Convention Visitors Bureau of Greater Monroeville (“Visit Monroeville”) requests funding to support a series of youth baseball and/or softball tournaments to be held by AC Sports on 13 weekends from April 30 – July 31, 2022, at various locations in Allegheny County. Age groups range from 8 to 18 with boys and girls participating.

Ms. Conturo further stated AC Sports has been running tournaments for 15 years, and this grant will help maintain the event with increasing costs and provide an opportunity for growth. The budget for the event is \$581,620.

Visit Monroeville projects that the 2022 event will provide 8,521 hotel rooms with total projected revenue impact of \$10.43 million. If approved, grant funds will be used to pay for the rental of municipal/publicly owned fields and purchases of baseball and softballs. The grant amount recommended is \$75,000. The reasons the grant would be recommended to the SEA Board for funding include the economic impact and the help it would provide to continue the event whose costs are increasing with the opportunity for growth and expansion.

Ms. Conturo introduced Senator Sean Logan from Visit Monroeville.

Mr. Logan congratulated Ms. Conturo on her upcoming retirement and wished her the best. Mr. Logan indicated this event is one of the largest youth tournaments in Allegheny County and encouraged the Sports Commission's affirmative recommendation. Logan further indicated Matt DeSantis from AC Sports was also in attendance.

Senator Costa stated the program has reached out into Westmoreland and wondered if there was any concern that the organization would leave Allegheny County and go into other areas.

Mr. Logan stated that it is always a possibility, but it's incumbent on Visit Monroeville to protect the tournament to keep it in Allegheny County. He confirmed that other counties do reach out to Mr. DeSantis throughout the year to encourage him to bring the tournament to their areas.

Mr. DeSantis stated that Monroeville is where we started. We go outside of Allegheny County for overflow reasons if there are not enough hotel rooms where the fields are.

Senator Costa asked if the proceeds from the SEF Program would only be used in Allegheny County.

Ms. Conturo confirmed that is correct and indicated that that is one of the conditions to be included in the grant agreement.

Senator Costa asked if there were any questions from the board. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve. On a motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was approved:

RESOLUTION NO. SC005

RESOLVED that in accordance with the ACT 42 EDTF Restricted Account Programs and Procedures the SEA Sports Commission hereby recommends to the SEA Board that a \$75,000 SEF grant be provided to the Convention Visitors Bureau of Greater Monroeville (d/b/a Visit Monroeville) in support of 13 weekend youth baseball/softball tournaments to be held from April 30 – July 31, 2022, at various locations in Allegheny County by Atlantic Coast Baseball LLC (AC Sports), pursuant to a grant agreement substantially in the form provided; and further that the proper officers and members of the SEA Sports Commission are hereby authorized to do all acts as may be necessary and proper to carry out the intent and purpose of this resolution. All resolutions or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this resolution are hereby repealed or rescinded, cancelled or annulled so far as the same affect this resolution.

Senator Costa continued to the next item on the agenda, recommendation of a SEF program grant in the amount of \$70,000 to Sevens Entertainment, LLC (“Premier Rugby Sevens”) in support of a Rugby 7s tournament to be held at Highmark Stadium on a Saturday in June or July 2022, together with training during the five days prior at locations in Allegheny County.

Ms. Conturo stated the application was submitted in conjunction with SportsPITTSBURGH, an arm of VisitPITTSBURGH. The event would be a Pittsburgh tour stop for a Rugby 7s (a short form of the game of rugby) tournament. The Pittsburgh tournament would occur on a Saturday in June or July 2022. On the day of the tournament, there will be six professional men’s teams and four professional women’s teams that would play matches

throughout the day. Matches are made up of seven-minute halves. The tournament is expected to be held at Highmark Stadium.

Ms. Conturo further stated the five days leading up to the Saturday tournament consist of training programs at two locations in Allegheny County. Ms. Conturo further stated there will also be community engagement activities such as local clinics and other integration with youth organizations during the training days. The budget for this event is \$638,200.

Ms. Conturo stated Rugby 7s is sanctioned by USA Rugby and is the form of rugby showcased in the Olympic games. USA Rugby is currently in negotiations to host the Men's World Cup in 2031 and the Women's World Cup in 2033 of Rugby 7s. If the games are awarded to USA Rugby, Pittsburgh could be one of 30 cities vying to be a host city.

Ms. Conturo further stated that it is expected, going forward, that Pittsburgh would be one stop in a planned four-six event 2022 tournament season for Premier Rugby Sevens. The long-term plan is that Pittsburgh be part of an annual tour, and by 2027 to grow the event from one tournament day to two and from 10 to 22 teams. Attendance for the event is estimated at 5,640. VisitPITTSBURGH estimates that the event will produce 1,755 hotel room nights and \$1,345,628 in visitor spending.

Ms. Conturo stated the SEF grant funds would be used for the rental and operational costs of Highmark Stadium and needed venue build-out (e.g., locker rooms) and/or the rental costs of the training facilities in Allegheny County.

Ms. Conturo further stated the reasons the grant would be recommended to the SEA Board for funding include the following: the economic impact, the national/international fan base for Rugby 7s providing the potential of creating positive national/international media exposure for the region, there is an opportunity that this event could become an annual event for Pittsburgh and

could grow from one tournament day to two, the event could increase Pittsburgh's chances of being a location for the Men's World Cup in 2031 and the Women's World Cup in 2033, if USA Rugby is awarded those games, and the community engagement activities such as local clinics and other integration with youth organizations that could have a legacy impact for the sport in the region. Ms. Conturo further stated Jennifer Hawkins from VisitPITTSBURGH is present on the call.

Senator Costa asked if there were any questions.

Senator Fontana asked if the people at Highmark Stadium are committed to this.

Ms. Hawkins confirmed that is correct.

Senator Fontana stated that this event being held at Highmark Stadium will bring the people to the South Side, Station Square, and Downtown Pittsburgh with the temptation to spend money which is a good thing. Senator Fontana further stated this is a great opportunity to grow the game of rugby in our area.

Senator Costa asked if there were any questions from the board. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve. On a motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was approved:

RESOLUTION NO. SC006

RESOLVED that in accordance with the ACT 42 EDTF Restricted Account Programs and Procedures the SEA Sports Commission hereby recommends to the SEA Board that a \$70,000 SEF grant be provided to Sevens Entertainment, LLC (d/b/a Premier Rugby Sevens) for Rugby 7s tournament to be held at Highmark Stadium on a Saturday in June or July 2022, together with training during the five days prior at locations in Allegheny County, pursuant to a grant agreement substantially in the form provided; and further that the proper officers and members of the SEA Sports Commission are hereby authorized to do all acts as may be necessary and proper to carry out the intent and purpose of this resolution.. All resolutions or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this resolution

are hereby repealed or rescinded, cancelled or annulled so far as the same affect this resolution.

Senator Costa continued to the next item on the agenda, recommendation of a SEF grant in the amount of \$75,000 to Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta, Inc. (“America’s Regatta”) in support of its Formula One Powerboat Races to be held July 28 through July 31, 2022.

Ms. Conturo stated that America’s Regatta requests funding to support a four-day event of Formula One Powerboat races with a field of 34 drivers. The event would take place July 28 – July 31, 2022, in the Pittsburgh waters, and would use North Shore Riverfront Park and Point State Park. The applicant reports that the event would be the largest inland regatta featuring the most Formula One Powerboats ever assembled in the United States and that the sport has growing national and international interest. The event has a budget of \$1,208,505.

Ms. Conturo further stated the American Power Boat Association (“APBA”) is the sanctioning body for Formula One Powerboat Racing, and the most recent Pittsburgh Regatta (2018) was only a three-day event with a smaller focus on Formula One Powerboat racing. Ms. Conturo stated the applicant reports that the three-day 2018 Regatta attracted 850,000 spectators, used 8,500 hotel room nights and generated \$38 million in consumer spending. The applicant estimates the 2022 four-day event will attract 1,200,000 visitors, use 13,000 – 15,000 room nights and generate \$72 million in consumer spending.

Ms. Conturo stated as part of the grant application and the requirements for funding is that the event as intended occurs. Before funding is released, there is a requirement of a final report which will confirm and detail the specifics of the event and provide any needed backup.

Ms. Conturo further stated the SEF grant funds would be used to pay the costs of the City of Pittsburgh services (Public Works, Police, EMTs, etc.), private security, safety boats, and license fees/rentals for North Shore Riverfront Park and/or Point State Park.

Ms. Conturo stated the reasons the grant would be recommended to the SEA Board for funding include the following: the economic impact, the national/international fan base for Formula One Powerboat Racing, the event has the potential of creating positive national/international media exposure for the region, that the City has not had the regatta since 2018, and that this restructured regatta has the potential of becoming an annual event. Ms. Conturo stated John Bonassi from Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta is present on the call.

Senator Costa asked if there were any questions from the board.

Mr. Udin asked if there is any connection between this organization and this event and the controversial Three Rivers Regatta that did not occur in 2019.

Mr. Bonassi stated that there is no connection or affiliation, and this is a rebranded group known as America's Regatta. Mr. Bonassi further stated this regatta is completely restructured, with protocols in place to avoid any of the negative occurrences that occurred in 2019.

Senator Fontana stated that this has the potential to really grow the area for years to come, and hopefully they can get the needed sponsorships behind them.

Mr. Bonassi stated that that is exactly what they plan to do and that the authorization of an SEF grant is an excellent start for continued fundraising and sponsorship initiatives. Mr. Bonassi further stated there is a major challenge in that it costs approximately \$750,000 to \$1 million to hold the event. And, because it is free to attend, the sponsors are the stakeholders with respect to making the regatta successful.

Senator Fontana stated that this has the potential to bring a focus on Pittsburgh and its three rivers for a big boost to tourism if sponsors can get behind it.

Senator Costa asked if there were any questions from the board. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve. On a motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was approved:

RESOLUTION NO. SC007

RESOLVED that in accordance with the ACT 42 EDTF Restricted Account Programs and Procedures the SEA Sports Commission hereby recommends to the SEA Board that a \$75,000 SEF grant be provided to The Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta, Inc. (d/b/a America's Regatta) for Formula One Powerboat Races to be held July 28 through July 31, 2022, pursuant to a grant agreement substantially in the form provided; and further that the proper officers and members of the SEA Sports Commission are hereby authorized to do all acts as may be necessary and proper to carry out the intent and purpose of this resolution. All resolutions or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this resolution are hereby repealed or rescinded, cancelled or annulled so far as the same affect this resolution.

Senator Costa asked if anyone in the audience desired to address the board.

Mr. McDonald Jr. stated that the public was provided with three options for public participation: email, telephone, or the Zoom chat function. No public comments were submitted via email, there were no registrations to submit a public comment via telephone, and no comments were submitted via the Zoom chat function.

Senator Costa thanked everyone for their participation along with the members and staff that worked through this application process, as this is a historic moment as these are the first four grants to be recommended.

Senator Costa, with there being no additional comments or business, asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 P.M.