

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Monday, 19th October, 2020

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

Members present: Alderman Haire (Chairperson);
Councillors Canavan, Matt Collins,
Flynn, Kyle, 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;
Mrs. C. O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk
Services;
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Copeland and Councillors Cobain, Groves and M. Kelly.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th February were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd March.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Welcome

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Ms. J. Corkey, the new Chief Executive of the ICC Belfast, to her first meeting of the Shareholders' Committee and wished her well in her role.

Restricted Items

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

BWUH Ltd. Performance Report – Quarter 2, YTD 2020/2021

The Chief Executive of the ICC Belfast, Ms. Corkey, provided the Members with an update on the company's performance for quarter two, year to date, covering the period 1st April to 30th September, 2020.

She explained that, given that the venues had been closed from 16th March due to the Covid19 pandemic and the major impact it had had on sales revenue, very few Key Performance Indicators had been reported on during the year to date.

The Director of Finance & Systems advised of the loss that was projected for the year and outlined that the company's financial performance had understandably been majorly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Members were reminded that the Council had made a claim for loss of income to the Department for Communities (DfC) to mitigate the impact of Covid-19.

The Chief Executive explained that both venues remained in standby mode and that staff were working hard to retain business and to defer events which had been due to take place in 2020 to future years. She explained the importance of virtual and hybrid events to the business.

The Members were provided with an update on the Corporate Social Responsibility of the business.

The Committee was provided with an update on the staff of BWUH Ltd., including the number which had been furloughed. The Chief Executive outlined that managers had continued to hold 'keep in touch' days with furloughed team members, and that, where possible, she had attended those meetings to interact with the team.

In response to a Member's question regarding those staff members who had been furloughed, the Director of Economic Development advised that a report covering BWUH Ltd. employees would be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration on 23rd October 2020.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the update which had been provided.

Extending Directors' contracts to 31st December, 2020

The Director of Economic Development advised the Committee that an extension to the contracts for three of the existing directors of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. had been approved. He explained that the extension, to 31st December, 2020, had been approved, on 30th July, by the Deputy Chief Executive of Belfast City Council, and the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Shareholders' Committee.

The three Directors concerned were Mr. A. Dixon, Mr. R. Holt and Mr. P. McClughan.

The Committee was advised that the extension was to accommodate the pause in the recruitment process which had been caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The previous contracts were scheduled to end by 31st July, 2020.

Noted.

BWUH Internal Audit Update

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) provided the Committee with an update on the outcome of an internal audit which had been undertaken at the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall (BWUH) Ltd. in January and February 2020.

She explained to the Members that the focus of the audit was on core financials, risk management and performance management, as well as following up on any outstanding recommendations from previous audits. The Members were advised that the draft report had been agreed with the BWUH Ltd. Acting Chief Executive and that the Executive Summary was presented to the BWUH Ltd. Audit and Risk Committee in April 2020.

The Head of AGRS provided the Committee with an overview of performance management and finance and risk management and the respective improvements which had been recommended.

She advised that management had agreed all the recommendations and had put in place an action plan to implement all actions by the end of May 2020. The Members were advised that the implementation of the actions would be followed up as part of the 2020/2021 internal audit.

The Committee noted that AGRS was reviewing the internal audits that were originally planned to be undertaken in BWUH Ltd in 2020/21 and determining any changes that might be needed to take account of the impact of Covid-19 and any related assurance needs. She explained that that would be done in conjunction with BWUH Ltd. management and would be agreed with the BWUH Ltd Audit and Risk Committee in November 2020.

The Committee was advised that the findings from the 2020/2021 internal audit would be reported to future meetings of the BWUH Ltd. Shareholders' Committee.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and thanked the Head of AGRS for her attendance.

Chairperson