

# **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**

Monday, 18th November, 2019

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

Members present: Councillor Flynn (Deputy Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford);  
Aldermen Copeland and Haire; and  
Councillors Cobain, Magee and McAteer.

In attendance: Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;  
Ms. C. Toolan, Chief Executive, 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.

(Councillor Flynn, Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor Mulholland (Chairperson) and Councillors Canavan, Groves and Kelly.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th November.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### **Schedule of Meetings 2020**

The Committee approved the schedule of meetings for the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee as outlined below and agreed that all meetings would commence at 5.15 pm:

- Monday, 20th January;
- Monday, 17th February;
- Monday, 18th May;
- Monday, 15th June;
- Monday 19th October; and
- Monday 16th November.

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**Presentations**

**Catering at BWUH Ltd.**

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Mr. A. Dougan, Hospitality Belfast, to the meeting.

Mr. Dougan advised the Committee that he was delighted that the company had signed a four year catering contract with BWUH Ltd. He highlighted the importance of using local Northern Ireland produce, from local producers, in such a high profile business within the city, which would ensure that tourists and conference delegates to the city were given a true Belfast experience.

The Committee thanked Mr. Dougan for his presentation and he retired from the meeting.

**Digital First Approach**

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Ms. S. Geddis, Business Development and Client Marketing Manager at BWUH Ltd., to the meeting.

Ms. Geddis provided the Committee with a detailed overview of the significant changes which the business had carried out in terms of marketing its events. She highlighted that significant engagement had been carried out with key stakeholders, with a core focus on the customer.

As a result of the changes, she advised the Committee that the business had seen a significant increase in online ticket sales as a result of customer engagement through the company's digital platforms.

The Members were provided with a recent example of how the business worked with clients to ensure that their aims were met, by way of a personalised digital campaign.

The Committee thanked Ms. Geddis for her presentation and she retired from the meeting.

**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.**

**BWUH Ltd. Quarter 2 Performance Report**

The Chief Executive of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. (BWUH Ltd.) confirmed to the Committee that a new catering contract for the company had been signed, with Hospitality Belfast, in October 2019 for four (plus two) years.

The Business Support Director advised the Committee of the Company's performance during July, August and September 2019, and provided a detailed analysis

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of actual performance against the budget, in relation to sales and overhead costs. The Members were advised that the company was on target to achieve its goals.

The Members were advised of the company's strategic goals and how it was achieving, or surpassing, the targets in relation to the number of conferences held, the number of delegate days and the economic return to the City by 2020/2021. The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the company was on track to achieve its economic return aim one year early.

The Committee was given an overview of the sales pipeline for conferences and entertainment for the coming years.

She reminded the Members that 2020/2021 remained a challenging year for the company, and added that the continued uncertainty surrounding Brexit was a contributing factor.

She provided the Committee with an update on the company's Corporate Social Responsibility programme. She reported that a team of BWUH staff had recently taken part in a Dragon Boat Race for the Mary Peters' Trust and that the team barbecue had been held in aid of Autism NI. She also outlined that the company had initiated a corporate "step challenge" to encourage health and wellbeing amongst staff.

The Committee was advised that the ICC Belfast had been Highly Commended in the Best Venue and that Visit Belfast had won the Best Events Destination at the recent C&IT Awards.

It was reported that the Conditions Survey had since been completed, to establish the priorities for the capital programme, and that it was currently being reviewed.

The Chief Executive explained that the company had recently employed two marketing students on a casual basis to gain experience within the BWUH Marketing Team and that it had also approached the Ulster University and Queen's University to fill a one year student placement within the Sales and Marketing Team, commencing June 2020.

She also advised that a number of Event Management students from the Ulster University had been invited to attend the ICC Belfast later that week to gain first-hand knowledge of how the team prepared for a major event.

The Members were reminded that the Board would be seeking two replacement Board Directors in April 2020.

The Chief Executive explained that the Board of BWUH Ltd would attend the Shareholders' Committee meeting on 17th February, 2020, and suggested that that meeting could take place in the ICC again.

The Committee noted the update which had been provided.

Deputy Chairperson