



GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 8, 2021
Minutes

The City of Rome General Administration Committee met at 11:00 AM on Wednesday, September 8, 2021 in the Sam King Room.

Members present:

Chairman, Jamie Doss	Commissioner, Jim Bojo
Commissioner, Bill Collins	Sammy Rich, City Manager
Meredith Ulmer, Assistant City Manager	Joe Smith, City Clerk
Toni Rhinehart, Finance Director	Kristy Shepard, HR/RM Director
Johnny Bunch, OTS Director	Lisa Smith, Tourism/RTC
Mark Green, Recording Secretary	

Members absent:

Andy Davis, Patrick Kirn

Chairman Jamie Doss called the meeting to order at 11:14 AM.

I. Tennis Center Operation Agreement

Sammy Rich presented a discussion regarding a potential agreement with Cliff Drysdale Tennis, a tennis management company. Rich began, "We accepted proposals to find a private tennis operator... We had a really good proposal from Cliff Drysdale Tennis (CDT)." Rich and Lisa Smith notified the committee that a group, comprised of City and Berry College employees, was formed to review the proposal. Rich continued, "We do not have a contract yet. We are comfortable enough to enter into negotiations with this group and move forward." Rich asked the Commissioners for permission to move forward with the negotiation phase of the process. Rich informed the committee that CDT's parent company, Troon, is the same company that owns Indigo Golf Partners, who currently manages Stonebridge Golf. Rich asked Lisa Smith if she would talk more about CDT.

Lisa Smith responded, "CDT has a very unique perspective on the tennis business. Their tennis business is not just about the business of tennis. They also care about creating experiences... they have a large travel aspect to their company." Smith had nothing but positive things to say about CDT.

Rich commented, "They are the largest (tennis) management company in the US. It sounds to me like they have a pretty good depth to their organization. With that, they are going to have expertise that we don't have." Rich notified the committee that CDT's initial proposal includes a management fee of \$10,000 to be paid monthly, and an annual incentive tied to operating profit (3%) ... One of the things they offer is an annual capital contribution of \$10,000. They seem to have a really good proposal."

Commissioner Bojo questioned, "Do they hire all of the staff?" Rich responded, "Theoretically, yes." Bojo questioned again, "Do they pay for it out of the \$10,000 a month (management fee), or do we pay for it on top of that (management fee)?" Rich responded, "That is the whole magic of how the facility works. We will still have operation money going in. We will still have capital requirements, because we will ultimately own the facilities... it will be a very similar relationship to how Stonebridge has worked out.

Joe Smith interjected, "Stonebridge, 15+ years ago, they (the management company, Billy Casper Golf) did absorb all of the employees... some (employees) lasted a short time, and some lasted a long time." Joe Smith notified the committee that all employee salaries are paid out of the management fee at Stonebridge.

Commissioner Collins commented, "We were probably faced with the same thing years ago (with Stonebridge Golf). We knew we were not in the golf business to manage golf... If this company is the guru of tennis, they didn't get to where they are at by not doing the right thing... I think it is a chance worth taking to move forward with the negotiation."

Commissioner Doss questioned, "Is there a good chance the director will move here from another community?" Lisa Smith responded, "They will definitely put out a search to the public." Doss continued, "If they manage 33 other facilities, will there be a conflict of interest with our tournaments?" Rich responded, "No. This would, by far, be the largest facility. This would be a big feather in their cap... They get that this is a tournament center for economic impact." Doss and Collins asked additional questions regarding CDT's proposal for the City's tennis facilities.

Collins questioned, "How soon will we be able to switch over (to CDT)?" Rich answered, "The sooner we get them (here), the better we are."

Doss questioned, "For the \$10,000 a month, what exactly are we getting? My opinion is that we haven't failed with our tennis center, but we do want to take it to the next level." After some discussion, a motion was made.

MOTION: Commissioner Bojo motioned for the City to move forward with negotiating a contract with Cliff Drysdale Tennis.

2nd motion: Commissioner Collins seconded the motion.

II. 401(a) Defined Contribution Plan – Match Percentage

Joe Smith began, "As you all know, the City has been offering a match for moneys that employees put into their 457(b) accounts... The City would match up to 2.5%... It is a great option for employees in addition to their Defined Benefit plan." Smith reminded the Committee that the match percentage decreased from 2.5% to 1.25% in 2009. Smith also reminded the committee that the match percentage was raised from 1.25% to 1.5% last year.

Jamie Doss stated, "From my seat, I am totally in favor of raising that matching amount... It is an incentive to retain employees."

Bill Collins questioned, "The Commissioners are considered part time employees. Is there an opportunity for them to participate and become vested?" Joe Smith responded, "Not in the defined benefits plan. They (Commissioners) can participate in the 457(b), but there is no match with the 401(a)."

Doss asked, "Is the recommendation to go to 2%?" Joe Smith responded, "Yes."

Bojo questioned, "If we decide to raise it, is it immediate?" Toni Rhinehart answered, "Our recommendation would be to make the change effective January 1, 2022."

MOTION: Commissioner Collins motioned for the City to increase the 401(a) Defined Contribution Plan Match Percentage to 2.0%

2nd motion: Commissioner Bojo seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 11:57 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Green, Recording Secretary