

STAFF REPORT

To: Mayor and City Council

Date: May 15, 2007

From: David Pisha, Civic Center Director

Via: Gary W. Jackson, City Manager

Re: Civic Center Event Management

Summary Statement: The purpose of this staff report is to provide an overview of the Asheville Civic Center's event management practices as requested by City Council's Public Safety Committee.

Review: The Asheville Civic Center is dedicated operating the facility according to four key guiding principles:

1. The Asheville Civic Center will provide an enjoyable and safe venue for patrons.
2. The facility will maximize the City of Asheville's financial solvency by operating as efficiently as possible.
3. The venue will serve as a public gathering space with a diverse mix of events and activities.
4. The staff will provide an exceptional level of customer service to both facility patrons and those who rent the venue.

These principles are intended to guide the professional management of every event at the Civic Center and to inform the public and our stakeholders about the standards they can expect regardless of the type or size of event they attend.

Having said that, each event at the Civic Center is unique and has its own operational requirements; therefore, certain aspects of event management, including security, are determined on an event-by-event basis within the framework of industry best practices. When working with a promoter to book an event, we will consider several factors when determining the level of security required including the event's expected ticket sales, the type of seating in the venue, past experience with similar events, industry benchmarks, etc.

During the last few years, the Asheville Civic Center has experienced a steady increase in the number of large, arena events. These events typically require more security due to larger crowds and open seating arrangements. Because of this shift in our event mix, the Asheville Civic Center has looked at other venues for best security practices and implemented a Concert Action Plan to assure our facility exceeds industry standards when it comes to the safety of our patrons.

Based on the results of the Concert Action Plan, the facility has adopted standard practices like prohibiting large bags from all events to enhance the venue's security. The Civic Center has also improved coordination with other city departments and divisions including the Asheville Police Department, the sanitation division and the traffic engineering division to ensure patrons have a safe, enjoyable experience inside and outside of the building.

Recommendation: A report on the Civic Center's event management plan was presented to the Public Safety Committee on April 3, 2007. As recommended by this committee, this briefing has been scheduled for City Council's May 15, 2007 meeting.