



City of Marquette, MI

300 West Baraga Ave
Marquette, Michigan 49855

Meeting Agenda City Commission

WORK SESSION

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

5:15 PM

Citizens' Forum, Lakeview Arena

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Present: Davis, Gottlieb, Hanley, Larson, Mayer, Ottaway, Schloegel

Commissioner Michael Larson moved to approve the agenda with two changes, eliminating the first public comment period and adding a commissioner comment section at the end of the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Cary Gottlieb and carried unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Hanley had no announcements.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

This item was removed.

1. Discussion - Lakeview Arena

City Manager Karen Kovacs provided a history of Lakeview Arena and discussed its impact in the area. She discussed the ongoing struggle to prioritize the maintenance and improvements of the facility against the city's ongoing budget needs. She said that limited financing options, staffing constraints, and restricted opportunities for revenue diversification can make municipal arena management difficult when compared to private options.

Charlie Holsworth and Josh Paquette of BASE Hospitality then presented the outlines of a proposal to assume ownership and operation of Lakeview Arena as a nonprofit entity. Their goals include keeping the facility as an ice rink and reinvesting in it as a long-term community asset, offering year-round ice and expanding use for local and out-of-town tournaments, increasing event flexibility and maximizing underutilized space, and leveraging private-sector advantages in capital investment, staffing, and fundraising.

They stated that a nonprofit operator is well positioned to make long-term

improvements and attract outside investment while preserving the arena's core community role.

Following the presentations, City Commissioners shared a range of questions and comments regarding the proposal. Discussion focused on the arena's financial structure and outstanding debt obligations, future planning and due diligence, affordability and access, long-term viability and a desire to ensure the arena remains a community asset.

Commissioners voiced interest in continuing the discussion about the plan, and requested more details, including a business plan, a clear timeline, and a summary of management structures from other arenas in the region.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

Margaret Brumm spoke about the local importance of hockey and of Lakeview Arena and said tonight's presenters may represent the best option for the future of both.

Amanda Gobert expressed cautious optimism in the proposal and said a transition like this could succeed if it's done well.

Amanda Beerman said this could be a good move and said City Commissioners were asking good questions. She requested a long-term guarantee of ice rates and rental fees for user groups.

Nicole Harrington voiced concerns about possible fee increases and the impact on small user groups.

Barry Greenleaf said he was involved with the curling club and he voiced a desire for assurances that even small clubs would remain supported.

Becky Lloyd discussed the motivations behind public and private ownership models and said it is a slippery slope to begin cutting programs or selling assets based on what's profitable.

Karla Kramer said that public ownership is intended to provide wide accessibility, and she talked about how many people come from neighboring townships and cities to utilize the arena.

Annabelle Noe highlighted how often local youth use the facility and asked that it remain accessible for them.

Susan Lemire said she strongly opposed selling the arena outright.

Doug Garrow supported the intentions of the proposal, but urged a long-term vision over speed.

Kimber Anderson spoke about the figure skating club and stressed the need for ice availability and inclusive planning.

2. Commission Comments

Commissioner Davis said she would like to see a business plan. She said she has a lot of questions, and is looking forward to getting more information, but she said she doesn't want to move too quickly.

Commissioner Gottlieb said he thought he was elected in part due to his dedication to local recreation and that he takes that seriously. He said he would need substantially more information before making a decision.

Commissioner Larson said he found the proposal promising and supports continued dialogue and due diligence. He said he would like to review examples

from other communities.

Mayor Pro Tem Schloegel said Lakeview is a public asset and is a community and economic driver. He said he can see possible benefits to moving forward with a plan like this and said he would support additional conversations and meetings.

Commissioner Mayer said he supports further exploration of the proposal.

Commissioner Ottaway emphasized long-term planning and preserving public assets. He said that the city needs to be cautious with something like this and should be thinking decades into the future. He said he would support a first right of refusal being included in any sale.

Mayor Hanley said she agreed that any sale should include a first right of refusal clause, allowing the city to regain possession of the arena if the purchasers have economic issues in the future.

City Manager Kovacs thanked the Commission, and said she has heard requests for additional documentation, including prior reports, comparative data, and a full business plan from BASE. She also thanked and praised staff for their efforts.

Adjournment

Mayor Hanley adjourned the work session at 7:07 p.m.

Jessica Hanley, Mayor

Kyle Whitney, City Clerk

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