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City of FRESNO GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

File#: 12501852 Opening Date: 3/14/2025

Request for Qualifications Evaluation Committee Report

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

RUTH F. QUINTO, CPA – Assistant City Manager, Office of the Mayor & City Manager

NICK MASCIA – Assistant City Manager, Office of the Mayor & City Manager

JENNIFER RUIZ – Deputy City Manager, Office of the Mayor & City Manager

BRIAN BARR – Director, General Services Department

CLIFFORD TRAUGH – Assistant Director, General Services Department

KARIN TEMPLE – Community Member

BACKGROUND:

The City solicited proposals from qualified private management firms for the operation and promotion of the Fresno Convention and Entertainment Center (FCEC). It is the City's desire to find a firm that can deliver a broad array of cultural, educational, entertainment, sporting, meeting, conference, and exhibition activities to provide a wide variety of events for the region's residents while maximizing the event mix to optimize revenues available for reinvestment in the facility. The City has an existing contract for management services of the FCEC, however, it expired in June 2025 and was recently extended to December 31, 2025 to allow additional time for the bidding process.

The City advertised on Planet Bids on February 21, 2025. There were 15 prospective bidders. At the conclusion of the RFP opening, three proposers submitted proposals as follows:

1. ATG Entertainment
2. The Sport Facilities Company
3. ASM Global (current contract holder)

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS:

RFQ Release: 2/21/2025

Opening: 3/14/2025

Committee Evaluation: 3/28/2025

Proposer Interviews: 4/03 – 4/04/2025

Final Committee Selection: *Recommendation to Reject All Bids

EVALUATION CRITERIA AS LISTED IN THE RFQ:

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1. Qualifications
2. City objectives
3. Demonstrated experience and understanding of the local demographics
4. Community expectations
5. Regional tourism dynamics
6. Financial capacity and soundness
7. Timeframe of the development Response
8. Capacity to perform the proposed development within the timeframe
9. Any other factors, whether quantifiable or not

EVALUATION COMMITTEE NOTES:

ATG ENTERTAINMENT

The company presented as a professional and strong team that is very experienced in the theater industry. They operate internationally and have 24 venues in the United States. However, the evaluation committee's primary concern about this vendor is that they did not have experience operating convention center venues. Fresno would be the first convention center venue in their portfolio which poses a significant risk that was not sufficiently addressed in the interview discussions.

THE SPORTS FACILITIES COMPANY

The company demonstrated a strong administrative corporate framework to support the network of venues that they currently manage. The committee's primary concern is that the company is almost exclusively focused on sports facilities that target local athletics. A review of the websites of the facilities the company chose to highlight found "open gym" sessions and only a handful of sporting events advertised. There did not appear to be a connection to a ticketing platform for major events in any of these facilities, which causes concern about the capacity the company has to attract and manage higher-profile concerts or other events. The company's business model seems to be a closer fit to how the City of Fresno runs and operates its multiple community centers, rather than the convention center.

ASM GLOBAL

The company is the current contract holder and does demonstrate that it has the corporate infrastructure necessary to manage the facility as it has been doing so for over 15 years. However, the committee's primary concern is that the company's proposal represented a status-quo operating model whereas it was communicated to each vendor that the City is looking for a more vibrant, utilized, and well-connected convention center operation. The company did not offer ideas on how to improve the profitability of the center, attract bigger or higher-profile acts, nor clearly articulate how specific facility improvements (either newly proposed or already in progress) could improve profitability.

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SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The committee recommends rejecting all bids for this RFQ and then conduct a new RFQ process. The vendors that applied during this round of bidding are welcome to submit their proposals again and outreach will be conducted to potentially attract additional new bidders.

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Evaluation Committee Sign-Off

The following Evaluation Committee voting members have read the enclosed report and concur with the findings as written:

Signed by:
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7/22/2025
RUTH F. QUINTO, CPA
Assistant City Manager
Office of the Mayor & City Manager

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NICK MASCIA
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7/22/2025
KARIN TEMPLE
Community Member