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Convention Center shortfall now estimated \$1 million this year

NEWSLANC previously reported: *“According to the Convention Center Authority, the deficit each year amounts to approximately \$500,000, largely because of a shortfall in projected revenue from the Hotel Room Sales Tax. (It reportedly has a cumulative short fall of over \$2 million.)”*

We have now learned that the appropriate answer concerning the amount of “*short fall*” should have been one million dollars for the year.

NewsLanc is advised that the figures are discussed openly at committee and board meetings.

Convention and Visitors Bureau opposes raising hotel tax; alternatives?

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA BUSINESS JOURNAL: ... *“Renegotiating the food and beverage concession agreements between the convention center authority and Penn Square Partners could move \$400,000 to \$500,000 a year to the authority’s side of the balance sheet’, suggested Stephen Sikking, a partner in the Eden Resort and Fulton Steamboat Hotel and a bureau board and task force member.*

“Sikking, like many county hoteliers, strongly opposes a hotel tax hike, saying the industry has already done enough to support the convention center...”

EDITOR: A good portion of the short fall of the convention center is due to the ‘sweetheart deal’ favoring Penn Square Partners that was rammed down the throat of the LCCCA board without even given board members adequate opportunity to review the documents. ...

“The existing agreements give the authority 5 percent of proceeds, whereas 20 percent to 30 percent would be more typical of industry practices, he said.

LETTER: *“Before any tax increase of any kind on City/County Taxpayers, the Hotel Industry, or the Restaurant Industry is even considered, there must be a voter referendum this fall. Only then should any increase be considered.*

“Otherwise...let PSP make up the difference...this was their brainchild, they created the one-sided agreement, and gave the LCCCA no time to investigate, review and compare with other agreements.”

LETTER: *“The current LCCCA is not the same organization that dragged us into this fiscal folly. What you say is 100% true of the LCCCA before the tenure of Art Morris, but today only two of the original group remain: Ted Darcus, who is no longer in a position of influence, and R.B. Campbell, one of the few LCCCA board members who had the audacity to ask real questions. Even Stevens & Lee is no longer involved.*

“History will show that the LCCCA board and directors before mid-2007 (aided and encouraged by Stevens & Lee) sold out generations of local taxpayers to powerful people. Today’s LCCCA is practically powerless, which is EXACTLY what their predecessors planned.”

LETTER: *“The LCCCA is making a heroic effort to keep its expenses under control. Unfortunately, there are major situations which the LCCCA has little or no control over:*

“Cooper-Carry designed a facility so elaborate and so grandiose that large parts of the ‘integrated facility’ cannot have their energy costs significantly reduced. From the Vine Street lobby on the lowest level, to the second-floor balcony, to the hotel lobby and the hotel restaurant along East King Street, there is a massive open space a city block long and up to four stories high.

“-A large part of this area has exterior walls that include immense plate glass windows. Heating and air conditioning costs for this space are proportionately shared between the hotel and convention center; however, the vast majority of this cavernous space is the responsibility of the

LCCCA, and because of its configuration it must be kept at a comfortable temperature even when the main convention hall is empty – which is the vast majority of the time. (The LCCCA is in the process of installing thermal film on many of the plate glass windows.)

“- The LCCCA is responsible for providing and maintaining large areas which primarily profit the hotel. This includes all meeting rooms on the third and fourth floor (including the 9,700 sq. ft. Heritage Ballroom), 50% of the hotel lobby, 100% of the connecting bridge between the parking garage and hotel lobby, and 100% of the hotel kitchen, along with other parts of the “integrated facility”. This places a significant financial burden on the LCCCA without producing a significant amount of revenue...

LANCASTER NEW ERA: *Editorial “Don’t delay plan to require election ID” states “The new law requires voters to show photo identification when they vote in order to thwart the possibility of such fraud. Formerly, all anyone had to do was provide a name and sign a log. No proof of identity – with or without photo – was required following the first time voting.”*

WATCHDOG: Funny, when we send a check to the Lancaster Newspapers, Inc., they never ask us for a copy of a photo ID. Why? Banks have the responsibility of checking signatures on checks against the signature given when the bank account is opened.

Assuming the editor(s) has taken the time to vote, he / she must be aware that that voters have to sign the voting register and the clerk carefully compares the voter’s signature with the voter’s signature at the time of registration. ...

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