



MIAMI BEACH

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Matti Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: April 22, 2009

SUBJECT: **A REFERRAL TO THE FINANCE AND CITYWIDE PROJECT COMMITTEE A DISCUSSION REGARDING TRANSITIONING CERTAIN OPERATING ACTIVITY AND THE ASSOCIATED FUNDING FOR THE BASS MUSEUM OF ART TO THE FRIENDS OF THE BASS MUSEUM, INC., A FLORIDA NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION.**

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION

Refer discussion to Finance/Citywide Projects Committee as recommended by staff.

ANALYSIS

The Bass Museum was established from its inception as a strong public/private partnership through a contractual agreement entered into 45 years ago when the City accepted the gift of the art collection of John and Johanna Bass. This agreement stipulates that the City will "maintain the collection in perpetuity...provide for the exhibition of the collection, keep it open and available to the public," and provide basic funding for the maintenance and exhibition of the collection. The City fulfills this obligation by funding the operational elements of the Museum, and maintaining the building, which is a City asset. The agreement further stipulates that the Bass Museum, as an operating entity, should be overseen by a Board of Trustees. The Board has the responsibility for Museum policies and procedures, as well as day-to-day management through the staff it employs. The Museum's Executive Director/Chief Curator, for example, is a City employee with full benefits, but is hired by, and answers to, the Board of Trustees.

In addition to the City and the Board of Trustees, a third entity exists to promote and further the mission of the Bass Museum of Art: Friends of the Bass Museum, Inc. This private and separate 501(c)3 organization was established in 1978 as the membership and fundraising arm of the Museum. The President of the Friends chairs the Board of Trustees. The Friends' Board of Directors serves as advisory to the Trustees, advocates and raises funds for the Museum, and sponsors Museum programs, which include all special exhibitions and educational programs. The Museum's membership, education, development and marketing efforts are realized by employees of the Friends of the Bass Museum. Thus the current Museum staff consists of City employees (both classified and unclassified) and Friends employees, with substantial differences in benefits and pay scales.

To remedy this situation, the Administration is working closely with the Museum's staff and Boards to streamline the current governance model and to standardize employment

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practices. While the City's commitment to the Bass Museum remains strong, both the Administration and the Museum feel that the City can continue to fulfill its contractual obligations without having actual City employees working at the Museum. To this end two recently-vacated City positions at the Bass have been filled as employees of the Friends, the Assistant Director and Curator. The objective is to transition all Bass Museum positions to the Friends of the Bass over time, which will allow for significant savings in salaries and benefits.

Further, both the Administration and the Museum agree that additional operating budget items should be transferred to the Friends of the Bass Museum as well for their oversight and management. In addition to allowing the Friends to pursue potential savings by using non-City contracts for services such as carpet cleaning or for the purchase of office supplies, for example, transferring the budget allocations for certain line items would also begin the process of transitioning much of the day-to-day administration and oversight to the Friends. This is an important step in the move towards increased simplification of the Museum's governance structure, which has been considered essential for the future well-being of the institution and was included in the Museum's own five-year strategic plan, completed in March 2007.

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends referral to the Finance/Citywide Projects Committee.


JMG/HMF/mas