

Can Carl Weinstein Manage the Trumpets Contract Project?

If you understand something about business and competitive procurements, Carl Weinstein's latest bloviating on Ron Johnson's OP-ED site (quoted below) probably takes your breath away with its arrogance, its shallowness, and its gross lack of business sense. As the old saying goes, "cheer up, things could be worse". So, we cheered up, and sure enough, things got a lot worse!

Sorry, but I have had it up to my eyeballs with Carl's outrageous grandstanding! Carl speaks ONLY for himself. There has been no board vote to put Carl in charge of anything--except to the carry the title of VP. And, it is clear from his recent statements that he has no clue on how to handle any kind of a fair business procurement, or even a simple negotiation. And, his clowning around on Channel 99's buffet boys segments certainly do not show that Carl has any kind of food or restaurant expertise.

But, the good news is that there are NO "board plans" for trumpets decisions--as Carl has crudely described. Even our dysfunctional SCA board would not likely approve such a flawed approach for contracting with a trumpets operator. Imagine Carl thinking that the board would invite some companies (who happen to be available on a given day) to a "get acquainted" session, then ask them to bring along some "possible menus with prices", and then after a period of time, notify most of the companies they had not been selected to continue--without telling them why! Imagine such a bogus process!

Now, perhaps some of Carl's cheer leading friends may think I am way off base with such severe ridiculing of him and his proposed process? So be it. But, after having to listen for two years to so many half-baked procurement ideas and/or unethical project management approaches by such as Favil West, Bob Berman, Patti Shock, David Berman, Bob Sansing and Mike Dixon, I am just not willing to tolerate Carl and Roz screwing everything all up--again. We have had enough of that!

So, the "gloves are off" until the board can decide to make some sense out of its trumpets policies. My position is that we must not implement a restaurant until we can do it smart. And, when it come to the Chef Neal issue, my question is, if Neal Salvino can please hundreds of our SCA members for almost a year by delivering thousands of catered meals for the Women's club lunches, that may be far more success than any other company has ever had IN our facilities! And, although Neal's current restaurant is more of a neighborhood cafe than anything else, his desire to move his high quality food and service into our much better facilities could be a big win for everyone. In that case, everyone involved is motivated to work hard and succeed based on quality-first, profits-second.

Sure, SCA groups have had other catering companies doing business in our facilities for various groups at various times last year. But, none of them generated the kind of VERY HIGH praise about SUSTAINED quality and service that Chef Neal's organization has done! There is a clear business lesson to be learned in this case, and we need to be paying attention.

So, do not ask me to apologize for taking the position that the provider of Trumpets services in the future has to be equal or better than what Chef Neal's organization has proven that can be done. We must require proof of quality and service for our members. We must not accept a round of EMPTY vendor promises based on freshly-printed menus using unknown ingredients and displaying unproven prices that have never been served to SCA member satisfaction.

Maybe the contract candidates should have to successfully cater one or more Women's Club luncheons, and/or deliver a month or two of highly successful Sunday Brunches, or a month of successful lunch buffets, before they are considered eligible for consideration? In not that, how would you be able to have the same level of confidence in their success as Chef Neal? Sorry, but some of Carl's new candidates appear to be unlikely able to prove they can reliably deliver equal or better food and service for our residents than what Chef Neal has already done for nearly a year.

Finally, we need a way for the whole community to participate in the evaluation process as the community will vote with their pocketbooks before this is over. It seems quite clear that the board itself is not capable of making a smart decision without involved the community, so why not just deal with the issue and include the members in the evaluation process via surveys and temporary trials like catered Sunday brunches, weekday lunch buffets and/or happy hours in the bar?

Think that is crazy? Maybe it needs to be better described to make it work? Or, maybe you have a much better idea? Let's hear it! Time is slipping away, and it is obvious that if we give too much rope to Carl and Roz, they will do SOMETHING--even if it is a really bad idea.

By the way, with due regard to my good friend Ron Johnson's observations today, please rest assured that that I and the women's club leaders have no conflicts of interest with Neal Salvino--or any other company. It is unfair for anyone to criticize a club who has a huge catered luncheon EVERY MONTH (hundreds of servings) and who have received so many bad meals for so long--before Chef Neal was discovered! They have a right to demand that the board provide equal or better services than what Chef Neal provides.

Naturally, just because Chef Neal has been a good catering contractor for the Women's Club for almost a year, and just because he also has a highly successful neighborhood restaurant in the middle of the "working side" of the LV Strip, does

not guarantee he will succeed in effectively running our entire food service operation. But, that is why I have proposed a short-term service contract to consider/test the feasibility.

When one gets down to the fine details of such a business approach I believe the opportunities for success will greatly outweigh the risks of failure. I honestly believe my approach could minimize our financial risks and maximize our chances for great success--as defined by huge repeat business support by our residents. Regardless of what is decided, it is obvious that we must find a much better project leader than Carl Weinstein.

Bob Frank
SCA Director, September 5, 2008

Carl Weinstein said on Ron Johnson's OP-ED:

I think it is time to set the record straight on the current search for a restaurant tenant at Anthem. Two weeks ago the Board held a workshop for the BOARD to discuss various options for having a restaurant at Anthem. At that workshop we invited any restaurant operator to express interest in being considered. WE DID NOT ASK FOR PROPOSALS because at that time we had not decided on whether we were going to vote for a PUBLIC or PRIVATE restaurant because obviously there would be a difference in a proposal depending on the status of the restaurant. There were three firms that expressed interest and they submitted sample menus with proposed prices. This type of submission was fine because they would be the same menu regardless of public or private status. And most importantly; THEY ASKED IF THEY COULD SEND A SAMPLE MENU IN TO THE BOARD BEFORE THEY SENT IT!!

On the other hand, with prompting from various residents, Chef Neal sent in a proposal that contained elements that were far worse than what we got rid of when we expelled S and D Enterprises. It was not until this past Thursday that the Board voted to have a PUBLIC restaurant. We HAVE NOT asked for proposals from interested parties at this time. We are planning to have a "get acquainted" meeting between the Board and all interested parties. After that meeting the Board will decide with whom we wish to negotiate. It is likely that we will NEVER ask all interested parties to send us proposals. I have heard rumors that the same meddlers have advised Chef Neal to send in a new proposal. I REPEAT--- THE BOARD IS NOT ACCEPTING PROPOSALS AT THIS TIME. It will be a waste of effort for ANY interested party to send us a proposal at this time. I hope that this clarifies the process the Board is following and that the meddlers will allow is to carry out our mission without them adding complications to the process.

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