



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** Members of the Budget Committee

**From:** Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services

**Meeting Date:** November 28, 2016

**Subject:** Report CSD16-023  
Petes' Funding Request

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## **Purpose**

A report to seek Council direction regarding the Petes' Funding Request.

## **Recommendations**

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSD16-023 dated November 28, 2016 of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That the Petes' annual operating expenses to the City be reduced by: waiving the rental fee on the Petes' Suite, at an approximate annual cost of \$18,500 (excluding HST); and the rental fee on the Alumni Room, at an annual cost of \$9,142 (excluding HST), for an estimated annual operating savings of \$27,642 to the Petes, effective the 2016-2017 season, starting September 1, 2016;
- b) That the Petes annual operating revenues from ticket sales be increased by: receiving 50% of the Club Seat and Restaurant Seat Premiums relating to Petes' games at an estimated value of \$73,500; effective the 2016-2017 season, starting September 1, 2016;
- c) That 10% of the City's Gross Revenues from Food and Beverage Sales at Petes Games be provided to the Petes at an estimated value of \$9,850, effective the 2016-17 season, starting September 1, 2016;

- d) That the City's funding support for a Petes' Marketing position in the approximate amount of \$47,400 (based on 2014/2015 season) be withdrawn and that the current advertising share be changed from 50/50 to 40% City and 60% Petes, representing an initial financial loss of \$2,516 to the City, as additional financial incentive for the Petes to increase advertising sales, effective the 2016-2017 season, starting September 1, 2016;
- e) That Game Day Expenses be waived as an expense charge to the Petes for a five year period, effective the 2016-17 season, starting September 1, 2016;
- f) That the Trial Period for the Letter of Agreement, dated February 14, 2014, relating to the definition of Gross Advertising Revenues, the Sharing of Net Advertising Profits, and the formation of a Marketing Committee be amended to reflect the advertising share revision as noted in Recommendation (d) and extended beyond the termination date of August 31, 2017, to the end of the current agreement;
- g) That in exchange for the above financial concessions that the Petes agree to complete the financial reconciliation for each hockey season prior to the end of the City's fiscal year, December 31<sup>st</sup>;
- h) That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign Letters of Agreement to reflect the above noted changes, and any other related documents necessary to execute the Agreements;
- i) That Staff be directed to report annually to Council on the effectiveness of the funding concessions, financial incentives, joint sponsorship/ marketing/ advertising initiatives, and annual attendance;
- j) That Staff be directed to enter into discussions with the Petes to identify short-term capital improvements, such as a team lounge, media room, or new score clock/ video boards (including appropriate cost share/ partnership strategies), that could be made to the Memorial Centre to improve team and audience amenities for consideration during the 2018 budget process;
- k) That the OHL Facility Study be deferred until 2018 so that the City and Petes can focus on improving revenue generation and relations.

## Budget and Financial Implications

The financial values used in the production of this report are taken from the 2014/15 season final reconciliations. Numbers for the 2016/17 will have increased slightly and final amounts will be adjusted accordingly.

The expense reduction and revenue-sharing identified in a) and b) represent an approximate total loss of \$111,142 in recoveries to the Memorial Centre's budget, if implemented for the 2016/17 season.

Recommendation d) represents an initial financial loss of \$2,516 to the City by eliminating the \$47,400 staff expense and reducing the City's share of Advertising revenues to 40% or approximately \$199,665. The total net budget of these three recommendations is \$113,508.

Although the revenue for Game Day Expenses has not been budgeted for several years, the cost to the City for staff and other expenses for games days totals approximately \$140,000 annually.

Approval of these recommendations would require an additional \$56,754 for the balance of 2016 with funds secured from the 2016 General Contingency; and an estimated \$113,508 in 2017. Since this request has **not** been factored into the current 2017 budget, Council will need to direct staff to identify the potential source of funding to accommodate the recommendations.

## Background

### Petes Request

The City's Chief Administrative Officer, the Director of Community Services, and the Director of Corporate Services have been meeting with the Peterborough Petes Executive (the Petes) since the spring of 2015 in an effort to resolve financial challenges facing their organization.

During these meetings, the Petes have stated that they lack the player-related amenities like the team lounges found in new Ontario Hockey League (OHL) facilities. The Petes identified that the cost of their education fund, player gas allowance, and workout expenses have increased by \$161,790 since the 2008/09 season. With their declining attendance, now one of the lowest in the league, they are drawing down their reserves to cover operating costs. City staff cannot verify the extent of the alleged financial hardships because they have not had an opportunity to review the Petes annual financial statements.

The Petes are expected to formally present their request for a greater share of the City's cost recoveries at the November 23<sup>rd</sup> Public Budget Committee meeting. For specific details, please refer to the Petes Partnership Proposal, Appendix A.

**a) \$350,000 Net Increase Funded Through Changes to Agreement**

The Petes have reviewed all Facility Agreements across the League and contend that they have one of the least favourable financial arrangements with their host municipality in the OHL. Consequently, they initially asked the City to provide them with \$350,000 in revenues as either an increased share of Petes-related revenues or as a reduction of expenses. They have also asked that this funding not be provided as either a grant or subsidy.

**b) Eliminate Game Day Expenses**

Under the current agreement, when the average annual ticket sales exceed 2,700 per game, the Petes would be required to pay approximately \$4,000 a game or \$140,000 a year to the City to cover the City's Game Day Expenses at the Memorial Centre. This includes box office staff, operations staff, ushers, doormen, and first aid staff.

As a result of low attendance, the Petes have not paid any significant Game Day Expenses for the past several years. Nevertheless, they have asked that this provision in the Agreement be eliminated because they view this clause as an on-going disincentive.

**c) Take Over Box Office Operations**

The Petes have also proposed that they take over the full operations of the Box Office at the Peterborough Memorial Centre as a way to generate more ticket sales.

**d) Financial Relationship Must Change**

The Petes expressed concern that without a substantial increase in the level of City financial support, the team will continue to flounder. The Board may be under increased pressure to sell the team. This could result in the Peterborough Petes relocating to another host municipality, similar to the fate of the Belleville Bulls.

To better understand the Petes' position, the City CAO and the Director of Community Services attended the Petes' inaugural Town Hall Meeting with Season Ticket Holders held at Market Hall on September 15, 2016.

**OHL Trends**

In their Partnership Proposal Document as appended, the Petes outlined OHL Team movement and ownership changes over the past decade as follows:

- Belleville Bulls (2015) moved to Hamilton (now Bulldogs)
- Plymouth Whalers (2015) to Flint
- Erie Otters (2015) sold to JAW Hockey Enterprises
- Sarnia Sting (2015) sold to Darian Hatcher and David Legwand

- Brampton Battallion (2012) moved to North Bay (later attracted Brampton Beast, East Coast Hockey League)
- Mississauga IceDogs (2007) move to St. Catharines to become Niagara IceDogs

More recently, the Ottawa Senators announced their acquisition and move of the Club's AHL affiliate from Binghamton to Belleville to become the Belleville Senators for the 2017-2018 season.

There has also been increased pressure by OHL teams to seek major funding concessions from their host municipalities. Most recently, in July 2016, the Guelph Storm announced a new ten year agreement with the City, resulting in an annual \$500,000 loss of revenues to the City.

The Petes have also referenced the success of several OHL franchises in securing new arena complexes in the downtown core of their respective municipalities like: the Meridian Centre in St. Catharines, (2014), seating 5300; the K-Rock Centre in Kingston (2008), seating 6,700; the General Motors Centre in Oshawa ((2006), seating 5180; and the Budweiser Centre in London (2002), seating 9,046. These newer OHL Facilities typically have expanded seating with better sight lines and other amenities.

### **City Staff Considerations**

#### **a) No Two Agreements are the Same**

Every agreement between the OHL team and its respective municipality is different. As an example, a team may not pay Game Day Expenses, but the team pays directly for ushers and doorman. In some cases, they run their own box office. The Peterborough Memorial Centre has many other major events, like the Laker's season and playoffs. It makes sense that the City retain the Box Office and hire the same employees as doormen and ushers for all events.

#### **b) Revenue Intent**

The original revenue projections from Stadium Consultants International (SCI) presented to Council on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002 and referenced in subsequent reports, indicated that the improvements to the Memorial Centre and "increased net revenues to the Centre would offset the debenture expenditure required to pay for the \$11.9M renovation" (Report CAO-04-012, dated November 15, 2004, p. 7). This assumption also formed the basis for the new 20 Year Agreement between the City and the Petes, (Report CSAS03-004 presented to Committee of the Whole on September 8, 2003).

Use of post-renovation Petes-related revenues to offset annual debenture payments remains the key driver in all City deliberations relating to the Petes and administering the business operations of the Peterborough Memorial Centre. Currently, the \$947,142 annual debt charge of the Memorial Centre is off-set by post-renovation revenue items from the Petes and other Memorial Centre events. There are seven years remaining on the debenture and the current agreement with the Petes.

**c) Incentives**

If the City provides the requested revenue concessions with no conditions, there is no incentive for the Petes to invest in improvements to their product on the ice. Sharing Club Seat and Restaurant Seat Premiums and a percentage of the City's Gross Revenues from Food and Beverage Sales encourages both parties to work co-operatively and collaboratively on marketing initiatives to retain the existing audience and to attract new spectators. The Food and Beverage Share also encourages the Petes to conduct more business with the service provider to mutual benefit.

**d) Precedent**

The proposed revenue concessions may impact both existing and potentially new sporting ventures. The Lakers have already approached the City with a request for similar revenue sharing or cost reduction strategies. While their attendance is markedly higher than the Petes, they pay their players and rely on a much shorter season to generate their revenues. The Lakers do not pay Game Day Expenses because they share more revenues with the City through their ticket sales, with a split of 80/20% respectively, which helps defray the City's expenses.

Staff anticipates, however, that the Lakers will also request a 10% share of the advertising revenues, presumably from the City's side at approximately \$50,000 annually and an additional 10% share of the City's share of the Gross Revenues from Food and Beverage Sales resulting from sales at their games, at an estimated value of \$4,000 annually.

Any financial concessions to the Petes will become the new financial base threshold for any subsequent agreement with the existing Petes owners or new owners.

**In Support of the Recommendations**

The following table shows the revenues from all Petes-related sources to the City through the Peterborough Memorial Centre during the 2014-15 hockey season. The Staff recommendations relate to rows: 1, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 11. If recommendations a) to e) of the report are approved, the total impact to the City would be \$235,508.

<b>City/ Petes Revenues from Petes Games 2014/15 Season</b>						
<b>a) Source</b>	<b>b) Current to the City</b>	<b>c) Committed to Renovation</b>	<b>d) Current to the Petes</b>	<b>e) Potential to Petes</b>	<b>f) Potential to City</b>	<b>g) Impact on City</b>
<b>1. Advertising</b>	50% share/ \$249,581	50% share/ \$249,581	50% share/ \$249,581	60% share/ \$299,497	40% share/ \$199,665	-\$49,916
<b>- Less expense</b>	-\$47,400	-\$47,400	\$47,400	\$0	\$0	\$47,400
<b>2. Share Ticket Rev.</b>	10% share/ \$110,900	\$0	90% share/ \$998,199	90% share/ \$998,199	10% share/ \$110,900	
<b>3. Parking Revenues (Net)</b>	\$25,000		\$0	\$0	\$25,000	
<b>4. Food and Bev (% of Gross)</b>	\$98,500	\$98,500	\$0	10% share/ \$9,850	90% share/ \$88,650	-\$9850
<b>5. CRF \$1 per ticket</b>	\$75,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$75,400	
<b>6. Club, Restaurant Premiums</b>	\$147,000	\$147,000	\$0	50% share/ \$73,500	50% share/ \$73,500	-\$73,500
<b>7. Box Office: Cost Recovery Surcharges</b>	\$14,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$14,200	
<b>8. Suite Revenues</b>	\$244,000	\$244,000	\$0	\$0	\$244,000	
<b>9. Pete's Suite Lease</b>	\$18,500	\$18,500	-\$18,500	\$0	-\$18,500	-\$18,500
<b>10. Alumni Room Lease</b>	\$9,142	\$9,142	-\$9,142	\$0	-\$9,142	-\$9,142
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$944,823	\$719,323	\$1,267,538	\$1,308,688	\$803,673	-\$113,508
<b>11. Games Day Expenses</b>	-140,000	\$0	\$140,000 (1)	\$140,000	-\$140,000 (2)	-\$140,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$804,823	\$719,323	\$1,407,538	\$1,521,046	\$663,673	-\$253,508

Note 1: The City currently incurs expenses of \$140,000 per year on average for Game Day Expenses that are not reimbursed to the City by the Petes as a result of low attendance.

Note 2: Recommendation (d) formally waives the requirement for the Petes to pay Game Day Expenses.

### 1. Advertising

In 2014/15, the City provided \$47,400 to the Petes as a contribution towards marketing staffing expenditures and shares the marketing revenues equally. Staff is concerned that without some revenue-sharing there is even less incentive for the City and Petes to work together on marketing opportunities.

If the City stopped providing the staffing contribution of \$47,400 and agreed to change the funding ratio to 40/60, there would not be a significant reduction in revenues in the first year. It would, however, provide more incentive to the Petes to increase advertising

sales. Under the proposed arrangement, the current unsold inventory valued at \$53,600 if sold would result in an additional \$32,160 to the Petes and \$21,440 to the City.

The City would, however, need to retain some marketing and advertising opportunities within the Memorial Centre to promote other Special Events. This would require additional negotiations and perhaps expansion of the current advertising inventory. As referenced earlier in the report, if the City proceeds with this concession, it will likely be pressured by the Lakers to give up an additional 10 percent of the City's share to them. It could be argued that any share of advertising revenues to the Lakers should come from the Petes' share because they could both cross promote on the rink board and clock advertising.

As outlined in Recommendation (j) that Staff be directed to enter into discussions with the Petes to identify short-term capital improvements. A separate Letter of Agreement surrounding the addition of a new score clock/ video boards (including appropriate cost share/ partnership strategies) would include the addition of a partnership with the Lakers, allowing for further revenue sharing that includes the Lakers in the arrangement.

## **2. Ticket Revenues**

Staff does not recommend decreasing or waiving the current 10% Share of the Ticket Revenue, valued at \$110,900. It is the only revenue to offset the City's Box Office administrative costs relating to Petes' ticket sales and to help offset the Petes' free use of the facility for their training camp and games, practice ice-time, office, dressing rooms, utilities, and souvenir shop.

## **3. Parking Revenues**

Staff does not recommend full or partial sharing of parking revenues for two reasons. It sets another precedent for other event organizers and promoters and potentially a further corresponding loss of revenue to the City. Plus, any parking complaints and concerns will always be addressed to the City.

## **4. Food and Beverage Share**

Staff support modest share as incentive to build audience and collaborate more with food service provider as noted earlier.

## **5. Capital Refurbishment Fund**

The CRF (Capital Refurbishment Fund) ticket surcharge is applied to all tickets sold at the Peterborough Memorial Centre and is used as an operating fund. The current CRF is \$1 including HST and the majority of other comparable facilities have a rate of \$2 to \$2.50.



## **6. Club/ Restaurant Premium**

Early in the discussions, the Petes raised concerns about the Club and Restaurant premium charges. It soon became apparent, however, that their concern was not the rate, but rather that they did not receive a share of the additional revenues. Sharing the revenues equally provides additional incentive for the Petes, especially for season ticket holders. The City will retain responsibility for maintaining the Club and Restaurant areas of the building including the equipment.

This concession will create similar expectations by the Lakers.

## **7. Box Office Recovery**

The Box Office Surcharges identified on the chart cannot be re-allocated to the Petes because they are cost-recovery to pay for the cost of the ticketing system.

## **8. Suites Revenues**

Staff does not recommend sharing of any of the Suites revenues because this is one of the single largest sources of funding to help offset the annual debenture payment due to the cost of the suites being included in the renovation. The City also incurs additional staff expenses for security and cleaning of the suites and marketing for new suite holders and retention of existing.

There is already a financial benefit to the Petes from mandatory ticket sales from Suite leases. This represents 214 tickets per game or 17.2% of the 1,246 Season Ticket Holders in 2014/2015). (These calculations do not include the Super Suite provided lease free to the Petes during their season.)

## **9. Petes Suite Lease and 10. Alumni Room Lease**

Elimination of these expenses at an estimated annual operating savings of \$27,642 helps the Petes bottom line. There is also an opportunity for the Petes to generate revenue from their Suite by renting it out for other events.

Staff hope that with the waiving of the Alumni Room lease, that they will still be able to secure free use of the space, as mutually agreed upon, for meetings and City VIP hospitality functions.

The Petes already enjoy free use of their office space (1,073 square feet), Team Hockey Area (1,840 square feet), and Retail Store (416 square feet). Collectively, they represent approximately 3,329 of square feet. The commercial value of the free space at a conservative \$10.00 per square foot is estimated at \$33,290 in annually savings to the Petes or subsidy from the City.

## **11. Game Day Expenses**

While there has not been a full funding contribution from the Petes towards game day expenses for several years as a result of the existing agreement, the City still has approximately \$4,000 worth of staff and facility expenses the day of each game. Since all other users of the Memorial Centre pay event day expenses, the City is already subsidizing the Petes operation by approximately \$140,000 per year. (Game day expenses for the Lakers are covered by the 20/80% share on ticket sales; and the Agricultural Society's free use of the Morrow Building several times a year and the occasional free use of the Memorial Centre are covered in several agreements.)

Ordinarily for major events, the event day expenses total approximately \$6,500. Game Day expenses that would be charged to the Petes include: game day staff (ushers, doormen, operations, box office) and First Aid.

The Petes Partnership proposal shows that all eleven comparator arenas they used received games day expenses from their OHL Teams, at an average rate of \$1,377 per game.

### **Turn Over Box Office**

Staff does not recommend transferring the Box Office operations to the Petes. This would be viewed as contracting out since all of the front line Box Office staff are part of C.U.P.E. 126.

In the 2014/15 season, the Petes played 40 games, with an average attendance of 2,410 including 1,246 season ticket holders, 332 complimentary tickets and 832 "walk-ups". This represents 96,400 tickets issued for Petes games. While it does not correlate directly, in 2015, the Box Office issued 164,670 tickets overall so the volume of Petes activity represents approximately 58.5% of the total.

In 2015, the direct operating cost of the Box Office including telephone, ticket system loan, technology services, bank charges, Box Office staff and benefits and excluding utilities and percentage of management costs totalled \$249,339 or \$1.51 per ticket for all events. The City provided this service to the Petes at a cost to the City of \$145,564.

### **Other Options**

#### **1. Increase the Incentives**

The City could increase the level of incentives outlined above. The loss of revenues to the City, however, can't go too much further or City loses its ability to competitively negotiate future partnership opportunities. This "bigger carrot" also seriously compromises the overall operating model for the Arenas Division, which historically has been expected to operate on a full cost-recovery basis.

## **2. Don't change the agreement and subsidize through an annual grant**

Staff remains concerned that if the City enshrines these changes in the existing agreement, the concessions become the new starting point for any future discussions with the Petes or any new owner.

Traditionally, when Council is called upon to provide support to Not For Profit organizations in the community, they recognize it as a subsidy and provide funding through an annual grant. As with all grants, the funding is conditional upon receipt of an annual audited statement.

## **3. Status Quo**

Staff recognizes that the Petes face increasing financial pressures. The team is challenged to compete with the amenities provided in new OHL facilities for the players and patrons. Staff also acknowledges that other municipal OHL host communities have provided significant financial concessions to their teams.

The City could maintain the status quo without sharing the operating revenues, if the Petes would support greater City involvement in marketing, sponsorships and advertising along with the capital improvements contemplated in recommendation (i). The Petes, however, have made it clear that they want the City to stay out of their business. They alone are responsible for improving their product on the ice.

Both parties agreed to the current 20 year agreement. That agreement was pivotal in convincing the Council of the day to agree to the PMC's renovation. While City costs have increased since then, declining ticket sales have eroded the City's revenues from Food and Beverage, the CRF, and Club Seat Premiums. If the attendance were back to its 2005/06 season levels, both the City and the Petes would be in a much better financial position.

Neither the City nor the Petes benefit from maintaining the status quo under the current conditions. Without a significant improvement to the product on the ice or the financial incentives from the City as outlined in this report, the franchise remains vulnerable.

## **OHL Study**

The OHL Facility Study, originally scheduled for 2018, was moved up to 2016 as a result of Report CSD15-004, dated April 20, 2015. Staff recommends that this study be deferred until 2018, which is five years before the 20 year agreement with the Petes expires and the debenture is paid off for the Memorial Centre renovations. By 2018, the City will have reached a new agreement with the Agricultural Society and developed a capital program to address their needs; be nearing completion of the new Community Arena complex at Trent; and have developed a more positive working relationship with the Petes as a result of this report.

## **Contact with Other Ontario OHL Host Municipalities**

Since the migration of the Belleville Bulls to Hamilton was referenced several times in discussions with the Petes, City staff researched the matter further. Staff learned that the municipality agreed to a number of financial concessions over the years to the point that there were negligible revenues from the Bulls activities at the end. Even though the City had committed to a new OHL facility to replace the aging Yardman Arena, which seats 3,257 and is of similar vintage to the Memorial Centre, the team owner still moved the team.

Again, to better understand the challenges and opportunities faced by other host municipalities, City staff including the CAO, Directors of Community and Corporate Services, and the Arena Division Manager, met with their counterparts in Guelph. Staff learned that Guelph was also facing a request from its OHL team, the Guelph Storm, for major financial concessions to keep the team in the City at its downtown facility. The City has recently agreed to a new ten year deal in which the City will receive no revenues from any sources from the team.

Together with municipal staff from Guelph and Sarnia, Peterborough City staff helped organize a day long meeting in Guelph with other OHL host municipalities including: Kitchener, Barrie, North Bay, and Owen Sound. This proved to be a very worthwhile experience. City staff learned:

- Few of the other arenas provided as many concerts, entertainment or special events as Peterborough
- Several were in negotiations with their respective teams with similar team strategies seeking major financial concessions; all teams contend they have the worst deal in the league
- Several have virtually all revenues going to the team
- It is challenging to directly compare operational revenues and expenditures because every agreement is different
- It is challenging to directly compare municipal investments in capital infrastructure for major facility upgrades or for new OHL facilities because each project has evolved under different circumstances
- Most of our peers experience an annual operating deficit
- Kitchener appears to have the closest working relationship with its OHL team

As a result of the meeting, staff from Sarnia agreed to develop and circulate a comprehensive survey to capture facility size, seating, use, revenues, expenditures, and agreements. Participants have also agreed to meet annually with the next meeting tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2016.

City staff, including the Directors of Community and Corporate Services, the Arena Division Manager, and the Memorial Centre Manager, has also met with municipal staff and the operations contractor for Kingston's K-Rock Centre. In this particular case, the City owns the facility but it is managed by a third party contractor. City staff learned:

- The new OHL facility in a downtown location works
- Kingston's revenue shares with the Frontenacs is similar to Peterborough (Club and Suite revenues to City; shared advertising; pouring and naming rights to City; 10% of ticket sales; CRF of \$1.90; provide share of Food and Beverage)
- Their advertising split is now based on gross not net; everyone benefits from increased advertising activity
- Naming rights revenues are tied to attendance targets and adjusted annually
- Kingston receives approximately \$400,000 - \$450,000 annually from the Frontenacs (excluding Suites)
- The municipality is responsible for capital costs: new facility, score clock, advertising infrastructure
- The Frontenacs have been successful in attracting youth, student, and a young family audience
- Kingston does not have major lacrosse league tenant
- There is no major site-specific parking; downtown parking is dispersed; public lots are treated as event lots with revenues to K-Rock Centre
- The range and number of events at K-Rock are comparable to the Memorial Centre
- It appears that the Municipality, Facility operator, and Frontenacs are true partners in building franchise together

## Summary

Through our discussions with the Petes, meetings with our peers, and the preparation of this report, City staff has a much better appreciation of the pressures the Petes are experiencing with their business within the OHL. We understand the financial pressures they face and the need for some concessions.

City staff is heartened by the Petes sincere interest in renewing our partnership. However, we also have a business to run at the Memorial Centre. We need to maintain a balance between providing support and incentives to the Petes to improve their product and expand their audience, while still honouring the City's original commitment to the community to cover the cost of the improvements to the Memorial Centre from additional revenues generated as a result of the various enhancements.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:

Appendix A – The Petes Partnership Proposal