



Revised 2/24/17

Policy and Purpose for Usage of MSFA Suites by Authority Board Members, Staff and SMG

I. Background and Legislative Goals for the Authority

The Legislature found in the Stadium Legislation that there is a public purpose for the MSFA to conduct events for professional football and a broad range of other civic, community, athletic, educational, cultural, and commercial activities. The Legislature specifically tasked the Authority to achieve two main goals in operating and maintaining the facility:

- 1) Maximizing access for public and amateur sports, community and civic events as well as other public events in type and on terms consistent with those held at the previous stadium,¹ and;
- 2) Operating the facility “in a first-class manner, similar to and consistent with other comparable NFL stadiums.”² In addition, the Board has tasked staff to develop short and long term Capital Plans to ensure that the facility stays in good repair and that necessary improvements such as technology upgrades or acquisition of additional stadium infrastructure should be foreseen and properly budgeted.

Successful marketing is a key component of reaching these goals. The Authority finds that in order to meet the twin goals of community and amateur sports access at affordable rates, as well as keeping the facility in a first class and competitive state, requires an aggressive and on-going marketing effort to attract and retain commercial spectator events as well as mega-events such as the Super Bowl and NCAA Men’s Final Four that will maximize revenues. The Authority is responsible for ensuring that the facility is wisely managed and effectively marketed, to allow for the maximum return and public benefit of the Minnesota taxpayers’ significant investment into the facility.

II. The Authority’s Opportunity to Use Suites to Further Legislative Goals

Through its Use Agreement with the Minnesota Vikings and other relevant agreements, the Authority has control of two suites – at no cost to the Authority or the public – whose purpose is to enable the Authority and SMG to successfully market the facility to potential and current commercial events. In addition, the Authority will need to market to other mega events as well as community and amateur sports entities during NFL and other significant events.

Consistent with their obligations to effectively manage and market the facility and achieve a maximum return on Minnesota taxpayers’ substantial investment in this facility, the MSFA Board, staff, and SMG staff will actively participate in such marketing activities and efforts during Authority events.

The Authority recognizes that there are a limited number of individuals or groups that may book the stadium for a particular type of event, such as a high-attendance sporting event. However, the Authority believes that

¹ Minn. Stat. § 473J.13, subd. 3.

² Minn. Stat. § 473J.13, subd. 1.

certain aspects of the facility – including its infrastructure, concessionaire services, day-of-event services (such as security, etc.), and other aspects – remain relatively constant even when the type of event varies. As such, the Authority has determined that use of the suites is a critical tool in its marketing plan, whether the potential user plans to host a high-attendance sporting event or some other type of event (such as a concert).

III. Restrictions on Suite Access for Marketing Purposes

The Authority's suites are to be used to fulfill its Legislatively-assigned purposes, including effective marketing of the facility and overseeing operation of the facility in a first-class manner. When distributing tickets for the suite, these purposes must be kept in mind.

Depending upon the circumstances, it may be appropriate to invite the following people to attend an event in one of the Authority's suites:

Authority board members and executives. Authority board members and executives may use the suite to actively participate in marketing activities with external invitees. While attending the game, the Authority board member or executive must observe the operation of the stadium and must pay attention to any facts or issues that would allow the Authority to better fulfill its purpose, including: operations, crowd management, facilities, upkeep, staffing, and opportunities for alternative uses or improvement. He or she must communicate any concerns or suggestions, based on his or her observations at these games, to Authority staff and/or the Authority Board.

Other Authority personnel and SMG personnel. In certain situations, it may be appropriate for other Authority personnel to attend to further support this marketing role by, for example, assisting with hosting external invitees and/or acting as a resource of information about the region, community or facility to further the marketing goal. It may also be appropriate for certain SMG staff to attend to assist in this marketing effort.

Users and potential users of the facility. As has been the historical practice, Authority and SMG staff are strongly encouraged to invite potential users to observe the operation of the facility to allow the potential user to see the capabilities and operations of the facility during an event individuals or groups considering whether to book the facility for an upcoming event. In limited circumstances, it may be appropriate to invite individuals/groups who have already entered an agreement to host an event at the facility if (1) allowing the individual to observe the operation of the facility during an event would resolve specific, significant challenges or issues related to the upcoming event, or (2) the Authority board member or executive has reasonably determined that allowing the individual to observe the operation of the facility for this specific event would assist in efforts to convince the individual to book additional upcoming events at the facility.

Community member groups. Certain local coordinator or community member groups – such as the Convention Bureau, Meet Minneapolis and others – can also substantially further the Authority's public goals of effective marketing of the facility. These groups are dedicated to the success of the Twin Cities, including success as a destination for large events drawing crowds from around the county. Allowing these groups to observe the operation of the facility and connect with potential users of the facility could be a significant component in encouraging outside groups to book the facility, or in providing the groups with sufficient information to allow them to refer outside users to the facility as a potential venue.

Public officials. Authority board members and executives should be sensitive that various legal and perception issues may limit the willingness of public officials to attend marketing events within the Authority suites. It is,

however, appropriate under Minnesota law (specifically, the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure statute, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 10A) for Authority board members or executives to invite public officials to Authority suites if attendance otherwise meets the requirements of this policy.

IV. Procedure for Use of Suites for Marketing

The Authority adopts the following procedures, in order to ensure that the Authority suites are being used for the maximum possible benefit.

Access to Tickets. Tickets for each event will be available to Board Members and the CEO/Executive Director for marketing purposes. The Authority will work with SMG to invite potential and recurring users to the event, along with mega-event customers and community users as well. Should either the CEO/Executive Director or an individual Board Member not be able to personally attend an event then their ticket(s) will be returned to the Authority for re-distribution.

Maintaining a Record of Attendees. The Authority will maintain a list of the individuals who use the Authority’s suites. This list shall include: the date and type of event, the name of the individual attending, the individual’s employer or organization, the Authority board member or employee who issued the invitation, and the public purpose for that individual’s presence. By way of example only, below is a sample of entries that could be maintained:

Event	Invitee	Company	Host	Public purpose
12/1/16	Board Member 1	MSFA	n/a	Marketing
12/1/16 Vikings Game	John Smith	XYZ Events Co.	Board Member 1	Potential user of the facility
12/1/16 Vikings Game	Jane Doe	Minneapolis Civic Tourism Group, LLC	Board Member 2	Provide regional and city background and assist in marketing the facility to XYZ Events Co.

Responsibility of Board or Staff Member Using Suite. Each time an Authority board member or executive uses the suite, he or she must individually assess – using his or her background, experience, and knowledge about the marketing goals – whether his or her use of suite tickets serves a public purpose, keeping in mind the public purposes described in this policy and in the Stadium Bill. Each individual must think through the goals outlined for the Authority, and make clear in his or her own mind the public purpose that would be served. In particular, the authorized person must consider the individuals to whom it extends an invitation to use one of the tickets allocated to each member, and determine that inviting that person serves a public purpose. Any member or executive who has questions or wants counsel as to whether a particular use is appropriate should contact Jay Lindgren, the Authority’s General Counsel.

V. Expenditures for Food and Beverage During Events

Although the Authority is entitled to access the suites free of charge, pursuant to certain contracts, any provision of food or beverages in the suite requires an additional expenditure. Expenditure of funds for food serves important public goals. One characteristic of U.S. Bank Stadium that makes it particularly attractive to events is its world-class catering, and the participation of local chefs and

restaurants. Aramark, the Authority and the Vikings have worked to establish a partnership with “Minnesota’s top chefs and premier restaurants [tha] will establish U.S. Bank Stadium as a leader in dining experience within the Minnesota sports landscape and across the sports and entertainment industry.”³ Showcasing the unique food options available at the facility is a crucial component to an effective marketing plan.⁴

Providing food also serves a public purpose by supporting the goal of the meeting. The events often occur around mealtimes and it is not possible to reschedule the marketing event to a different time. Providing food allows the marketing meeting to continue without interruption and demonstrates the capabilities of the stadium to individuals and entities considering booking future events at the stadium.

Of course, food expenditures must be reasonable; excessive food expenses do not serve a public purpose. Any member or employee who has questions or wants counsel as to whether a particular expenditure is appropriate should contact Jay Lindgren, the Authority’s General Counsel. Alcoholic beverages cannot be reimbursed by the Authority and a process will be established for user reimbursement or purchase of these beverages similar to the practices implemented at the Metrodome.

VI. Implementation of This Policy

This policy has been adopted to ensure that the Authority’s suites are used in a manner that will allow for the maximum return and public benefit of the Minnesota taxpayers’ significant investment into the facility. Any member or executive who has questions or wants counsel as to whether a particular use is appropriate should contact Jay Lindgren, the Authority’s General Counsel.

³ “Vikings, Aramark and MSFA Unveil Culinary Roster for U.S. Bank Stadium, May 24, 2016, available at <http://www.vikings.com/news/new-stadium/article-1/Vikings-Aramark-and-MSFA-Unveil-Culinary-Roster-for-US-Bank-Stadium/60273a7f-916e-431d-9290-e1a6f9b2203c> (Aramark President describing effort to “design an unprecedented and innovative dining experience at U.S. Bank Stadium that showcases the distinctive tastes and flavors of Minnesota and the very best from its burgeoning restaurant scene” and MSFA chair stating partnership with “Minnesota’s top chefs and premier restaurants will establish U.S. Bank Stadium as a leader in dining experience within the Minnesota sports landscape and across the sports and entertainment industry” and noting that “[t]hese Minnesota partnerships are an integral component of the stellar dining program being developed by Aramark, to complement the world-class status of the new stadium”).

⁴ See, e.g., “Inside the Vikings Stadium’s Medtronic Club,” *Finance & Commerce*, July 12, 2016, available at <http://finance-commerce.com/2016/07/inside-the-vikings-stadiums-medtronic-club/> (news outlet describing in detail the food offerings at U.S. Bank Stadium); “U.S. Bank Stadium’s World-Class Dining Experience to Showcase Minneapolis-St. Paul’s Premier Local Brands and Small Businesses,” July 12, 2016, available at <http://www.usbankstadium.com/news/detail/us-bank-stadiums-world-class-dining-experience-to-showcase-minneapolis-st-pauls-premier-local-brands-and-small-businesses> (““The unique line-up of local partners contributing to the food and beverage offerings at U.S. Bank Stadium fits directly into our vision of providing the best overall customer experience for our guests through all aspects of our operations,” said Patrick Talty, SMG General Manager at U.S. Bank Stadium.”).