


MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Aldermen

FROM: Joseph A. Melder, City Manager 

CC: Melissa Carter, Interim COO
David Keating, Senior Director of Real Estate Administration

RE: Second Amendment to Lease and Operating Agreement at Grayson Stadium

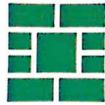
DATE: August 11, 2025

BACKGROUND

Grayson Stadium is a historic baseball stadium built in 1926 that is part of the historic 75-acre Daffin Park located at 1401 Victory Drive (the intersection of Victory Drive and Bee Road). The City of Savannah (Purchasing Department) issued a request for proposals and sealed bids in March 2019 soliciting a well-qualified and experienced stadium operator to lease and operate Grayson Stadium. The request for proposals closed in April 2019 and only one proposal and sealed bid was received. The City and sole bidder (Fans First Entertainment, LLC. – owner of the Savannah Bananas) then negotiated a mutually agreeable Lease and Operating Agreement. That agreement was unanimously approved by the Mayor and Aldermen during the regularly scheduled City Council meeting on September 24, 2020.

In compliance with state statute at the time, the base term of the Lease and Operating Agreement was five-years (October 1, 2020, until September 30, 2025) with the option to extend for one additional five-year period (October 1, 2025, until September 30, 2030). The agreement includes base rent of \$25,000; the obligation for Fans First Entertainment, LLC (the "Operator") to invest at least \$250,000 of private capital in the stadium improvements during the first five-year term; provide four VIP tickets to home games for City use; and defines various shared operating expense obligations.

The Lease and Operating Agreement was amended in 2024. The First Amendment was unanimously approved by the Mayor and Aldermen during a regularly scheduled City Council meeting on September 24, 2024. The Amendment governed the City investment of up to Three Million Dollars (\$3,000,000.00) of public SPLOST funds to construct certain public improvements and infrastructure at Grayson Stadium (including a new artificial turf field, video-scoreboard, field lighting, and more) with project management and administration of these investments to be provided by the Operator at no cost or expense to the City.



The Operator sent notice to the City on April 28, 2025, stating it was exercising the option in the lease to renew and extend for one additional five-year period (from October 1, 2025, until September 30, 2030).

PROPOSED SECOND AMENDMENT

The Operator is requesting a Second Amendment to the Lease and Operating Agreement in order to make additional leasehold improvements to Grayson Stadium. Specifically, Operator is seeking to construct a new +/- 10,000 square foot stand-alone locker room and team support/training facility (see Exhibit A attached hereto for a rendering/elevation of the proposed new building). The new building is being planned for construction behind the left center field wall, back behind the video scoreboard (see Exhibit B attached hereto for site plan). The Operator will invest its own private sources of capital to design, build, operate, and maintain the new building and requisite site work.

Also, even though the City leased the entire stadium to the Operator in 2020, some City departments continued to use portions of the facility; specifically some of the storage bays beneath the first base stands. Operator has requested the City vacate these spaces so it can use the entire leased premises for its operations and storage.

In return for these requests, the Operator has agreed to invest at least \$250,000 of additional private capital in renovations to historic Grayson Stadium and will assume all operating and maintenance expenses at the leased premises. Previously, the City paid for electricity, janitorial services, janitorial supplies, and maintenance. The shift in operating and maintenance expenses is expected to save the City more than \$150,000 per year. The City will continue to pay for capital repairs and/or replacements exceeding \$10,000 per item. The City agreed to stripe parking on the east/west one-way interior drives of Daffin Park. This striping will help better manage parking impacts at Daffin Park during games and other events and also be a benefit to the City's planned new signature playground to be constructed at the park.

SUMMARY

The Second Amendment facilitates expansion of Operator's (Savannah Bananas) business and will increase the resulting significant and positive economic impacts to the City of Savannah and overall region. The Operator will add the new building at Daffin Park at their sole capital investment and expense. The Operator will also invest at least \$250,000 of additional capital investment in renovations to the historic stadium and assume more than \$150,000 in operating and maintenance expenses from the City.

Recommend approval.

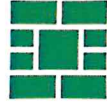


EXHIBIT A
BUILDING RENDERING
NEW LOCKER ROOM FACILITIES FOR
FANS FIRST ENTERTAINMENT

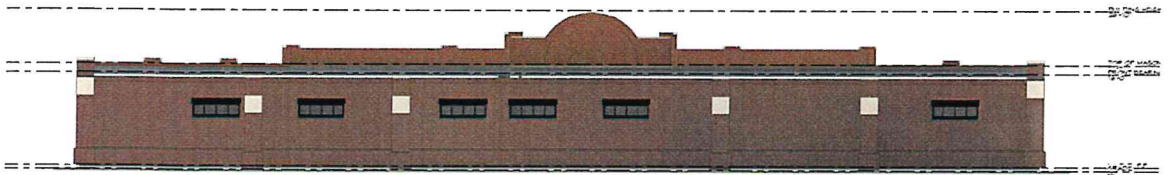
1401 E. VICTORY DRIVE

07.30.2025

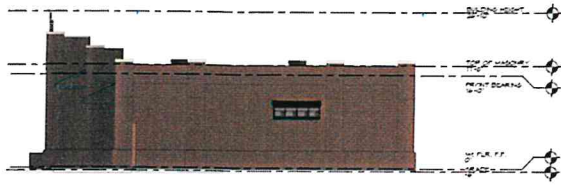
RES
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SOUTH PRESENTATION ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



NORTH PRESENTATION ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



EAST PRESENTATION ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



WEST PRESENTATION ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

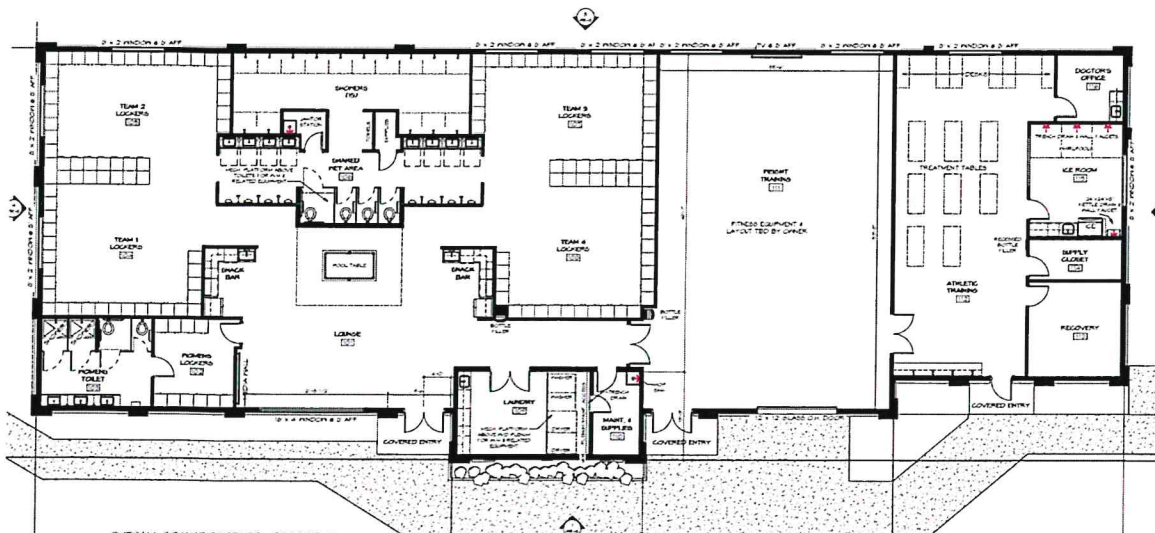




EXHIBIT B
SITE PLAN

