

**DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
NOVEMBER 3, 2025**

Minutes

Mayor Amorose Groomes called the Monday, November 3, 2025 work session to order at 5:58 p.m.

Council members present: Vice Mayor Alutto, Mayor Amorose Groomes, Ms. De Rosa, Mr. Keeler, Ms. Kramb and Mr. Reiner. Ms. Fox was absent.

Staff present: Ms. O'Callaghan, Mr. Hartmann, Mr. Rubino, Ms. Blake, Ms. Hunter, Mr. Jiang, Ms. LeRoy and Ms. Weisenauer.

Also Present: Bredan Buckley, Dublin Entertainment

Independence Day Entertainment

Mayor Amorose Groomes welcomed Ms. LeRoy and Bredan Buckley, Dublin Entertainment to present the staff report.

Ms. LeRoy provided a presentation showing previous entertainment acts beginning in 2005. She noted that Mr. Buckley began working with the City in 2013 when he booked Chicago for the Independence Day celebration.

Mr. Buckley provided Council with an extensive overview of his background and the entertainment booking industry. He explained that he has been working in sports entertainment, facility management, and entertainment buying since 1997, having previously worked for Ohio State University booking acts for the Schottenstein Center, Nationwide Arena, and Ohio Stadium. He emphasized how the entertainment industry requires established relationships and trust, as agents and managers are protective of their artists and want to ensure they are sending them to legitimate, well-run events.

Mr. Buckley detailed how the music industry has fundamentally shifted since the early 2000s. He explained that bands previously toured primarily as a marketing tool to sell albums, but this changed when the Backstreet Boys became the first band he recalls publicly stating they made more money from touring than album sales. With the advent of streaming services and music piracy through platforms like Napster, touring became the primary revenue source for artists. This shift has benefited events like Dublin's, as legacy acts continue touring rather than relying solely on album royalties, which many are now selling off as annuities.

The distinction between soft ticket and hard ticket events was thoroughly explained. Hard ticket events, such as concerts at Nationwide Arena where patrons purchase tickets through providers like Ticketmaster, involve artists receiving either a guarantee or a percentage of gross revenue after expenses. Typically, after covering venue rental, marketing, stagehands, and production costs, artists receive approximately 90% of remaining revenue while promoters keep 10%. In contrast, soft ticket events like fairs, festivals, and Dublin's Independence Day celebration require paying artists more than their typical guarantee since there's no percentage opportunity. Mr. Buckley explained that artists will command more for these dates than Live Nation would pay for a comparable amphitheater show.

Mr. Buckley outlined the five key entities involved in booking entertainment: the artist, manager, agent, promoter, and venue. He explained that artists typically hire managers to run their business operations while they focus on creating art. Managers make all career decisions including album releases, promotional appearances, and touring schedules. They hire agents whose specific responsibility is finding live performance opportunities and routing tours efficiently to minimize overhead costs. The promoter, which in Dublin's case is the City itself, takes the financial risk and handles all logistical elements including artist payment, stagehands, marketing, and ensuring professional execution. He noted that of these five entities, only the artist and venue are truly essential, with the others needing to prove their value.

Regarding compensation structure, Mr. Buckley explained that agents and managers typically each take 10% off the top of an artist's fee. Using a \$200,000 guarantee as an example, he noted that \$40,000 would go to the agent and manager before the artist sees any money. After paying lawyers, accountants, production managers, tour managers, and other road crew, then dividing among band members, the money starts coming down to \$10,000 or \$20,000 apiece. This explains why efficiency in tour routing is crucial for artists' financial success.

When asked about industry changes since COVID-19, he explained that when restrictions lifted, there was both a surge in artist supply—as self-employed performers desperately needed income—and audience demand for communal experiences. This convergence caused ticket prices to increase significantly and reset market expectations at a higher level that continues today.

Regarding July 4th pricing premiums, Mr. Buckley distinguished between "routing opportunities"—where promoters can offer flexible dates as bands tour through a region—and specific date requirements. He explained that July 4th commands premium pricing due to competition from numerous communities hosting similar events, making it about reputation, relationships, and willingness to meet financial expectations.

Ms. LeRoy then presented three questions for Council consideration: whether to specify a budgeted amount, preferences for genre or time frames, and any additional feedback for band selection moving forward.

Mr. Keeler initiated the Council discussion, stating he appreciated the flexibility shown over the years with budgets ranging from \$150,000 to \$250,000. He acknowledged the subjectivity in determining whether a more expensive act provides proportional value. He expressed satisfaction with alternating between country and pop genres, with pop being the broader category. Regarding budget constraints and the ongoing discussions about various City events and bed tax fund balance, he indicated comfort with a \$175,000 range but would need significant justification for \$250,000.

Ms. De Rosa asked Mr. Buckley to explain pricing tiers, to which he responded that agencies search their databases based on budget parameters to identify willing artists, then consider availability, routing proximity, and potential need for additional compensation for one-off dates. When pressed about what an additional \$50,000 might provide, Mr. Buckley acknowledged it would access another tier of artists but emphasized the subjectivity involved.

Ms. De Rosa suggested flexibility with an average of \$150,000, allowing for smaller local bands some years to save for bigger acts or multiple bands other years. She expressed personal preference for pop over country while acknowledging this might not reflect community preferences.

Vice Mayor Alutto supported the idea of occasionally featuring regional or local acts to save money while providing exposure opportunities, balanced with bringing in bigger names perhaps every

other year or every three years. She expressed enthusiasm for live music of any genre and emphasized the importance of variety, noting that any act will have both supporters and detractors. She appreciated the budget flexibility over the years but acknowledged that there is a point of diminishing returns, with Mr. Buckley confirming that top-tier acts simply do not play soft ticket events.

Mr. Reiner complimented the variety of acts over the years and acknowledged the complexity of securing performers willing to perform on July 4th. He expressed satisfaction with the \$175,000 range.

Ms. Kramb suggested putting \$150,000 in the budget with flexibility to adjust in subsequent years. She expressed interest in seeing comparison lists of artists available at different price points, specifically between \$150,000 and \$175,000.

Mayor Amorose Groomes characterized the budget as opportunistic, agreeing to include a specific number while remaining willing to increase that number for exceptional opportunities. She indicated the 1980s era would likely capture the largest percentage of Dublin's population. While identifying with country preferences, she praised all previous acts, specifically highlighting Sheryl Crow. She suggested that if booking two bands, she would prefer pairing a regional act with a national act rather than two established acts. Mr. Buckley clarified that some bands tour as a package deal.

Ms. O'Callaghan outlined the selection process moving forward: Council members would receive a list from Mr. Buckley and rank their top three choices. These rankings would be provided back to Mr. Buckley, who would attempt to negotiate with the top vote-getters while maintaining flexibility since availability and willingness to negotiate are not guaranteed. Mr. Buckley added that the negotiation process can be lengthy, sometimes taking weeks or over a month, involving back-and-forth with managers about dates and compensation, occasionally discovering deal-breakers like a band member unwilling to work July 4th. Ms. O'Callaghan emphasized the importance of Council responding promptly to the ranking email to facilitate the process.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.



Presiding Officer - Mayor



Clerk of Council