

First of all, I would like to thank you all for allowing me to present our needs to you and taking the time to listen and consider our request.

I am Dave Ouellette, owner/operator of the Badlands Big Sticks baseball club here in Dickinson. When the team was brought to Dickinson, it was founded by a out of state owner. During the first season of operations, it became very clear that this was a program/event that needed local ownership to have "skin" in the game everyday, as it is a full time job and has an incredible amount of moving pieces behind the scenes. I am here today to request financial assistance on an annual bases for the operation of this event that we have been putting on for the past 7 years now. While this is technically a for profit business, at that end of the day, this business has not made a profit over the years and I would be happy to provide you with all of the previous tax returns at any time if you would have any need to review them. Over the 6 year coarse of this business venture that I took on, I would say I personally average 60-70 hours a week during the season working on the events whether that would be in person at the ballpark or at my desk on the computer or phone coordinating and entering data for the business dealings. Over those 6 years, I personally have not received a paycheck or salary for the work I have put in. I have been blessed in my life and fortunately have not had to require this business to pay my mortgage or utility bills at home. If that was needed, I would have had to close the doors years ago and we would not have this vital community event in town.

If you have never been to a game, (which I hope that you all have at some point), The Big Sticks are a summer collegiate level wood bat league. So, it is all College players that come to town for the summer to play ball and improve their talents for their college careers and hopefully move on to the big leagues from there. The Big Sticks have been in three leagues total now. Originally starting in the Expedition League, then a lateral move to the Independence League and now a huge step up and basically to the "Major leagues" of summer collegiate ball in the Northwoods League. The new league we have joined has been around for 30 years and has 26 teams in the league. It is the oldest and largest league in the world. Every game is video live streamed and some are even broadcast on ESPN plus nationally. So, it is a big step up. In last years world series game three, both starting pitchers played in the Northwoods league during their college careers. The NWL has by far the most players/alumni that have played or are playing in the MLB. I believe they just announced their 347th former NWL player that debuted in the Major leagues last week.

While making the move to the oldest, biggest, and best league out there is a great opportunity and honor, it also comes with a huge operating cost increase to put things on to their level of expectations. We now have two other teams in ND that are in the Northwoods League. The Minot Hot Tots and the Bismarck Larks. This will provide for a huge in state rivalry between the clubs going forward and will draw many more people from Bismarck and Minot to come to Dickinson and watch their host players or just their favorite team take on their in-state rivals. Which will generate more business for the community as a whole, from restaurants to hotels and gas stations ect.

Now a little bit more about the operation. The event is much more than just a baseball game. That is just the icing on the cake to be able to watch high quality baseball with your family and friends. The event is more so a community gathering, a community support, a community recognition of non-stop businesses, both for profit and non-profit entities that are at the games raising money for their organizations from the large crowds we bring together and now even larger crowds will be at the games

with the new league and in state rivalries. We recognize a community veteran for their past services every night at the games which gets an overwhelming amount of respect and thankfulness from the fans every time and to be honest is my favorite 3-4 minutes of every game win or lose, we have non stop in between inning games for both youth and adults, we bring in entertainment acts from all over the country that perform at major league stadiums, we raise money and donate money to countless charities throughout the season. It is simply a huge entire community event/gathering, with an entire age range including infants to senior citizens with stuff to do for everyone in between. We have been told countless times how incredible our concessions offerings are compared to other places across the state and others from many other states voicing the same thing. I have been approached many many times from people that have attended these games and came up to me and said, "I felt like I was in a big city! This is amazing and I had no idea Dickinson had something like this to offer, I will definitely be back many times this summer!"

Now, where this pertains to an ongoing city contribution/sponsorship/support, or whatever you want to call it. Over the years, the Big Sticks have leased the Dickinson Park and rec Dakota Community Bank and Trust ballpark. We use it all summer, along with DSU, Dickinson Baseball Club and Dickinson High School. While over the years before the Big Sticks came into town, we (The Dickinson Baseball Club, DSU and DHS) got by with the accommodations that were at the ballpark with the smaller crowds that were typically generated for those events. With the Big Sticks in the picture and a much larger attendance at all the games, we have developed many additional needs to accommodate the larger crowds and offerings needed. So, over the course of the past 7 years, we have upgraded many aspects of the Park and Rec owned ballpark at our own expense, yet none of those improvements have increased the value of any of our business assets, but it has increased the value of the city owned ballpark property with many electrical and communication improvements, Expansion of the concessions building, the concessions deck areas, sound system, seating areas, so on and so forth. All of this absolutely needed for the Big Sticks, but on top of that taking the experience at the city owned ballpark to another level when the DBC is playing there or the high school and college teams are playing there. So, now when those games are played there and especially when a High School Tournament, College Tournament or Legion Tournament is hosted here, we get countless compliments of the facility and the appearance and offerings. It is a much better environment for those other users while for the most part the Big Sticks have footed the bill for the lion's share of the improvements.

We have a great working relationship with the Park and Rec. They do an amazing job with the upkeep and maintenance of the field and facility. We understand there is costs involved to upkeep that mtnc on the field and facilities. To that extent, the Big Sticks pay a annual lease to the park and rec for the use of the facilities.

The Big Sticks have a trade out lease agreement with the Dickinson Baseball Club (Legion/Babe Ruth Baseball/DBC). Whereas we own the rights for all of the advertising at the ballpark, so we now contribute the first \$70k of our fundraising every year to the DBC for their operating expenses money that they used to raise with advertising at the ballpark. This is a huge burden off their shoulders to not have to go out and raise those funds. We have also taken over all the concessions operations for their games. They now have the best possible ballpark concessions offerings and do not have to sign up for the volunteer working sessions to operate their program.

The Big Sticks host 35 home games and play 35 road games in the 2.5 months they are here. Approximately 7 days "off" if you will in the entire summer stay. Well, on those days "off" most of the time we have the team doing something in the community, helping out at the bakken bbq, helping out at the Hospice picnic in the mall parking lot, Fourth of July parade, helping out with the Make a Wish event tear down and set up, picking up garbage around town, going to mustang and diamonds facilities to do mini camps, swimming with the Big Sticks event, ect ect. Just non-stop stuff that make the Big Sticks a vital part of this community. Having been at the ballpark the past 7 years nearly at every game, I could not imagine this town without this community event throughout the entire summer. Every night of the week throughout the summer. Games Monday thru Sunday so at any point in time the people in this community can look at the schedule and find a date that works for them to get together with their family or friends and head down to the ballpark for an evening of fun. Just one more major offering this city can promote as a reason to take a job in Dickinson and raise your kids here in Dickinson. This is something we need to have here long term for the benefit of our community, our children, grand children and beyond.

It is a community event, put on at a city owned property, and attracts a lot of people to come to town, but it is not possible to put on without the community coming together to make it happen. We need 35-40 host families to house the players and interns every summer, we need restaurants to donate meals, we need hotels to donate rooms we need businesses to donate funds to pay for buses and other travel expense, we need fans to purchase tickets, we need loyal employees to go above and beyond what they are getting paid for because they have a love and passion for this community and the event that it provides. Again, as I mentioned before, this is a for profit business, but it is a unique situation that to this point has not been a profitable business. We would not be here today requesting support if this was a high revenue generating profitable business. That would not be appropriate. But we are here requesting support from the city to help get this business to cash flow and keep it in existence for the long term benefit of the community as a whole.

Is there a grant program available for this type of unique situation? Is it possible for the city to fund the lease/rent amount to the park and rec to avoid the Big Sticks from having to take that money out of their operation to pay the Park and Rec. Is it possible for the city to fund the DBC program to a certain extent to offset some or all of the youth baseball program expenses that the Big Sticks have to pay from their operations.

Thank you so much for your time and the opportunity to present this information and request to you tonight. I am simply asking for consideration of this unique request and gladly will answer any and all questions you may have for me right now or at a later time.

Sincerely,

Dave Ouellette

Badlands Big Sticks Baseball Club, LLC