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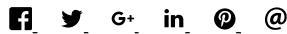
Authority supports more use of arena's metal detectors

By Jocelyn Brumbaugh
jbrumbaugh@tribdem.com 14 hrs ago



1st Summit Arena @ Cambria County War Memorial is shown on Monday, May 21, 2018.

By Eric Knopsnyder
eknopsnyder@tribdem.com



EBENSBURG – All ticketed events at 1st Summit Arena @ Cambria County War Memorial – including high school hockey games – should be subject to use of the facility's metal detectors, a majority of the arena's authority said Monday.

"We're obligated for safety," said Mike Barletta, chairman of the war memorial authority, which held a regular meeting Monday at the North Central Recreation Center in Ebensburg.

"I think we have to use them for every event."

Steve St. John, general manager of both the recreation center and the arena, said the cost to local school districts using the arena for hockey games is \$48 per game to cover only the costs of trained security guards to operate the metal detectors.

"We're keeping ourselves from being a soft target," St. John said.

The additional cost per game is something the consensus of the authority said it could absorb at first, but should also be considered by school administrators.

"That's not a hockey coach's call, it's the school's," Barletta said.

Last year, the authority purchased four portable walk-through metal detectors and four metal detector wands for use at the 4,000-seat arena in downtown Johnstown, a purchase that was offset by a grant of about \$11,600.

Each walk-through metal detector cost about \$3,500 and the wands were about \$1,200 each, according to quotes presented by St. John. The equipment costs also included training.

On Monday, the board was also presented with a proposal from Precision Business Solutions of Ebensburg to manage the arena's information technology systems, including wireless internet.

Walter Hutsky, of Precision Business Solutions, said the arena currently has several internet accounts and uses a cable connection that could be improved by a fiber alternative.

"It's very unusual to have multiple connections coming in for a single vendor like this," Hutsky said.

The arena's wiring is in poor condition, prompting Hutsky to suggest an outside contractor to handle that issue before new equipment could be set up.

Included in the proposed project by Precision Business Solutions is upgraded infrastructure to equipment more suited for businesses, a new firewall and different networks for guests, point of sale and employee use.

Hutsky told the board there are ways to scale back certain parts of the projects for cost concerns or complete the proposed project in phases. The first step, he said, would be to correct the arena's wiring.

"The current system that we have doesn't make sense," St. John said.

"Personally, I think this is a very big move."

St. John noted the authority has other business that is likely more urgent, but improved internet service is something the arena could offer those interested in using the space for an additional charge.

Jocelyn Brumbaugh is a reporter for the Tribune-Democrat. Follow her on Twitter @JBrumbaughTD.

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Jocelyn Brumbaugh