

Managing The Civic Center: Comparing Three Groups That Want The Job

The three groups vying to manage the Hartford Civic Center, including what the Connecticut Development Authority has said are the pros and cons of each proposal.

	WORST-CASE ANNUAL LOSS TO STATE	PROPOSED BEST-CASE ANNUAL LOSS TO STATE	PROS	CONS
<p>MSG</p> <p>Has run the Civic Center since 1997. Owns the Hartford Wolf Pack (AHL), New York Rangers (NHL), New York Knicks (NBA) and New York Liberty (WNBA). Runs UConn football stadium Rentschler Field in East Hartford, New York’s Madison Square Garden arena complex and Radio City Music Hall. Parent company is Cablevision</p>	\$2.65 million	\$2.55 million	Stability, local knowledge, only group that could guarantee a minor league hockey team next year.	Could prioritize New York over Connecticut; hard to remake an arena it has run for 10 years; is the perceived status quo.
<p>BALDWIN SPORTS GROUP/GLOBAL SPECTRUM</p> <p>Howard Baldwin is a former owner of the Hartford Whalers; Global Spectrum operates big-name arenas such as Philadelphia’s Wachovia Spectrum and regional facilities such as Springfield’s MassMutual Center. Its parent company is Comcast, and its representative in the Hartford proposal is Frank E. Russo Jr. — who once ran the Civic Center for the city.</p>	\$2.73 million	\$831,000	Bring their own ticketing, marketing, concession services; have potential for regional sports television network; have Baldwin’s hockey experience; plan to give the arena a new image, possibly selling naming rights.	No guarantee of AHL team for next season; state wouldn’t control pricing for concessions, ticketing, marketing; not a true joint-venture between Baldwin and Global Spectrum — Baldwin would run hockey, Comcast would run arena.
<p>NORTHLAND/AEG</p> <p>Northland Investment Corp. is run by Lawrence R. Gottesdiener and is downtown’s largest property owner with a \$500 million portfolio. AEG Worldwide of Los Angeles owns the Los Angeles Kings (NHL), Manchester Monarchs (AHL), four major league soccer teams and has an ownership interest in the Los Angeles Lakers (NBA) and the Los Angeles Sparks (WNBA). Operates arenas that include the Staples Center and Home Depot center, both in Los Angeles.</p>	\$2.93 million	\$1.43 million	AEG is in the entertainment business; partnership is a true joint venture; plans to give arena new image and has good track record with selling naming rights; Northland’s existing \$500 million investment in Hartford is added incentive to succeed.	No guarantee of AHL team next season; AEG’s facility-management arm is a new, relatively untested subsidiary of the parent company.
<p>NORTHLAND/AEG ALTERNATIVE</p> <p>Northland/AEG would assume the lease of the arena from the state and take over operations of the building entirely.</p>	\$2.02 million	\$2.02 million	Northland/AEG assumes all operating risk.	Northland/AEG reaps all financial benefits.

SOURCES: Connecticut Development Authority; MSG; Baldwin Sports Group; Global Spectrum; Northland Investment Corp.; AEG Worldwide