



# Visit Dublin Ohio Board Meeting Meeting Minutes April 8, 2026

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## Meeting Information

Location: Muirfield Village Golf Club

*Board Members Present:* Betty Clark, Tim Lecklider, Jessica Rexer, Lindsay Weisenauer, Dave Cecutti, Craig Baldrige, Dr. John Marschhausen, Meghan Kwast, Jeff Kasler, Ian Montgomery, Dr. Ben Bring, Mitchell Briant, Brian Harman, Heather Ditty, Mary Jobe, Dr. William Burke, Clay Rose

*Board Members Absent:* David Babner, Eric Belfrage, Deniz Akyuz, Sharon Baker Magee, Rachel Stuart

*Guests:* Dan Sullivan, the Memorial Tournament presented by Workday

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## Action Items

- @[Board Members] - Contact Scott or Betty if interested in the President-Elect position.
- @[Scott] - Meet with the city's finance committee (Matt and Megan) to discuss the contract and keep the board updated.

- @[Scott] - Create a one-to-two-page memo summarizing the food truck discussion for Megan and Lindsay.
- @[All] - Note that the next meeting will be hosted by Brian at the zoo on June 15th.

## Key Decisions

- The consent agenda was approved by a unanimous vote. Tim Lecklider made the motion and Dr. Bring seconded.

## Detailed Minutes

- [00:57-02:54] **Leslie is introduced as the new Head of Marketing and Communications and briefly shares her professional background.**
- Leslie has over twenty years of experience in marketing and communications.
- Her career began as a newspaper reporter in South Carolina, followed by over twenty years at agencies in New York.
- She has been in Columbus for a few years and expressed her excitement about joining the team, noting that her first week coincided with the Shamrock event.
- [02:54-06:13] **Leslie presents the St. Patrick's Day "World's Largest Human Shamrock" event as a successful mission moment.**
- Visit Dublin initiated the event to create a unique moment the organization could "own" for the city, distinct from other St. Patrick's Day noise.
- The event was a significant success, generating over one billion media impressions to date.
  - National coverage included outlets like People Magazine and The New York Post.
  - Regional coverage included key markets such as Chicago and Dayton, with 10-15 broadcast appearances.
- The initiative fostered a strong sense of community engagement, with participants expressing pride and excitement.
- A detailed case study of the event is available in the meeting packet.
- It was highlighted that the event was a collaborative "all hands on deck" effort involving the Visit Dublin team and the City of Dublin, which helped with promotion.
- An attendee shared an anecdote about hearing people from outside Dublin discussing the event, indicating its wide reach and positive reception.
- [06:13-07:10] **Scott provides highlights from the consent agenda, focusing on financial performance and meeting minutes.**

- **Bed Tax:** Year-to-date figures are down 4%, primarily due to a poor performance in December. However, January showed a 7% increase, and there is optimism for the upcoming Christkindlmarkt in December.
- **Financials:** The balance sheet shows over \$690,000, with an accounts receivable of \$17,000 and a reserve fund balance of \$359,000.
- **Meeting Minutes:** There were typos and bugs in the previous minutes, which were the first produced with a new system.
- **Key Decision:** The consent agenda was approved by a unanimous vote. Tim Lecklider made the motion and Dr. Bring seconded.
  
- The annual audit came back "100% clean" with zero exceptions, which was noted as being rare.
- The organization's robust system of checks and balances, established with Clay's help, was credited for the positive result.
  
- **[08:09-09:03] Scott shares administrative updates, including the completion of the 990 tax filing and a new signage project.**
- The organization's IRS tax filing (Form 990) has been completed.
- To increase local relevancy, a new sign featuring the Visit Dublin logo and color will be installed on the corner of High Street and Bridge Street.
  - This became possible after the Bridge Street area began allowing color signage.
  - The sign will replace the existing "Visitor Information Center" sign.
  - A request for additional window signs was not approved by the city.
  
- **[09:03-09:51] A call for 2027 board candidates and a President-Elect is announced.**
- The organization is actively building a pool of candidates for the 2027 board.
- There is a specific search for a President-Elect.
- Action Item: @[Board Members] - Contact Scott or Betty if interested in the President-Elect position.
  
- **[09:51-11:51] Scott updates the board on the City of Dublin bed tax contract negotiations.**
- Following the February 23rd City Council Finance Committee meeting, four key recommendations were made regarding the bed tax fund:
  1. Establish a minimum fund balance of 50% of the previous year's total (approximately \$2.1 million).
  2. Create formalized contracts with Visit Dublin, the Arts Council, and Dublin Historical Society.
  3. Develop a mechanism to manage fluctuations in bed tax revenue.

4. Determine how to handle funds once the desired fund balance is achieved.
- The committee favored a three-year contract over the initially proposed five-year term.
  - Action Item: @[Scott] - Meet with the city's finance committee (Matt and Megan) to discuss the contract and keep the board updated.
  - For context, the bed tax represents only 2% of the city's total revenue, and the 10% portion being justified by Visit Dublin is just 0.16% of the city's entire budget.
- [11:52-12:51] **An upcoming Finance Committee meeting on May 12 is noted, and a new discussion on food truck policy is introduced.**
  - The City of Dublin has requested input on a food truck policy.
  - Scott and Lindsay will lead a discussion to gather high-level feedback and direction from the board on Visit Dublin's official position regarding food trucks. The discussion will not focus on operational details like fees or proximity rules.
- [12:51-15:42] **Lindsay outlines the city's proposed regulatory framework for food trucks.**
  - The city is developing a policy to balance the vibrancy food trucks can offer with the interests of existing restaurants and businesses.
  - The proposed amendments will establish a new comprehensive regulatory framework. Key components include:
    - **Licensing:** Requiring an annual food truck license, with a separate application for each truck. Licenses would be renewed each February.
    - **Operating Standards:** Rules for hours of operation and a prohibition on leaving trucks unattended or overnight.
    - **Location & Parking:** Trucks would not be allowed to park directly in front of restaurants without permission, on sidewalks, near intersections, or blocking access. Use of streets and parks would be limited unless part of an approved event.
    - **Enforcement:** The policy will define violations and enforcement procedures.
  - The policy aims to establish clear rules, support fair competition, enhance public safety, and ensure flexibility.
- [15:42-18:34] **Scott presents feedback on food trucks gathered from local restaurant partners.**
  - **General Consensus:** Restaurant owners are not against food trucks but believe there is a right time and place for them, such as at city-organized events like Food Truck Wednesdays at Coffman Park.
  - **Key Concerns from Restaurants:**
    - **Economic Disparity:** Restaurants are local businesses paying income tax and bed tax, contributing significantly to the local

economy, whereas food trucks pay a small fee and have less of a lasting economic footprint.

- **Location Restrictions:** Restaurant partners are universally against allowing food trucks on Riverside Drive and High Street due to safety concerns (e.g., children near fast-moving traffic), parking and traffic congestion, and direct competition.
- **Parking:** Food trucks take up valuable parking spots.
- It was clarified that this feedback represents the views of restaurant partners, not the official opinion of Visit Dublin.
  
- [18:34-23:16] **Board members and staff discuss specific concerns and considerations for the food truck policy.**
- **High-Concern Areas:** There is agreement that High Street and Riverside Drive are major points of concern for downtown businesses regarding food truck placement, particularly due to parking and competition.
- **Event-Specific Use:** Food trucks are seen as beneficial for permitted events to supplement restaurants, but the event organizer bears the burden of managing traffic, safety, and trash.
- **Logistical Issues:** The noise and fumes from generators were raised as a negative impact to consider.
- **Regulation of Food Type:** Lindsay stated that regulating the type of food trucks (e.g., preventing multiple coffee trucks) has not been part of the discussion to date but could be raised with city staff.
- **Licensing Clarification:** A food truck would need one annual license to operate anywhere in the city for various events; individual event organizers would not need to secure separate licenses for the trucks they host.
- **Revenue Share:** The only revenue for the city would be from the permit fee; there is no proposed revenue-sharing model. However, it was noted that some community organizations (e.g., sports teams) have arrangements where they receive a percentage of sales from food trucks at their events.
- **Health & Safety:** It was confirmed that health department requirements would be part of the licensing process.
- **Overall Sentiment:** No one present expressed being "anti-food-truck."
  
- [23:20-25:09] **Discussion concluded on food truck placement regulations, proposing a framework for approved and disallowed areas.**
- A key consideration for food truck placement is ensuring they are not situated directly in front of an existing business, especially on a neighboring parcel.
- Locating food trucks in Bridge Park was deemed largely unfeasible.
- The suggestion to not allowing food trucks to park on Riverside Drive was noted as a valuable point for further consideration.
- The impact of food trucks taking up parking spaces was also acknowledged as a significant factor.

- A proposed regulatory model would involve defining areas where food trucks are explicitly not allowed, with all other areas being implicitly approved by default. Another is to create a list of "encouraged" areas.
- Action Item: @[Scott] - Create a one-to-two-page memo summarizing the food truck discussion for Megan and Lindsay.
- **[25:18-26:42] The team explored potential incentives for brick-and-mortar businesses to partner with food trucks and clarified rules for private events.**
  - The idea of offering incentives to local businesses to host food trucks was raised as a way to help them provide outside service.
  - The team will take back the idea of exploring what incentives could be offered to brick-and-mortar businesses to encourage them to branch out with food trucks.
  - Regarding private events in residential areas:
    - If a food truck is on a public street for an event (e.g., a party), it would fall under the proposed city regulations.
    - If a food truck is in a private space, such as a backyard or a business's private parking lot, it is understood that it would not be under the city's purview.
- **[26:47-27:46] Josh provided an update on the successful Q1 group tour market, highlighting key drivers and upcoming events.**
  - Q1 is a heavy season for the group tour market.
  - Josh attended two trade shows, which have already resulted in new bus tour bookings.
  - A significant focus for this year is promoting the ChristkindlMart to fill hotel and bus capacity during a time of need. This initiative has received a lot of positive and curious feedback.
  - St. Patrick's Day continues to be a major draw for bus tours.
  - The "Irish experience" is what truly differentiates Dublin from other cities and is a primary interest for tour groups, even more so than historical attractions.
  - Three tour groups were hosted during the St. Patrick's Day week, originating from Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.
- **[27:46-30:37] Katie said the Fairy Door Trail is celebrating its 10th anniversary, demonstrating significant and measurable economic impact.**
  - The Fairy Door Trail is a self-guided scavenger hunt through downtown Dublin where participants find hidden fairy doors in retail shops.
  - Participants who complete the trail receive a free t-shirt.
  - To celebrate its 10th anniversary, a birthday party will be held at Riverside Crossing Park on Saturday, April 18th, from 2-4 PM.
  - Year-to-date, over 11,000 passports have been collected from individuals who finished the trail. This number does not include the family and friends accompanying them.

- The trail drives significant economic activity, as participants and their groups often make purchases at local shops, cafes, and restaurants.
- Analysis shows that while approximately 40% of participants are Dublin residents, the majority come from elsewhere in the state.
- The trail serves as an effective way for visitors, who may be in town for other reasons, to explore the community and spend money locally.
- The trail's popularity also encourages businesses to become partners to be included as a stop.
- **[30:37-32:29] Updates were shared on the Sports Ohio complex development, including recent advocacy and upcoming milestones.**
- Following the last board meeting, the city created a video showcasing the vision for the Sports Ohio complex.
- Dr. Burke, Dr. Lee, and Scott advocated for the facility's components during the State of the City address.
- Josh is collaborating with the facility's management company, Sports Facilities Companies (SFC), on messaging to attract new events.
- The first soccer tournament at the newly managed Sports Ohio and Darree Fields is scheduled for the upcoming weekend.
- The larger vision and framework for the entire "premier athletic and recreation campus" will be presented to the council for a first reading on April 13th, with potential adoption on April 27th.
- Key features of the vision include the addition of turf fields and retrofitting current indoor facilities for courts.
- **[32:29-33:28] The organization is undergoing its reaccreditation process, a distinction held by only a small percentage of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs).**
- The accreditation submission, which includes 155 detailed requirements, was completed last month.
- Only 6% of the 4,500 DMOs/CVBs worldwide are accredited.
- The organization has been continuously accredited since 2008.
- The accreditation standards are the same for all organizations regardless of size or budget, meaning they are judged on the same criteria as major destinations like Orlando or Las Vegas.
- **[33:28-34:56] Industry partners provided updates on upcoming events and the current academic and business climate.**
- **Ohio University/City of Dublin Speaker Series:**
  - The final event of the academic year will take place on Wednesday, April 22nd, at 6:30 PM at the Abbey Theater.
  - Speakers will discuss the impact of stress, anxiety, and management, particularly concerning injuries.
  - This marks the third year of this collaborative program.
- **Local Schools:**
  - The period after spring break is busy with award ceremonies and recognitions.

- Schools will be in session for four days after Memorial Day this year.
  - The end of spring break has been positive for restaurants, allowing business to return to normal.
- [34:58-35:54] **An update on upcoming soccer-related events was provided, highlighting major viewing parties for the World Cup.**
  - Numerous soccer-related activities are planned around Bridge Park for the upcoming World Cup.
  - An outdoor viewing event is planned for the World Cup final.
  - The Columbus Crew will also host a large outdoor viewing party for a USA game at Bushwick Park.
- [35:54-39:19] **Dan Sullivan provided an overview of the upcoming 50th Anniversary of the Memorial Tournament, a signature PGA Tour event.**
  - The tournament is celebrating its 50th anniversary, an important milestone for the Nicklaus family and all involved.
  - The 50th anniversary celebration was effectively kicked off last year by honoring Barbara Nicklaus during the 50th playing of the tournament.
  - The tournament will take place the first week of June and is again a signature event, expecting 72 of the world's top players.
  - Broadcast will be on the Golf Channel and CBS, reaching over 220 countries and territories.
  - The official honoree for the 50th anniversary is David Graham, a former Memorial winner and two-time major champion from Dallas, Texas.
    - His selection is expected to bring at least 50 visitors from Texas, boosting the local economy.
  - The tournament relies on over 3,800 committed volunteers, a number that has grown since tracking began to include groups beyond those tied to Nationwide Children's Hospital.
  - The high number of volunteers is a direct result of the tournament running its own concessions and using manual scoreboards.
- [39:20-42:12] **Details were shared on signature events and a special tribute planned for the 50th anniversary.**
  - **Legends Luncheon:** This event, supported by the City of Dublin, will host over 700 people and benefits Nationwide Children's Hospital. Roger Maltbie, the 1976 winner, will be a featured guest.
  - **1976 Winner Tribute:**
    - The commemorative tournament bear will be named "Maltbie" and will wear a replica of Roger Maltbie's distinctive 1976 pants.
    - Heather has arranged to have a life-sized version of the pants made for Roger Maltbie to wear on broadcast as a surprise.
  - **Media Day:** A formal press conference with Jack Nicklaus and David Graham will focus on the 50-year legacy of the tournament.

- **Time Capsule Failure:** A plan to unearth a 50-year-old time capsule at Muirfield and Memorial Drive was abandoned after it was discovered to be filled with water, destroying its contents.
- [42:12-44:08] **The schedule of public-facing tournament week events was outlined, including a change to a long-standing party.**
- **Volunteer Pickup:** A street-closing event in Bridge Park for volunteers.
- **The Fore Miler:** A race held on Thursday prior to the tournament.
- **Honoree Ceremony:** A ceremony for David Graham on Wednesday.
- **Benefit Concert:** Luke Bryan will perform, continuing the successful concert series.
- **ForeFest:** A Friday and Saturday event held in partnership with the Crawford Hoying team.
- The Bogey Inn party will not be held this year; the venue is in a state of "transition" and "repurposing" that will not be completed by Memorial Week.
- [47:03-47:58] **New physical installations and expanded branding will celebrate the tournament's 50th anniversary throughout Dublin.**
- **50th Anniversary Logos:** Five large (6'x8') logos will be created and moved around Dublin and downtown Columbus to increase visibility, similar to the Blue Jackets' 25th-anniversary campaign.
- **Field of Pin Flags:** Fifty pin flags will be installed in Bridge Park, creating a "field of flags" as a destination photo opportunity.
- **Bridge Walk of Fame:** The floor of the Dublin Link pedestrian bridge will feature decals celebrating the 50 years of tournament winners and honorees.
- **Ground Stamps:** The 50th-anniversary logo will be stamped on the ground at key intersections.
- **Disc Golf:** The popular frisbee golf course is returning.
- **Expanded Banners:** Banner presence will be expanded along Avery-Muirfield Drive and Dublin Road, featuring imagery of past winners and honorees.
- **AC Hotel Wallscape:** The hotel's exterior will feature a large image of four iconic players: Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Scottie Scheffler, and Tom Watson to celebrate the anniversary. Other hotel branding will also be updated.
- [47:58-48:56] **The Memorial Tournament highlighted its strong collaboration with the City of Dublin and Visit Dublin, which is critical to the event's success.**
- The partnership encompasses key operational areas including traffic, parking, communications, and safety.
- A notable collaborative effort is the drone show, for which new designs are being developed for this year.

- As a tribute, High Street will be renamed to "David Graham Drive" for the duration of the tournament.
- Dan expressed pride in the unique and collaborative relationship between the Memorial Tournament, the City of Dublin, Visit Dublin, noting it is a model other cities observe with envy.
- [48:57-50:49] **The PGA Tour is undergoing a major strategic shift under new leadership, which will impact the tour's structure and schedule.**
  - The new CEO, (formerly of the NFL), is focused on expanding the product's reach to a broader audience.
  - The strategy involves condensing the schedule for top players into a "Tier One" window from mid-February to mid-August, focusing on larger markets.
  - A "Tier Two" level of PGA Tour golf will exist throughout the calendar year, providing a pathway for players to advance to Tier One.
  - The Memorial Tournament is firmly positioned as a Tier One event.
  - The tournament's primary scheduling goal is to maintain its date two weeks before the U.S. Open, ideally starting on Memorial Day weekend.
  - The 2024 schedule is an anomaly due to Memorial Day falling very early and Father's Day (the traditional U.S. Open weekend) falling very late.
  - The tournament leadership is actively communicating with the PGA Tour to ensure the Memorial's prominent place in the hierarchy of professional golf is maintained as the tour evolves.
- [50:50-52:14] **The Memorial Tournament's marketing and community engagement are structured around three core pillars: Honor, Showcase, and Benefit.**
  - This framework, established by the Nicklaus family, will be reflected in social media content, video releases, and other marketing materials.
  - Upcoming community-related events include:
    - An exhibit by the Dublin Historical Society for the 50th anniversary during the month of May.
    - The unveiling of the Dublin Arts Council's "Swing" installation on May 20th.
  - The tournament dates for the following year are projected to be the week of May 31st, returning to the Memorial Day holiday week.
- [52:15-54:05] **An open Q&A session covered topics including course conditions and bids for future major tournaments.**
  - Regarding course changes, there have been no significant alterations, only necessary structural work that is not readily visible. The course survived the winter well and is in good condition.
  - The group noted the upcoming Senior Open in July and its potential impact on local hotels.

- In response to a question about hosting other tournaments, it was confirmed there is "always chatter" but nothing is confirmed.
  - The organization had previously bid on the next two Presidents Cups (awarded to Chicago and St. Louis) and will regroup to consider future bids, as they view the event as a great complement to the Memorial.
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- **[54:16-55:07] North Market is launching a new beer and planning several anniversary events.**
  - In partnership with Seventh Sun Brewing, North Market is launching a beer called "Eighteen Seventy Six," described as a North Market lager.
    - It will be available starting next week at the Market Bar, the Beer and Wine Store at North Market Downtown, and select specialty grocery stores.
    - Distribution is handled by Seventh Sun Brewing.
  - The 5th anniversary of the Bridge Park market will be celebrated in the fall.
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- **[56:39-57:07] Updates were provided on downtown Dublin events and the Dublin Market.**
  - The "All in the Pup Crawl" is scheduled for Sunday.
  - The Farmers Market will begin on Saturday, May 2nd, and run through September.
    - It involves partnerships with the Memorial Tournament, children's hospitals, and theaters for programming.
  - The Dublin Market has already received approximately 400 vendor applicants.
  - Additional programming includes the drone show and volunteer packet pickup.
  - A World Cup viewing party is also planned, with the first event taking place on June 12th at the Columbus Crew's home game as a "gorgeous park takeover."
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- **[58:13-59:12] Several new business openings were announced for downtown Dublin.**
  - Two new tenants are opening in Bridge Park:
    - "Chicken Salad Chick"
    - "Over Easy," a breakfast and brunch spot, is scheduled to open on April 20th.
  - Bristol is projected to open in late June.
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- **[59:12-01:00:05] The Columbus Zoo reported strong attendance and announced new evening events.**
  - Benefitting from good weekend weather, zoo attendance is up approximately 35% year-over-year.

- A new concept, "Adventure Nights," will be tested on Saturday evenings from June 25th through July 25th.
  - The Adventure Cove area (sea lions and seals) will be opened in the evenings with extra entertainment.
- The zoo is also bringing back a resurrected version of ZooFari, now called "Rendezoo."
  - This ticketed evening event for 2,000 guests will feature comedians, entertainment, beer, and wine, and offers an opportunity for local restaurants to participate.
- **[01:00:05-01:01:23] Updates were shared on the Summer Fun Series and the expansion of the DORA.**
- The Summer Fun Series schedule is:
  - Empower Hours on Tuesdays, starting June 9th.
  - Midweek Music on Wednesdays, starting June 10th.
  - Cinema Saturdays, starting June 27th.
- Progress is being made on the Christkindlmarkt, which is on track to open this year, with event permits expected soon.
- The ice-skating rink is being taken down.
- The Dublin City Council has expanded the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) rules.
  - Rationale: The change was made after observing successful, responsible use during previous events and a desire to progressively expand the program.
  - The DORA now includes the grassy areas of the park, which were previously excluded.
  - The expansion also incorporates new developments in Bridge Park.
- **[01:01:26-01:01:56] An upcoming Independence Day announcement was mentioned.**
- The announcement for the Independence Day celebration will be made soon.
- The musical performer will not be Luke Bryan (a reference to an earlier speaker or joke).
- **[01:02:01-01:02:31] A large public art mural project is underway in a new development block.**
- A local artist has been selected for the project through a process involving the Dublin Arts Council.
- The project will include a community engagement component, offering an opportunity for the public to be part of the final art piece. More details are forthcoming.
- **[01:02:31-01:03:45] The meeting concluded with acknowledgements and the announcement of the next meeting's location.**

- The group reiterated the critical importance of the partnerships between the city and various organizations, noting that they are unique and essential for executing large-scale events like the Memorial Tournament.
- Action Item: @[All] - Note that the next meeting will be hosted by Brian at the Columbus Zoo on June 15th.