



[eccvb.org](http://eccvb.org)  
3421 Cassopolis Street  
Elkhart, Indiana 46514  
OFFICE: 574-262-8161  
TOLL-FREE: 800-262-8161  
FAX: 574-262-3925

## ELKHART COUNTY INNKEEPERS TAX COMMISSION

### Minutes of Public Meeting

Friday, January 8, 2021, at Elkhart County Visitors Center, 3421 Cassopolis Street, Elkhart, IN

PRESENT: Mr. Dan Shoup, Commission President and Board of Directors  
Ms. Gita Patel, Commission Vice President (via Zoom)  
Mr. Rick Jenkins, Commission Secretary/Treasurer  
Mr. Scott Baker, Commission (via Zoom)  
Mr. Anant Patel, Commission  
Mr. Doug Risser, Commission

ATTENDING: Mr. Levi King, Board of Directors President  
Mr. Larry App, Board of Directors Secretary/Treasurer (via Zoom)  
Mr. Dan Bearss, Board of Directors (via Zoom)  
Mr. Arvis Dawson, Board of Directors (via Zoom)  
Mr. Brian Hoffer, Board of Directors (via Zoom)  
Mr. Jon Hunsberger, ECCVB Executive Director  
Mr. Terry Mark, ECCVB Staff Recorder  
Ms. Amanda Eckelbarger, ECCVB Staff  
Ms. Cindy Ostrom, ECCVB Staff

ABSENT: Ms. Beth Ronzone, Commission

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m.

Mr. Doug Risser was welcomed as a newly appointed member of the Innkeepers Tax Commission. Everyone attending the meeting introduced themselves.

### APPROVE NOVEMBER MINUTES

*Ms. G. Patel moved to approve the November 2020 minutes. Mr. A. Patel seconded. There was a vote and it was approved with all in favor.*

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. L. App referred everyone to the printed December 2020 budget report. He said the COVID-adjusted budget was on plus side by \$460,000, primarily because of the Payroll Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan, plus an unexpected grant from the state of Indiana. He said COVID-adjusted expenses came in at \$100,000 less than budgeted. Actual revenue totaled \$2.2 million and expenses were \$1.6 million. He said the balance sheet looks pretty good with \$1.4 million in cash. The ECCVB will be building up cash reserves in 2021 and operating on a conservative figure on room tax revenue of \$1.6 million.

In response to a question from Mr. A. Patel, Ms. C. Ostrom said the December room tax revenue figure is a factor of the amount that can be rolled over in 2020. Mr. J. Hunsberger said that the ECCVB is exploring applying for the newest round of PPP. Ms. C. Ostrom said she has been in contact with KeyBank for updated information, including the final application process and analyzing its implications.

*Mr. A. Patel moved to accept the financial report. Mr. D. Risser seconded. There was a vote and it was approved with all in favor.*

## ELECTION OF 2021 OFFICERS

Mr. D. Shoup listed the slate that was nominated in the November 2020 meeting: Mr. Dan Shoup for president, Ms. Gita Patel for vice president, and Mr. Rick Jenkins for secretary/treasurer. There were no other nominations from the floor.

*Mr. A. Patel moved to accept the slate of officers for 2021. Mr. R. Jenkins seconded. There was a vote and it was approved with all in favor.*

## BUREAU UPDATE

Mr. J. Hunsberger gave an update on the Economic Development Administration grant application. The ECCVB was working with the Economic Development Corp. and Chris Stager and had stretched our arms out wide to work with all elected officials to help all of our businesses. He said the application was denied because three of the requirements were not met. Mr. J. Hunsberger said this decision is confusing, but we believe it is partially because the available funds were already spent. There might be a follow-up meeting to get further explanation.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the Indiana Destination Development Corp. has released a grant opportunity. ECCVB staff have been working for two months to pull together a grant proposal for this program, which aims to bolster tourism in Indiana and build off idea of regionalism. Our proposal looks at Quilt Gardens as well as an effort to expand arts throughout county. The proposed arts trail that would build off Quilt Gardens, with permanent public art pieces at QG and downtowns. He said we have received support from area elected officials, the South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership, Northern Indiana Tourism

Development Commission, as well as the Community Foundation of Elkhart County with potential financial support. Even if we are not awarded this grant, the effort has set the ball in motion for a program that celebrates the Quilt Gardens' 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Mr. D. Bearss praised ECCVB staff for expanding core competencies for the grant application, which will bear fruit down the line.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said Vibrant Communities is almost at its five-year mark, with the Action Agenda winding down. He said the ECCVB and Community Foundation are looking at what that holds — an Action Agenda 2.0. It will involve reaching out to the community to understand what the priorities now, looking ahead 4-5 more years. ECCVB has been in communication with Planning NEXT to help with the communication, strategy, planning. The Vibrant Neighborhoods initiative is our effort to dig deeper into the community to encourage fun and engagement. Vibrant People encourages people to share on social media about what they are doing.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the staff has worked hard on the 2021 Digital Area Guide to think about the best path forward for our partners and destination. This effort is sensitive to our small businesses, but still accomplishes our need to communicate about them and the Elkhart County destination. ECCVB staff have updated the area guide digitally, pushing it out to users via the website. We are still distributing the 2020 guide. We have had positive feedback from our partners. In 2022, we will have a physical and digital guide as we still consider it a core piece of our revenue stream.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said that the Indiana Tourism Association is continuing its push to engage, inform and educate state legislators on the importance of tourism to the Indiana economy and local economies. We have worked with ITA on their campaign tools. We are sharing an edited version of the ITA press release that explains the campaign.

There was general discussion about the IDDC.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. D. Shoup announced that Ms. Ellie Billey has submitted a letter of resignation from the board of directors.

There was general discussion about COVID vaccine distribution and availability.

Mr. D. Shoup raised the issue of innkeepers tax collections from hotels. He said that while some delinquency is to be expected, there is one property that is more than a year and a half behind. He said there might be a need to explore beginning legal action for collections. Mr. B. Hoffer said even though there is pathway for the Elkhart County Treasurer's office to share more information, they have not been willing. He said he can renew conversation with Mr. Craig Buche on next steps. Ms. C. Ostrom said she is not sure on exact amount due.

Mr. L. King said he has been in conversation on a successor on the board for Ms. Eleanor Billey. Mr. L. King proposed Ms. Brittany Short and asked for feedback. Mr. J. Hunsberger said she is invested in the community as the co-owner of Pumpkinvine Cyclery in Middlebury with her husband, and chairing the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. She has been active in advocacy and working to complete the trail.

#### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be March 12, 2021, at 8 a.m.

#### ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Mark  
Staff Recorder

WE