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## ELKHART COUNTY INNKEEPERS TAX COMMISSION

### Minutes of Public Meeting

Friday, March 14, 2025, 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  
Mr. Rick Jenkins, Commission Secretary/Treasurer (via Zoom)  
Mr. Dan Boecher, Commission  
Mr. Anant Patel, Commission

ATTENDING: Mr. Levi King, Board of Directors President  
Ms. Brittany Short, Board of Directors Vice President  
Mr. Larry App, Board of Directors Secretary/Treasurer  
Mr. Arvis Dawson, Board of Directors  
Mr. Brian Hoffer, Board of Directors  
Mr. Jon Hunsberger, Executive Director  
Mr. Terry Mark, ECCVB Staff  
Mr. Don Anderson (via Zoom)

ABSENT: Mr. Doug Risser, Commission  
Ms. Beth Ronzone, Commission

### CALL TO ORDER

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

### APPROVE JANUARY MINUTES

*Ms. G. Patel moved to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2025, meeting. Mr. A. Patel seconded. It was approved with all in favor.*

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. L. App reported that the Elkhart County CVB's financial position is very strong. He said cash account balances excellent and in line with expectations. He said the majority of expenses in 2025 are to support Lerner 100 activities, including \$50,000 to activate arts in downtown. He said the Elkhart County CVB will be the premier sponsor of many activities, the Lerner Loves You movie series, Elkhart Jazz Fest arts VIP reception, Premier Arts' new musical "The Gift," and Elkhart County Symphony holiday performance featuring Girl Named Tom. He said new product development will take us past our budget, but is necessary to help with innkeepers tax increase.

Mr. J. Hunsberger gave an overview of Lerner 100 planning. He said the investment, while substantial, is absolutely worth it as it also creates other opportunities. He said the Elkhart County CVB will be sponsor of a major event at the Central Park stage, an event which will serve as a template for and justification of an outdoor performance space

There was general discussion of the Lerner Theatre, funding for Lerner 100 events, and major events in downtown.

*Mr. A. Patel moved to accept the financial report. Ms. G. Patel seconded. It was approved with all in favor.*

## BUREAU UPDATE

Mr. D. Anderson of Destination Consultancy said he will be in Elkhart from March 19-21 for interviews of commission members, board members, and staff, which will be helpful heading into external interviews. He said there has been a steering committee of commission and board members formed for the purpose of vetting information with this group. He said there will be meetings with county commissioners, county council members, administrators and six hoteliers. He said he and Mr. Mitch Nichols will be back in April for more external interviews. He said they will provide a synopsis at May meeting.

There was discussion on the potential innkeepers tax increase, with the consensus that the Elkhart County CVB should pursue 3 percent, with the possible consideration of phasing and the need to factor in evaluation of potential future investments and financial requirements. Mr. A. Patel said the timing for hotels is awkward, as costs have increased for hotels and inflation has also affected consumers.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the Elkhart County CVB is piloting an additive marketing program with TwoSix Digital to help events such as Mistletoe Market, Martinis & Music, and Bristol Corndog Festival)

Mr. J. Hunsberger asked all members to hold 4 p.m. Tuesday, May 6, on their calendars for a Tourism Matters advocacy event at Wellfield Botanic Gardens.

Mr. J. Hunsberger described ongoing product and experience development through conversations with communities about their priorities. He said the Elkhart County CVB is bringing a major art exhibit to Elkhart County in 2028. He said the Trolls exhibit is created by an artist that uses reclaimed lumber to fashion troll creatures, and an exhibit still in development is what is slated to come to Elkhart County. He

said it will debut in London this summer, with future exhibitions in Australia and New York City. He said it will be in Elkhart County for four months. He said it is exciting to be accepted for this exhibit. He asked members to refrain from any public disclosure for now, as Elkhart County CVB staff works on experience development, marketing and promotion development.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said he has extended a sponsorship challenge to Goshen Theater with the goal to increase the number of live music events.

There was general discussion of opportunities in Nappanee.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the Elkhart County CVB won the Best Cooperative Partnership Award for second year in row at the Indiana Tourism Conference. He said the Indiana Tourism Association has done an excellent job with the conference, elevating the overall experience and quality of workshops.

#### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 8 a.m. Friday, May 9, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Mark  
Elkhart County CVB staff

