

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**PITT-GREENVILLE CONVENTION AND VISITORS AUTHORITY**  
**Executive Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday, April 11, 2023**

The Executive Committee of the Pitt-Greenville Convention and Visitors Authority held its April 2023 Executive Committee meeting on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at Julep restaurant inside the Hilton. CVA Chair Diane Taylor, CVA Vice-Chair Candace Hollingsworth, Assistant Secretary Bri Lester, City Financial Services Director Byron Hayes, City Council liaison Rick Smiley, County Commissioner liaison Mary Perkins Williams, Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker, Assistant City Manager Michael Cowin, Mike Birling, Chip Allen, and Executive Director Andrew Schmidt were in attendance. CVA Secretary Kenneth Ross was unable to attend.

**I. Call to order** CVA Chair Diane Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:10pm. CVA Executive Director Andrew Schmidt shared with the Executive Committee that this was a meeting to discuss the 2023-2024 proposed budget and that no other items were on the agenda for today.

**II. Approval of Minutes** CVB Executive Director Andrew Schmidt reviewed the meeting minutes from the February 16, 2023 CVA Executive Committee meeting. After reviewing, Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker made a motion to approve the minutes. CVA Vice-Chair Candace Hollingsworth seconded the motion. The vote was taken and passed unanimously.

**III. Proposed Partnership Presentation between CPL, City of Greenville, and CVA** Executive Director Andrew Schmidt introduced Deputy City Manager Michael Cowin, VP of Baseball Operations for the Durham Bulls Mike Birling, and Coastal Plain League Commissioner Chip Allen. Chip Allen began the presentation by highlighting the following:

Mr. Allen gave the CVA Executive Committee background on Capitol Broadcasting Company out of Raleigh. Capitol Broadcasting is owned by the Goodmon family who has a great track record in cities like Durham and Rocky Mount. CBC purchased the Coastal Plain League in October of 2022 and also have baseball experience as they own the Durham Bulls and Holly Springs Salamanders. Capitol Broadcasting also owns WRAL, FOX 50 in Raleigh.

Allen continued by giving an overview of the CPL itself. There are currently 14 teams in the league with most residing in North Carolina but a few are in Virginia as two in South Carolina and one in Georgia. Allen stated that the proximity of

these teams would bode well for developing rivalries if Greenville also had a team. Allen went on to add that the CPL has developed some excellent ball players that have made it to the Major League level and also been a good stepping stone for coaches looking to elevate their careers.

Birling then talked about the placemaking that a team adds to a destination. Birling said that the CPL and host cities work hard to create fan experiences that are memorable and enhance the profile of the cities they have teams in. Birling stated that if a team is brought to Greenville that full time staff would be hired to work with the community to make the team its own. An example might be a naming contest for the new team. Lastly, Birling gave an update on what would need to be accomplished to bring Guy Smith Stadium to a level that could host CPL games and the timeline in which that needed to happen.

Executive Director Schmidt spoke for a few minutes about the destination benefits of having a CPL team in Greenville. A synopsis of those benefits included the opportunity to increase backyard tourism, increase both sales tax and occupancy tax, increase destination exposure and destination profile, partner on stadium upgrades which would allow for additional sports tourism opportunities, a needed resident and conference amenity, and increase the ability to attract workforce.

Deputy City Manager Michael Cowin also spoke on a few of the specifics on the Letter of Intent between the City of Greenville and the Coastal Plain League. Cowin mentioned that the Babe Ruth League had been consulted and have agreed that the addition of a CPL team could be beneficial for the League so as long as Babe Ruth play continued uninterrupted. CVA Chairwoman Diane Taylor asked Deputy City Manager Cowin if there were any provisions made to partner with the Jackie Robinson League to benefit the black community. Cowin stated that there was not anything in the LOI but it is certainly a topic that can be discussed and added. Cowin continued that he would have conversations with CPL and report back.

Executive Director Schmidt stated that job of the Executive Committee now was to vote on whether they wanted to recommend that \$500,000 be utilized from the CVA's Capital Reserve Account to support the match being offered by Capitol Broadcasting to help upgrade Guy Smith Stadium to host a CPL team. Much of the renovations would focus on expanding the stadium's seating capacity. Finance Director Hayes said that given the current occupancy tax collections averages, it would take between one and two years to replace the revenue. Overall, it would not hurt the CVA's position.

CVA Assistant Secretary Bri Lester made a motion to recommend to the full CVA Board that a \$500,000 expenditure from the CVA's Capital Reserve Account be

utilized to support the match of \$500,000 from Capitol Broadcasting to upgrade Guy Smith Stadium with the goal of bringing a CPL team to Greenville to start play in the 2024 baseball season. Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Schmidt thanked the CVA Executive Committee and then explained that he will send the question to the entire CVA Board via electronic vote which is allowed under the bylaws. The urgency is that the question is being proposed to the Greenville City Council on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### **IV. Adjournment:**

There being no further business, CVA Vice-Chair Candace Hollingsworth made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:03pm. CVA Convention Center liaison Rhesa Tucker seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Ken Ross  
CVA Secretary

