

**Hamilton County Tourism, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting  
37 E. Main Street, Carmel, IN 46032  
Friday, October 4, 2024**

**MINUTES**

Attending in Person: Chris Stice, Scott Spillman, Norman Burns, Mark Truett, Jeff Brown, Michael Balcom, Anne Clendenin, Susan Miller, Bob Dubois, Andrew Newport, Vince Dora, Jimia Smith

HCT Staff also Attending in Person: Brad Lynn, Karen Radcliff, Laura Kelner, Mike Thibedeau, Carl Daniels, Ashley Ledford, Tina Rodgers, Betsy Ekelof, Sarah Mathews, Sarah Buckner

**I. Welcome**

Norman Burns called the meeting to order at 8:31am.

Burns acknowledged this as the last official board meeting with Brenda Myers as executive officer for Hamilton County Tourism, Inc. Burns and board members acknowledged her long tenured service to the community and expressed their gratitude. Myers thanked the board for their leadership and expressed excitement for HCT's future.

**II. Minutes**

Norman Burns presented the minutes from the June 2024 board meeting for review and adoption. Bob Dubois moved to approve the minutes as presented. Jeff Brown seconded. Motion passed.

**III. Board Nomination**

Brenda Myers introduced Anne Clendenin marketing director for the Fishers Event Center as a new board member to replace Adam Hoffman for the term 2024-2025. Clendenin introduced herself and touched on her experience in live sport and entertainment as well as facility management for 24 years. In addition to her arena experience, Clendenin worked in NCAA Championships and served on countless LOCs for many DMOs. President Burns requested a motion from the board. Chris Stice moved to approve Clendenin as a new board member to replace Hoffman and his remaining term. Mark Truett seconded. Motion passed.

**IV. Financials and Metrics Consent Agenda**

Norman Burns asked board members if there were any questions on any consent agenda items listed: 2024 Visitor & Lodging Report, 2024 Tax Remittance Report, 2024 HCT Budget Report.

Jeff Brown asked if the tax or budget totals presented reflected the additional 3% additional tax enacted at the beginning of 2024. Brad Lynn reported that the additional 3% is not included in the reports presented. The additional 3% collections will be presented in separate reports for the Tourism Commission beginning later this year when the funds are appropriated by Hamilton County Council. The board expressed an interest in seeing those reports, and staff made a notation to share those when that reporting begins. The 3% will be set aside in a separate account as required by the enabling legislation.

Vince Dora moved to accept the reports listed in the consent agenda as presented. Michael Balcom seconded. Motion passed.

**V. New Business**

**A. Audit Committee and 990s**

Brad Lynn reported on behalf of the Audit Committee that HCT received a clean audit report with no recommendations. In a slight delay, HCT's 990 is not completed yet but is underway. Peachin & Schwartz assigned HCT a new auditor who is new to the job and unfamiliar with HCT processes and software. HCT was given an extension thru Nov 15 although a completed 990 is expected in September for board adoption in October.

Lynn noted a few items for the board's attention. There is a slight decrease in assets because of the remaining carryover of ARPA funds.

Administration and operating costs are 11% of the organization's total expenses which is well under best practice benchmarks set for non-profits. Typically, non-profits hold to 20% for administration and operations. The HCT Audit Committee is a collaborative group that includes HCT Board members and HC Tourism Commission members. The Audit Committee recommends acceptance of the audit. Andrew Newport moved to accept the audit. Jimia Smith seconded. Motion passed.

#### B. Grant Requests

The HCSA grant budget has remaining funds and Carl Daniels requested \$10,000 be given as a grant to the Roundtrippers Foundation for its Miracle League field project in Westfield. The group needs \$20,000 to finish a fundraising goal of \$200,000 to begin construction of the new field which will be adapted so that athletes with a disability may play. Supporting adaptive sport projects is a new pillar in the HCSA strategic plan. Chris Stice moved to approve the grant request. Scott Spillman seconded. Motion passed.

Brenda Myers reviewed HCT's annual support of the Hamilton Area Neighborhood Development organization that works to increase the availability of affordable housing. This year there is a marketing need to promote the positives around affordable housing. Successful outcomes in the work for more affordable housing is needed for our hospitality workers. Jimia Smith moved to approve the grant request. Vince Dora seconded. Motion passed.

#### C. HCEDC MOU Amendments

Mike Thibedeau requested a \$20k increase to his budget to reflect an increase of the same amount in grant dollars awarded. The grant was expected but signatures were not in place until Q2 of 2024, therefore it did not make it into the budget. This revenue and expense update is a pass-through in the HCT budget and does not affect HCT's budget lines. Thibedeau requested a budget amendment so that HCEDC can move forward with distribution of the funds. Chris Stice moved to amend the budget to reflect the new grant revenue for HCEDC. Mark Truett seconded. Motion passed.

#### D. White River Management MOU

Brenda Myers reported on the White River project's many successes over the years. The effort has government clout now that the White River Technical Committee is part of the Central Indiana Regional Development Authority. The two major annual funders of the effort are HCT at \$90,000 minimum annually and Visit Indy at \$40,000 minimum annually. Visit Indy would like an MOU between the two organizations to reflect this ongoing financial commitment over the next five years—2025-2030. Myers reported that an MOU is not necessarily legally binding but gives all partners confidence during HCT's leadership change. Chris Stice noticed a few typos in the MOU and asked if those could be cleaned up. Stice also supported the project and noted its importance to parks.

Myers asked the board to endorse this first draft of an MOU and commit to the \$90k level against Visit Indy's \$40k level. Scott Spillman moved to approve and execute the MOU pending the corrections adding the financial commitment and making the typo corrections. Vince Dora seconded. Motion passed.

#### E. Computer Equipment

Brad Lynn requested to dispose of an asset since it still contained value. Brenda Myers would like to keep her computer after she retires. The new CEO will then receive a new computer.

Chris Stice moved to dispose of the asset. Mark Truett seconded. Motion passed.

#### VI. Old Business

##### A. Major Events Support Update

Karen Radcliff reported that the LIV golf event is now looking at dates in August which is preferable to June but the event contract and selection of Chatham in Westfield as the host site is still in negotiations. Confidence is very high that Chatham will receive the official selection notice soon because the information was leaked online.

The Indiana Bid Fund, which granted HCT/HCSA \$500,000 to pay for bid fees for this event needs a signed contract of acceptance now, even before the event selection notice so they can keep approvals moving on their end. Anne Poindexter has reviewed the grant contract and finds no complications, however since it is our responsibility to the state for compliance and reporting, an agreement to pass through the grant to any other entity than the event owner/manager may limit our control to comply with the grant requirements. The event management company, Par5Group, may be a

solution to receive the funds. Radcliff will execute the State Bid Fund grant contract and investigate an agreement with Par5Group to bring back to the board.

#### B. BEST Fund Update

Karen Radcliff reported the BEST Fund grant program is on schedule. The BEST Review Committee reviewed 10 applications and have made their recommendation to the full Tourism Commission who will vote to authorize distribution in August.

#### C. CEO Search Update

Norman Burns noted that he will ask the board to table this agenda item and bring it up in executive session immediately following this regular board meeting.

#### D. PSDA Update

HCT is paying for the research study by Hunden Partners that will identify PSDA areas and revenues generated for both the cities of Noblesville and Westfield. Karen Radcliff reported that the findings from the research are expected at the end of August which will be in time to inform a legislative communication and advocacy strategy for the cities.

#### VII. Department Update Sales Update

Laura Kelner presented a mid-year sales department report to the board. Key performance indicators for the team are centered around meeting bookings and room nights. At about halfway through the year, the team is close to halfway to their annual goal with more than half of the sales tradeshow schedule still to attend.

Kelner reported that the strategy to invite planners to Hamilton County on site visits is working well. She noted an example of a meeting planner who visited and toured in April, booked business one month after the visit. The board admired the updated sales collateral, ads, and promotional video.

#### VIII. Adjourn

Norman Burns asked for a move to executive session. Chris Stice moved to adjourn the regular meeting and open an executive session meeting to review the final item on the agenda, the CEO search update. Vince Dora seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned. All staff left the boardroom and board members remained.

**Hamilton County Tourism, Inc. Board of Directors Executive Session**  
**37 E. Main Street, Carmel, IN 46032**  
**Friday, August 2, 2024, at 10:15am**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES**

Norman Burns opened the executive session and provided a report to board members on the CEO search. The executive committee discussed internal candidates that were not selected. There is high confidence that a candidate in the current pool will emerge as the new CEO. The search committee is impressed with the talent before them. Karen Radcliff and some senior staff will be able to meet with the final two candidates. The goal is to have a new CEO on board before the next board meeting, Friday, October 4, 2024.

Burns also reported on a meeting on July 13 he held with Scott Spillman and Karen Radcliff. In that meeting they learned if Radcliff would accept a position as Interim President and CEO, and she indicated she would be happy to support HCT in this role as we transition to new leadership. The interim position will allow her full executive functions so that the HCT and HCSA team can move forward on work without delay. This is especially important due to the current budget season and upcoming budget hearing deadlines.

Burns suggested that Radcliff be hired as Interim CEO and include an increase in pay during the time she will perform CEO duties. Burns then asked for discussion.

There were questions regarding engaging Brenda Myers and if she was still on staff and could assist in onboarding. Burns clarified that Myers is no longer employed by HCT, so the board could not require her to assist. The expectations are that Radcliff should lead the onboarding; however it could be advantageous for the new CEO to meet with Myers at some point.

Board members acknowledged their confidence in Radcliff and agreed that this would be the best way forward. Vince Dora moved to offer Radcliff the position of Interim President and CEO at the rate described until a new CEO could start. Chris Stice seconded. Motion passed.

Burns also suggested the board give Myers's old computer to her rather than requiring her to purchase it. Andrew Newport moved to donate the old computer to Myers. Jimia Smith seconded.

Following the vote, Burns invited all staff back in the room to hear the update on the CEO search as well as the announcement of Radcliff's interim position. The Board entertained a few questions from staff, but all felt positive about the update and the direction.

At the conclusion of all items on the agenda, Andrew Newport moved to adjourn the executive session. Vince Dora seconded. Motion passed. Executive session adjourned at 10:45a.m.