

HAMILTON COUNTY VISITOR and CONVENTION COMMISSION
37 E. Main Street, Carmel, Indiana
February 17, 2022
5:30-6:45 p.m.
Minutes of the Meeting
Hamilton County Tourism, Inc. Offices, 37 E. Main St., Carmel, IN 46032

Attending the Meeting in Person: Perry Williams, Robyn Pauker, William Knox, Connor Sullivan, Jamie Hopwood, Kevin Walter and Monique Wise.

Attending Virtually: Christian Renner, Howard Stevenson, Kelly Tabeling, Lisa Hanni, Tiffany Pascoe.

Also Attending in Person: Brenda Myers, President/CEO, Hamilton County Tourism; Karen Radcliff, Vice President/CSO, Hamilton County Tourism; Betsy Ekelof, Director of Operations; and, Kris Kazmierczak, Legal Counsel.

Not Attending: Jack Russell, Andrew Brown.

I. Welcome

P. Williams welcomed everyone to the regular meeting of the Hamilton County Visitor and Convention Commission at 5:33 p.m.

II. November 2021 Minutes for Review

P. Williams asked if there were any additions or corrections to the November 2021 Tourism Commission meeting minutes. J. Hopwood moved that the minutes be approved as presented. M. Wise seconded. Motion passed in a roll call vote with all approving.

III. Update on 2022-2023 Appointments

P. Williams introduced William Knox, the City of Westfield appointment who replaces Todd Burtron and will serve a one-year term before reappointment.

He then welcomed back county re-appointments:

Andrew Brown, Howard Stevenson, Lisa Hanni, Christian Renner & Connor Sullivan, Commission appointments. Tiffany Pascoe and Jack Russell, Council appointments.

IV. Election of 2022-2023 Officers

A slate of officers for 2022-2023 was presented. This included:

Robyn Pauker, President

Connor Sullivan, Vice President

Kelly Tabeling, Secretary

Christian Renner, Treasurer

There were no nominations from the floor. J. Hopwood moved that the slate be adopted as presented. C. Sullivan seconded. Motion passed in a roll call vote with all approving.

R. Pauker then took over the meeting from P. Williams but first the Commission thanked him for his dedication and service during some very challenging years, and for taking on a third year in office to help see the Commission through to recovery. He was presented a gift for his many years of work.

V. 2021 & 2022 Financials & Metrics

A. **Occupancy Report** -- B. Myers presented the 2021 Occupancy Report. Year-end saw a 47% increase in occupancy over 2020 at 54.3%. ADR saw 19% growth, RevPAR 75% growth; and, 5.2% more rooms were available in the market. Hamilton County is still performing among the lowest of the Indiana competitive set due in part to the higher hotel chain scales it has, and to its locations (fewer properties located off major

pass-through interstates). Business transient continues to drag growth down while sports, group and leisure travel are recovering.

- B. **Tax Remittance Report** -- B. Myers presented the 2021 year-end innkeepers tax collections report. Tax remittances exceeded the \$3,831,272 in appropriated collections by more than \$850,000 and the first two months of 2022 are trending well. Those funds remain at the Tourism Commission level, pending the ability to retire the 2011 Hamilton County Tourism Bond.
- C. **2021 HCT Budget Report** -- B. Ekelof presented a management report, as payroll and related expenses have not yet been fully booked for 2021. It appears HCT will end the year with a slight surplus, however, B. Myers noted. A final report will be provided to the Board as soon as all expenses are booked.
- D. **2021-2022 Tourism Commission Financial Report** -- In November, the Tourism Commission agreed to negotiate a pay-off of the 2011 Tourism Bond held by the county as long as it was fiscally responsible to do so. B. Myers reported that as a result, and at the recommendation of HCT legal counsel Christine Altman, HCT put its funding agreement with the Commission on hold in order to retain funds for the note retirement. As a result, year-end 2021 the HCVCC had cash on hand of \$279,129.51. As of February 15, 2022, the HCVCC had cash on hand of \$1,973,958.96. Once the bond is retired, HCT will resume draw-downs, and any residual money left at the county level after the bond pay-off will be distributed back to the Commission.

C. Sullivan moved that the financial report be accepted as presented. J. Hopwood seconded. Motion passed in a roll call vote with all approving.

- E. **2021 Tourism Commission Financial Records Updates** -- B. Ekelof reported that the engagement letter to signal Peachin Schwartz and Weingardt to begin working on the Commission's financial reports has been signed.
- F. **2021 HCT Dashboard & Year-End Snapshot** -- B. Myers noted this document is in Boardable for anyone who wishes to see marketing and sales volumes from last year.

VI. New Business

- A. **2011 Tourism Bond Retirement Discussion & Action** -- B. Myers walked through a timeline to achieve this goal and reminded the Commission that in November it authorized the officers to negotiate the pay-off of the 2011 Tourism Bond, pending available funds. It took awhile to line up all the information needed to begin executing this. The Commission has sufficient funds to retire the note, the balance of which was likely to be about \$1.9 million. However, there are two pools of money (payment set-aside and debt service set-aside) available to help lower that amount, but it was noted that additional interest also will be charged in 2022. B. Myers did present an estimated total of what the final pay-off would be. The county is requesting at minimum \$1.9 million be transferred from the Tourism Commission to the county prior to giving 30-day notice to the bank holding the note. It will return the balance of the funds to the Tourism Commission for use in meeting the updated 2022 Funding Agreement. To make this happen, the Tourism Commission needed to seek additional appropriations from the County Council at its March 2 meeting. That meant a request needed to go to the Auditor's Office by February 11. At the request of the HCT Board, staff requested from the Commission's officers that an additional appropriation request be placed on the March county Council agenda, pending final approval by the Tourism Commission at its February 17 meeting. She asked for a resolution to pursue \$1 million in additional appropriations, which would come from actual additional revenue generated in 2021 and anticipated additional revenue in 2022.

J. Hopwood motioned that the Commission continue with an additional appropriations request in March. P. Williams seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote with everyone approving.

R. Pauker then asked for a motion to retire the 2011 Tourism Bond. J. Hopwood motioned and P. Williams seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote with everyone approving.

R. Pauker then asked for a resolution to amend the 2022 HCT Funding Agreement amendment as presented to replace any previous agreements. M. Wise made the motion and K. Walter seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote with all approving.

- B. **Legislative Updates** -- B. Myers noted that HCT continues to watch some legislation of concern, particularly legislation that would require public access to every single transaction for expenditures. The Indiana Tourism Association feels the requirement is redundant given the Tourism Commission is required to file a financial report and has very little financial activity and HCT has to file a comprehensive audit. She has been working with local representative and the ITA to suggest this language be removed from the bill. K. Radcliff has testified at the State House this year on behalf of sports and major event incentive legislation.
- C. **Partner Education Retooling** -- B. Myers provided information on partner education programs in 2022 and how HCT wants to continue to improve those offerings for hospitality businesses.

VII. Old Business

- A. **Hamilton County BEST Study Updates** -- K. Radcliff said HCT is still waiting to hear if it will receive an Economic Development Administration Business of Sports, Entertainment and Tourism grant. No news as of yet.
- B. **Written Policy re. Meeting Attendance** -- K. Kazmierczak, legal counsel, reviewed again whether the Tourism Commission wants to allow for virtual meetings once the Indiana Governor's executive order expires which allows for public meetings to be held hybrid, virtual or in person. He presented information on this at the November 2021 meeting but the discussion was rushed and there was a desire to confirm the will of the Commission. After much discussion, J. Hopwood re-affirmed that the virtual meeting policy be adopted. P. Williams seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote with all approving.

VIII. There being no further business, K. Walter moved that the meeting be adjourned until May 19, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. J. Hopwood seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote with all approving.

Approved after review by the Tourism Commission by Secretary Kelly Tabelaing:

Name

Date