

HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS
37 E. Main Street, Carmel, Indiana
February 3, 2023
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Hybrid Meeting

Attending in Person:

Michael Balcom, Kelly Sujka, Norman Burns, Ann Poindexter, Bob Dubois, Vince Dora, Mark Truett, Andrew Newport, and Scott Spillman.

Attending Virtually:

Jeff Brown, Chris Stice, Jimia Smith, and Kayla Arnold.

Also Attending:

Brenda Myers, President/CEO; Karen Radcliff, Vice President/CSO; Brad Lynn, Vice President Finance; Laura Kelner, Director of Sales; Betsy Ekelof, Director of Operations; Tina Rodgers, Director of Resources; Anne Poindexter, Legal Counsel.

Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair N. Burns opened the regular February meeting of the Hamilton County Tourism Board of Directors at 9:08 a.m.

I. Minutes of the November 2022 Meeting

N. Burns asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes that had been provided to the Board. There being none, S. Spillman moved that the minutes be approved as presented. K. Sujka seconded. Motion passed.

II. New Business

A. Additional Appropriations Request – B. Myers noted that HCT would need to seek additional funding from the Tourism Commission, but the Commission would not be able to draw down any additional revenue until later in the year. While there was more than \$1.3 million remaining from 2022, the additional request cannot occur until sufficient 2023 funds are available so any decisions today will need to be made on a promise that when funds are available, HCT can have access to them. She also noted that a funding agreement amendment could provide security that when and if available, the Tourism Commission would transfer those funds to HCT. There were no questions.

B. Resolution to Adopt Secretary/Treasurer as 401(k) Trustee – T. Rodgers noted that once a new secretary/treasurer is approved, it is required that a resolution to name that individual as the official 401(k) Trustee be adopted. She provided the resolution for review. There being no further questions, J. Brown moved that V. Dora be approved as the organization's retirement fund trustee. M. Truett seconded. Motion passed.

C. Building Renovation Proposal – T. Rodgers presented a variety of documents along with building task force members N. Burns and J. Smith concerning the building renovations. She provided a timeline to remind the Board of what has been done in regard to research for the project, including but not limited to getting an appraisal on the building, conducting two staff studies about building use, hiring Relocation Strategies to create a 50% construction plan for budget estimation, letting of bids for the project and now bringing a comparison of the bids for board review. Much discussion took place about the project for clarification. C. Stice asked about availability of space for sale in the adjoining buildings. Jimia confirmed Pedcor's position was not to sell, and T. Rodgers noted that the HCT staff would like to extend the lease on the third floor adjacent space and include those upgrades in the renovation.

A. Newport noted that renovating the building seemed fiscally prudent and less cost-prohibitive than previous proposed plans.

A. Poindexter counseled that negotiations as to how the building improvements should be handled with the Commission, and the government approval process are both still under way. She did not advise approval of a contractor yet. B. DuBois suggested waiting until the March board meeting would not change the contractor's proposal. N. Burns then asked for a motion that would authorize the staff to do its due diligence, work through the necessary approval processes and bring an approved project not to exceed \$1,150,000 back to the board in March for a vote. C. Stice made the motion. B. DuBois seconded. Motion passed. B. Myers then asked for a motion from the Board to direct her to request additional funds from the Tourism Commission to support the project through a funding agreement amendment. She noted again that HCT will take the risk on the building investment should there be a significant decline in revenue, although that risk is small given the amount of reserves on hand and additional ARPA support money that could augment wages and marketing if needed. V. Dora moved to request additional appropriations from the Commission. M. Truett seconded. Motion passed.

III. Old Business

A. BEST Study Update —K. Radcliff informed the board that the first project milestone meeting is scheduled for March 2 and invited any who can attend to do so. Information was sent and she will send again. The project is proceeding on schedule with rich information and much stakeholder input. J. Brown asked for an update on Grand Park's rebate program. K. Radcliff noted that as far as HCT is aware, all but a few entities have switched to the new "deposit" and then "final lodging payment" program and it seems to be working out well. J. Brown said he thought some reservations were coming in with rebates attached and K. Radcliff said that's likely outside Site Search's scope but staff would research it. S. Spillman then asked if any new event like pickleball would need to use the Site Search housing services.

B. Legislative Update—B. Myers updated the Board on the proposed tax legislation, stating that HCT is gathering signers on a letter of support for the proposal and thanked the hoteliers for their willingness to sign. She noted that K. Radcliff had provided draft legislation and the LSA is reviewing it. J. Brown asked when we planned to introduce the legislation, in this session or next. B. Myers said this session, second half, as an amendment. J. Brown mentioned that the hotels would be more apt to be in favor now that Grand Park's rebate program has moved to an advance deposit. C. Stice asked how the County Commissioners felt. B. Myers said she has had conversations with them and will share the legislation draft once it's complete because it will become the model for the local ordinance. She felt there was support and there is growing support by the county council. N. Burns asked if the board will have a chance to review the draft legislation points and make notes with staff on any questions or concerns in the next two weeks so that edits may be made. B. Myers said yes, the staff would share it with both the commission and the board. A. Poindexter counseled that since the staff now has language to be introduced as legislation, the board needed to agree to this direction in a vote. N. Burns noted that the board continues to express confidence in the direction to seek new innkeepers tax legislation and asked for a vote of confidence. S. Spillman moved that a vote of confidence take place. A. Newport seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Adjournment

There being no further business, K. Sujka moved that the meeting be adjourned and M. Truett seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.