

**HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**37 E. Main Street, Carmel, Indiana**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**ZOOM Meeting**  
**Friday, June 5, 2020**

**Attending:** Jeffrey Brown, Toby Miles, Bob DuBois, Mark Truett, Jackie Dikos, Jimia Smith, Scott Spillman, Andrew Newport, Norman Burns.

**Not Attending:** Jeremy Geisendorff, Angie Frazier and Gary Miller.

**Also attending:**

Brenda Myers, President/CEO; Karen Radcliff, Vice President/CSO; Betsy Ekelof, Operations Director; Tina Rodgers, Director of Resources; Laura Kelner, Director of Sales; Sarah Billman, Assistant Director Visitor Services, Christine Altman, Counsel.

**I. Welcome**

President Bob DuBois opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

**II. May Regular Meeting Minutes**

The May regular meeting minutes were presented for review. M. Truett moved both minutes be approved. J. Smith seconded. Motion passed.

**III. Financials & Metrics**

- a) **Occupancy Reports** – B. Myers presented the most recent occupancy report through April 2020. Hamilton County’s occupancy stood at just 12.3% and was the lowest in the competitive set except the “North Loop” Marion county hotels which were at 9.3%. This is a significant decline from 2019’s 66% occupancy rate. ADR was just \$75.76 and room demand was down 80.4%. The May weekly STR reports show some signs of improvement. Occupancy for the month through May 23 was 18.5% and the past week was a little over 20%.
- b) **Tax Collections Reports** – Remittance of taxes by hotels has been higher than anticipated, and that is much appreciated. Gross tax collections through the June deposit (April receipts) total \$1,722,151.09, which is significantly behind the original goal but better than had been anticipated.
- c) **Budget Reports** – Spending has been significantly curtailed as the May adopted emergency budget is in place even though it has not been updated in Intacct. Spending as of June 4 totaled \$1,832,900 against revenue of \$1,727,712, a difference of \$105,188. B. Myers also discussed a cash flow indicator report that will help the Board – and staff – understand how the forecast revenue flows against anticipated expenses. The periods of upcoming biggest concerns will be revenues from August, September and October which need to be at bare minimum 40% occupancy with an ADR of \$95 to make budget.

**IV. COVID19 Emergency Business Plan Updates**

- a) **90-Day Emergency Plan Activities** – K. Radcliff updated the Board on activities on the 90-day emergency plan (April-June 2020). All April and May tasks have been accomplished. The staff is working hard and is very focused on achieving the goals outlined in the plan.
- b) **June Bridge Leisure Campaign** – A. Ledford provided information about the planned June bridge leisure campaign. With the occupancy as low as it is and with a month lead time needed to prepare any ad creative, the staff began working with the 360 Group ad agency on using existing footage to craft a “We’re Ohhhhhh-So Open” campaign for northeast Indiana (television) and social media (Indiana and

parts of Chicago). Based on past relationships, the agency also was able to secure complimentary “trade” radio promotions using inventory and creating outdoor family getaway packages. The timing and placement are both a “gamble” of sorts, but it was determined that although the \$35,000 in creative and placement was worth the risk given the low occupancy rate. The staff is hoping to attract attention as pent-up demand rises.

- c) **Staffing** – B. Myers reminded the Board that the Plus Plan budget of \$2.84 million was adopted based on bringing 14 staff members back by August 1. Staff recommends bringing back a sales manager by July 1, a part-time administration support by August 1 and keeping three additional employees on furlough until August 1 if possible. The budget should support these decisions. In keeping them on furlough, we would pay their health care during this time period. The Board agreed with the proposed staff plan.
- d) **Nickel Plate Express** – B. Myers reported on the Nickel Plate Express railroad and HCT’s exposure given the pandemic and concerns about revenue. The 2020 Plus Plan budget and the 2021 proposed budget both have in them covering the National Bank of Indianapolis rail restoration loan, which is at prime + 2% and running about \$6700 a month. This is the only loan HCT is a guarantor for. The railroad is working with the private note holder for the equipment loan to see if any forbearance is possible. The ability to run again will depend on the Back on Track Indiana plan and how the pandemic is going.

#### V. Old Business

- a) **Audit & 990s Updates** – B. Ekelof asked for volunteers to serve on the 2020 Audit Committee. Bob DuBois, Jeffrey Brown and Norman Burns all agreed. The review should be late July 2020.
- b) **Funding Agreement** – C. Altman noted that there are still a few concerns on the funding agreement to be worked out.

#### VI. New Business

- a) **Recovery Task Force** – B. Myers noted that K. Radcliff would begin working on a recovery plan for 2021 soon and asked if there should be a recovery task force that might expand beyond the Board. Concern was expressed at this point given the limited capacity as to whether the task force was a good idea. B. Myers noted that Board and community members would be involved but not in an official capacity. Everyone agreed.

#### VII. Adjournment

The meeting automatically adjourned at 8:55 a.m. without a motion.