

HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
37 E. Main Street, Carmel, Indiana  
October 6, 2023  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Held at the Hilton Garden Inn, 9785 North by Northwest Blvd., Fishers, IN

**Attending the meeting in person:**

Norman Burns, Jeffrey Brown, Kayla Arnold, Vince Dora, Bob DuBois, Andrew Newport, Chris Stice, Michael Balcom, Scott Spillman

**Also attending the meeting in person:**

Brenda Myers, President/CEO; Karen Radcliff, Vice President/CSO; Sarah Billman, Director of Visitor Experience; Laura Kelner, Director of Sales; Brad Lynn, Vice President Finance; Tina Rodgers, Director of Resources; Betsy Ekelof, Director of Operations; Sarah Buckner, Assistant Director Community Engagement.

**I. Welcome**

Norman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He thanked Vince Dora for hosting the meeting.

**II. Minutes of the August 4, 2023 Meeting**

J. Brown moved to accept the minutes as presented. V. Dora seconded. Motion passed.

**III. Consent Agenda: Financials & Metrics**

B. Myers and B. Lynn noted the financial and visitor metrics provided in the consent agenda packet. She noted that HCT's occupancy rate and average daily rate remain strong and visitation numbers are as well. B. Lynn noted the written report he had provided and said things were going well – especially with in-year lodging tax remittances – but also noted that HCT will likely have to temporarily use reserves until the additional appropriations come through in November. After brief discussion, J. Brown moved that the financials and visitor metrics reports be approved as presented in the consent agenda. K. Sujka seconded. Motion passed.

**IV. Old Business**

- A. BEST Fund (Tourism Capital Fund) Updates** – B. Myers noted that the both the tax and ordinance have now passed and it's official that the tax rate will increase to 8% effective January 1, 2024. She noted that a priority mail with tracking packet had been sent out along with two emails. Another packet will be sent out first class in October along with two additional emails. It was asked that the non-hotelier Board members see the materials, and she said she would email those to them after the meeting.
- B. BEST Study Updates** – K. Radcliff reported that the study is wrapping up and the final draft should be available soon. An executive summary will be produced given how long the study is. Also, for the use of the tourism capital funds, the distribution criteria is being reviewed by the Tourism Commission and will be available soon. The application form and scoring rubric are still needed. B. DuBois offered to help draft the scoring rubric. K. Radcliff welcomed any help. B. Myers reminded the Board that the Tourism Commission will be scoring and distributing the funds.
- C. Office Update** – T. Rodgers reported that the final work is being completed and all has gone well. Fall but the first floor furniture is in and staff is already beginning to utilize the spaces. A few

minor touch-ups and all the technology installations are still needed. The project is still under budget. So far, everyone is very pleased with the work.

- D. **Additional Appropriations Update** – B. Myers noted that she missed the deadline by a day to get onto the October County Council agenda for the additional appropriations request and has submitted for November. B. Lynn did an analysis and HCT should be able to cash flow until those funds can be transferred. Big payments will be deferred until after that occurs.
- E. **Updated Financial Policies** – B. Lynn presented the updated Financial policies for review. As a reminder, these include general updates as well as recommendations by CFO by Design, which completed a study in 2021. Several people were asked to review the documents more closely. J. Brown noted that he wanted one more review for primarily clarity and content and not policy review. He also wanted to make sure the “financial committee” (essentially the executive committee of the Board) aligns across the document. The Board agreed to have J. Brown review one more time for those edits but to adopt the Financial Policies as presented. B. Dubois made the motion to adopt. M. Balcom seconded. Motion passed.
- F. **Nickel Plate Arts** – B. Myers asked that this item be tabled until November as there is still disagreement on what this entails and because legal counsel A. Poindexter was not able to make this meeting. The issue was over what the \$100,000 grant could be used for. S. Spillman looked up previous minutes and noted that the board required input on how the grant will be spent. J. Brown asked that the grant not be distributed until an agreement can be finalized that satisfies all concerns. B. Myers agreed that nothing will be distributed until the HCT Board has approved.

## V. New Business

- A. **Budget Amendments** – B. Lynn presented a list of budget amendments for review, noting that all were net neutral to the budget but would clarify and clean up several categories. In revenue, add \$30,000 to grants to allow for grants received. In expenses, professional fees, move \$10,000 to Dues & Subscriptions to true up that account; \$27,500 to wages to cover the additional sports hires; and \$11,000 to Pulliam grant to cover expenses for the sustainability manager (mostly covered by a grant). There being no questions, V. Dora moved that the budget be amended as presented. K. Sujka seconded. Motion passed.
- B. **2024 Business Plan** – B. Myers and the staff then reported on the 2024 business plan, which will inform the November board review of the 2024 budget. A complete copy of the plan was presented. All departments provided their key goals for the new in new initiatives as well as their key “Inspire Hamilton County” or “give-back” regenerative tourism goal. The Board had no questions but complimented the staff on the thoroughness of the plan.
- C. **Other Business** – J. Brown asked for an update on the search firm for the CEO replacement. N. Burns provided an update. He noted that he, B. DuBois and S. Spillman have met and are working on a request for proposals, which will be ready in November. The hope is to hire in late April or May, allow June as a transition month and to have the individual begin working mid-summer and for B. Myers to retire in late July. Additionally, B. Myers may be offered a retainer to be on hand for a period of time to assist the new CEO as might be necessary. N. Burns and S. Spillman also will meet with the HCT staff at its upcoming October staff meeting to provide them with insights. B. Myers asked what the budget implications might be, and N. Burns said he would share that information with staff for planning purposes.

There being no further business, J. Brown moved that the meeting be adjourned. M. Balcom seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.