

## **MINUTES**

### **Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors**

**Monday, November 13, 2023 at 11:45 AM**

**Irving Convention Center – Junior Ballroom C-D**

**500 W. Las Colinas Blvd.**

**Irving, Texas 75039**

Attendance: Bob Bourgeois – Board Chair; Richard Stewart, Jr. – Board Vice Chair; Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Beth Bowman, David Cole, Karen Cooperstein, Tommy DeBeaudry, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Herb Gears, Colvin Gibson, Julia Kang, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, Kelly O'Briant, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Sam Reed, and Council Liaison Kyle Taylor – Board Members; Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber, Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr, Councilman Al Zapanta – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan – ICC Staff; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Wendy Foster, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose, and Monty White – ICVB; Guests: Donna Bourgeois, Annette French, Melvin French, Cambria Jones, Helena Walsh, Bert Walsh; BVWD, LLP – CPA Partner Nick Wells

Board Chair Bob Bourgeois called the meeting to order at 11:48 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Bourgeois announced the Board and Business Development Committee recommendation from the Nominating Task Force Committee of Richard Stewart, Jr., for Board Chair and Herb Gears for Board Vice Chair. He asked for any further nominations from the floor. With no further nominations, Bourgeois asked for a motion to approve Stewart for Chair and Gears for Vice Chair of the Board. On a motion from Board member Karen Cooperstein and a second from Board member Sam Reed, the nominations were unanimously approved.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approving ICVB Board Meeting Minutes for September 25 and October 20, 2023
- Reviewing the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Accepting the ICC Financial Reports – September 2023

Bourgeois called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. On a motion from Board member Julia Kang, and a second from Board member Bill Mahoney, the motion unanimously was approved.

### **INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION**

#### **ACCEPTING THE IRVING CONVENTION AUDIT REPORT FOR FY2022-23 – BVWD, LLP**

Executive Director Maura Gast introduced Nick Wells with BVWD, LLP to present the ICC FY2022-23 audit report. Wells expressed his gratitude for the ICC team and the new partnership and gave an overview of the audit and stated the new process went smoothly.

- Required communication overview:
  - Looking at significant risks, policies, and procedures.
  - Critical accounting estimates were reviewed.
  - Focus on Accounts Receivables statements.
  - Overall quality of financial reporting and consistency.
  - There were no management consultations with other outside accountants.

- The audit reports no concerns and Wells congratulated the ICC on an excellent year.
- There is no fraud nor illegal acts nor were there significant difficulties in conducting the audit
- Wells stated policies, procedures and the monthly financial reviews were all great. Not one person has all the keys and mitigated controls are in place.

On a motion from Board member Colvin Gibson and a second from Gears, the ICC Audit Report for FY2022-23 was unanimously accepted.

**APPROVING THE BUDGET ADJUSTMENT TRANSFER ACHIEVED FROM THE IRVING CONVENTION CENTER FY2022-23 OPERATIONAL SAVINGS TO THE CONVENTION CENTER RESERVE/CAPITAL FUND**

Gast presented the \$819,221 savings as noted in the year-end Financial Statements and recommended these be transferred into the Convention Center Reserve/Capital Fund per the CIP Reserve Fund policy. She congratulated General Manager Tom Meehan and his team and expressed her thanks for his leadership, noting this was the best performance year ever.

On a motion from Kang, and a second from Stewart, the motion for the budget adjustment transfer from the ICC FY2022-23 operational savings to the Convention Center Reserve/Capital Fund unanimously was approved.

**APPROVING THE BUDGET ADJUSTMENT FOR COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA)**

Gast noted the Board's approval is needed for a budget adjustment of approximately \$77,000 for ICVB employees to receive a Cost-of-Living adjustment that was included and adopted in the City's budget after the ICVB Board had approved the ICVB Budget; funds are available in the Fund Balance. The City's adjustment will be made in January 2024.

On a motion from Cooperstein and a second from Mahoney, the Cost-of-Living budget adjustment unanimously was approved.

**APPROVING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GRANT FUND AND TRANSFERRING ALL AVAILABLE AND ELIGIBLE RECEIPTS, INCLUDING ARPA RECEIPTS, FROM THE CITY OF IRVING TO THAT FUND**

Gast noted to ensure ARPA expenditures are recorded properly, a separate fund was recommended to be established, as well as any future grant-type funds. To date, receipts have been recorded properly, and this fund will assist in being prepared in the future. Funds will not be moved until final direction is received from City Finance and/or the City's ARPA Compliance Auditor.

On a motion from Kang and a second from Gears, the establishment of a Grant fund and transferring all available and eligible receipts, including ARPA receipts from the City of Irving to that fund unanimously was approved.

**BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

- Service Award Recognition for CVB Convention Services Associate Helena Walsh.
  - Walsh was recognized for 10 years of service. It was reported as of November 27, Walsh will be the ICVB/ICC front desk representative. Walsh added her pleasure to work for the City as a CS Associate and is looking forward to the continued success of the organization.
- Irving Marathon Turkey Trot is on November 23 at Toyota Music Factory. The ICVB will have a team of 5K walkers for anyone who wishes to join. The start time is 9:15 a.m.

- The Frost 5K is on December 16 with an 8:10 a.m. start.
- Saturday, December 16 will be a City Council and Irving Arts Board joint meeting with a presentation of a new business plan from the Arts Board. The meeting will be held at the Convention Center. Bourgeois urged all Board members to attend and hear the presentation as it pertains to Hotel Occupancy Tax allocations. Gast will communicate to the Board about the meeting time once it is confirmed.
- Bourgeois encouraged everyone to read the many articles in the Board packet.
- Bourgeois thanked City Council for the new Board appointments of Cambria Jones and Stephanie Booker. He also noted Board members David Cole and Julia Kang were reappointed.
- The next Board meeting will be held on December 18 at the Convention Center.
- Bourgeois expressed his congratulations to everyone involved in the Las Colinas Association's Glow celebration.

Gast gave a short presentation to thank Bourgeois and Cooperstein for their service on the Board. She expressed her gratitude for their leadership, support and friendship, and recognized Donna Bourgeois for her support behind-the-scenes in Bob's leadership. All three of them are CVB volunteers at the Visitor Information Kiosk and community supporters in so many ways.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### Board and Business Development

Committee Chair Herb Gears reported:

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for December 8 at the Convention Center in the office boardroom.

##### Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Colvin Gibson reported:

- A recap of the October 17 Committee Meeting:
  - The Committee received a briefing from Irving ISD Director of Career & Technical Education Zach Moore. Moore agreed to help secure culinary staff with Irving Schools Foundation ICVB scholarship recipients and work to increase the recruitment for new scholarship applicants.
  - The Committee agreed the High Spirited Citizen annual luncheon is a preferable approach using that model. The next luncheon will be held in the Fall of 2024 with 10-15 nominees.
  - The annual holiday parade will be held on Saturday, December 2 and all Board members are invited to participate and ride with High Spirited Citizens in the horse-drawn carriage to celebrate volunteer spirit.
  - The Committee deferred the discussion of adding four non-voting members to the Committee to 2024.
- The next Committee meeting is TBD.

#### Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- The Committee met on November 7 and visited Grand Prairie's Epic Central.
  - Cole gave an update of the visit: Epic Central is a community planned center, recreation center, indoor/outdoor water park, adventure park and The Summit Senior Center.
  - The entertainment district has restaurants, hotels, and a small convention center under construction.
  - The Visit Grand Prairie staff and Deputy City Manager were welcoming and very knowledgeable with a very complete and interesting presentation and tour.
  - A video was shown with the Grand Prairie Mayor showing the property before and after construction.
  - The property hosts a free water show three times per night, with free parking.
  - Assistant Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek added they are building two hotels that are owned by the City and restaurants are City-owned and leased to tenants. She is looking forward to seeing the progress of the hotels and convention center. There is also a transportation company similar to the one in Arlington that picks up and drops off passengers at specific points from all hotels in Grand Prairie for \$3.00.
- The next Committee meeting is TBD.

#### CITY REPORTS

Councilman Kyle Taylor reported:

- Thanked Bourgeois and Cooperstein for their service and tireless efforts for Irving.
- One hotel on the City Council agenda came forward with a variance request. Council asked for adjustments and the item will be on the Council December agenda.
- Nothing has been decided on the City Hall move or renovation discussions. Location and financing will be reviewed. Recruiting and retaining quality employees will be a major factor in the project.
- It was a good Board and Commissions interview process for appointments this year. The onboarding process will begin in January 2024 with expectations defined.

Councilman Al Zapanta reported:

- Thanked everyone involved in the third annual Day of the Dead Celebration on Mandalay Canal, in particular ICVB and Las Colinas Association teams and Irving Police and Fire Department. There were over 2,000 people in attendance.

Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders reported:

- On behalf of City Manager Chris Hillman, Sanders thanked Bourgeois and Cooperstein for their support of the City.
- Solid Waste is moving back to two-times per week trash collections, starting on December 4. There is an interactive map on the City's website.
- The City of Irving's Fleet Department won the silver award for efforts taken to reduce petroleum use and improve air quality. The Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition, as part of its annual Fleet Recognition Awards, recognized Irving along with 23 local fleets. This marks the sixth time Irving received recognition. Irving is on the forefront with its approach to wellness.
- Heritage Park was recognized with the President's Award for Improvement by the Texas Downtown Association at their annual conference.

- Irving Boulevard is under construction and should be completed between Strickland Plaza and Sowers Road by the end of November.
- MacArthur Boulevard is still under construction and on schedule. Completion is expected by February 2025. Drainage needs may cause closure for an extended period of time.
- There are City events all month long in December, including the Police and Fire Blue Christmas toy donation drive.

Senior City Attorney Christina Weber reported:

- A delinquent hotel litigation hearing is scheduled for December, but it is anticipated the date will be moved.
- Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr added small payments are being received from the delinquent hotels. There is a memo in the packet reviewing the Hotel Tax Collections and monthly delinquent activity.

#### BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

##### Bureau Management

Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- Gast recognized all veterans and gave thanks for their service in conjunction with Veterans Day.
- The former and current Board members luncheon is scheduled for November 14 and will be an opportunity to visit with others, receive an update on the organization and opportunity to sign up for the Visitor Information kiosk.
- The December 16 joint Council and Arts Board meeting is the same day as the Frost Marathon races. If attending the meeting, traffic will be congested and she suggested using the service road or the back side of Spur348.
- The Navigators National Gathering 2023 group that is currently in the building is the largest ICVB/ICC booking. The CVB Sales team started making calls to the group for booking back in 2000. Gast thanked the sales team for their efforts and continued follow-up.

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- The Navigators group is expecting 2,000 attendees and 4,400 room nights.
- Fojtasek pointed out new items on the Sales and Services report in the Board packet.
  - Graph shows lead window for time between created date and event start date averages 9.9 months and median of 7 months.
  - A ten-year lead history is also included.
  - Booking Conversion window for time between RFP and converting to Definite or Lost Business status, reporting an average of 4.4 months and median of 2.6 months.
  - Booking time between booked event and event start date is two-month average.
  - A ten-year booking history is also included.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- The report in the packet shows Marketing Report analytics for the year and October.
- In FY2022-23 there was a 61% increase in total prospects over the previous fiscal year.
- Website traffic is strong with over 880,000 total sessions and an engagement rate of 67%.
- Blog traffic reports 85,994 pageviews for the fiscal year.

- Advertising, paid search, and digital marketing campaigns increased over the previous year and generated a combined 43,227,438 impressions.
- Social media saw an addition of 18,938 new followers.
- The Staycations campaign generated 79,263 hotel referrals and 177,595 website sessions, which is a 44% conversion rate.
- Promoted Content generated 10,522 blog visits., 267,002 post engagements on social media, which is an engagement rate of 21%.
- Pfaff expressed her appreciation to Bourgeois and Cooperstein for their leadership and friendship.

#### Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- The AirDNA reports for September show:
  - There were 665 available listings, which is a 16.7% increase in listing over last year's figure of 570.
  - The Average Daily Rate was \$222.30, which was a decrease of 0.46% over last year.
  - Occupancy percentage of 55.9%, which was an increase of 0.48% compared to last year.
  - Hotel comparable subset reports an Average Daily Rate for August of \$120.52, an increase of 1.08% from last year,
- The Administration and Finance team is finalizing the close of FY2022-23.
- Rose attended a Destinations International Business Operations Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. The theme was artificial intelligence with a network of peers across other destination organizations.
- Also attended a Chat GPT workshop in October at the Fort Worth Convention Center, with a hands-on AI demo.
- December holidays are fast approaching and the ICVB/ICVB staff have activities planned, including helping with the Irving Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign. Office Manager Carol Boyer is the liaison for staff to volunteer at the Hobby Lobby Grapevine.
- Also doing a donation drive for Angel Tree Forgotten Angels, focusing on teens and older adults.

Taylor expressed his appreciation to the City Attorney's Office for their efforts in the short-term rental registration process for hotel tax collections. There is movement on registrations, and it helps to get a true grasp on what is available.

#### CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- There were 220 events in the year, which is up 213 from last year.
- Attendance is reported to be 236,000, compared to 189,000 last year.
- Records were set this year for Revenue, Rent, Catering, Adjusted Gross Income and Expenses.
- Catering reports \$7.7 million in gross revenue.
- Expenses are up due to rising payroll, food, and supply costs.
- Of the \$1.395 subsidy, the ICC is returning \$819,221, which is an all-time high.
- Thanked his staff, Gast, CVB Sales and Marketing teams, Accounting teams, and City of Irving. Partnerships and teamwork are the reason for success.
- Meehan announced the acquisition of ASM Global by Legends. An article is included in the packet with the announcement. The merger will provide opportunity and synergy.
- Projects in the building:

- Lighting project converting to LED lights inside the building.
- Updating the office area.

#### INDUSTRY PARTNERS

##### LIVE NATION UPDATES

Live Nation General Manager Tommy DeBeaudry reported:

- Winding down a remarkably busy season.
- The last amphitheater performance was sold out on November 4.
- There are five remaining promoted events, and 11 private events.
- 2024 to date shows 18 promoted events with bookings into August, and 17 private events into October. It will be a very busy year.
- Using the quiet downtime to install a water softening system, some concession repairs, interior and lawn irrigation repairs.

##### HOTEL INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member Greg Malcolm:

- Reporting for South Irving:
  - Occupancy in October shows 77.6%, down 4%.
  - Average Daily Rate \$145.07.
  - RevPAR \$112.64, up 1.9% from last year.
- Broke ground on a Tru by Hilton property in South Irving, which will be a 2-year project.

##### RESTAURANT INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member David Cole:

- Cole gave a shout out to the Texas Rangers World Champions.
- Fogo de Chão Restaurant opened in Irving.
- The former Red, Hot and Blue restaurant site is under construction for a new restaurant.
- The former Mattito's site is also under construction.
- Thanksgiving meals are available from Irving restaurants if you order early.
- Cole is also ringing bells for the Irving Salvation Army at Bass Pro Shop with Councilman Taylor each Saturday. Santa is there and families are coming out to shop.

#### PARTNER ORGANIZATION AND STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce:

Chamber President Beth Bowman reported:

- Thank you to all who attended the Chamber's Annual Meeting, hosted by the Omni Las Colinas. The event celebrated the Chamber's highlights and heard from Kelly Moore Paints CEO Charles Gassenheimer.
- Thanked Bob and Donna Bourgeois for being global ambassadors for Irving and Cooperstein for her impact and engagement. Looking forward to continuing to work with them all.
- Christus Health held a building blessing on October 23 and ribbon cutting, and State Bank of Texas opened their doors. Both companies established roots in Irving.
- Congratulated Las Colinas Association on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and cutting through the clutter to provide a unique opportunity. The illusion of colors in the community draws traffic and helps small business and the hospitality industry.



- Year-end Economic Development has 57 wins, representing \$190 million in capital investment, 4,700 new/retained jobs, and 2.2 million sq. feet in commercial space.
- Joined Governor Abbott to celebrate Texas being named Best State for Business. The team will continue to work to amplify successes with information.
- The Chamber's new Board Chair is Vistra executive Brad Watson.

#### IRVING ARTS AND CULTURE

Irving Arts Board Chair Kelly O'Briant reported:

- Irving Arts Center
  - Mariachi Herencia de Mexico – Christmas Spectacle on December 15 at 7:30 p.m.
  - December Family Fun – the Art of the Holidays, Second Sunday Funday on December 10 from 1:00-4:00 p.m.
  - The Nutcracker presented by Marina Almayeva School of Classical Ballet on December 17 at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
  - Holiday in Sound Presented by the Irving Symphonic Band on December 17 at 3:00 p.m.
- Irving Archives and Museums:
  - *Popolo Vuh* Illustrations by Jamie Arredondo October through December.
  - *Ballet Folklorico/Fashion of Ballet Folklorico: Expressing Mexican Culture through Dance*, through February 4, 2024.

#### LAS COLINAS ASSOCIATION

Las Colinas President Hammond Perot reported:

- Perot congratulated Bourgeois and Cooperstein for their leadership to the Board.
- The LCA 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration took a team to accomplish, and he expressed his appreciation to everyone for their input and partnership.
- There were 8,000-9,000 attendees on Friday night and 11,000 on Saturday.
- Restaurants at Water Street reported an increase of 30% sales on Friday and Saturday, and 80-90% were Irving residents.
- The golf tournament and anniversary book were a year-long project and having some conversations about future ideas.
- Approximately 1,400 submittals to date for architectural controls, 1,600 property maintenance projects.
- Property sales – commercial and residential are down 40% from 2021 and 2022.
- Security dispatch alarm monitoring 22,500 alarms during the year. Most are technical alarms.
- 464,000 miles of patrol vehicles traveling the community.
- During the year, maintained over 400 acres of public space.
- LCA Board meeting tomorrow to discuss next year's budget, recommending a rate cut for members for the third year in a row – 18% reduction over the last three years.
- Congratulated Gast and Meehan for a momentous year.

Bourgeois pointed out the "State of the Industry" Meetings Today article in the packet, noting Gast is featured in the article.

Bourgeois spoke for he and Cooperstein saying it has been an honor to spend time with the Board / Irving evangelists.



With no further discussion, Bourgeois adjourned the meeting at 1:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  


Maura Allen Gast, FCDME

Executive Director