

**MINUTES**  
**IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**Irving Convention Center – Junior Ballroom C-D**  
**December 13, 2021**

Attendance: David Cole – Board Chair; Bob Bourgeois – Board Vice Chair, Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Beth Bowman, Dallas Burke, Karen Cooperstein, Colvin Gibson, City Manager Chris Hillman, Nydia Hoskins, Julia Kang, Kim Limon, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, John Nicks, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, and Sam Reed, and Richard Stewart, Jr. – Board members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Mayor Pro Tem and Council Liaison Kyle Taylor and Councilman Oscar Ward – City of Irving Elected Officials; City Secretary Shanae Jennings, Deputy City Secretary Jennifer Phillips, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Financial Services Director Bret Starr, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan and Director of Sales Matt Tungett – ICC Staff; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff, and Monty White – ICVB.

Board Chair David Cole called the meeting to order at 11:47 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

Cole opened the meeting with a prayer for humility and stated it is an honor and privilege to serve as ICVB Board Chair. He commended the other Board members for their commitment to service for the community.

City Secretary Shanae Jennings conducted the swearing in of new Board members Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Colvin Gibson, and Sam Reed; and reappointed Board members Bob Bourgeois, David Cole, Karen Cooperstein, and Julia Kang.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approve the ICVB Board of Directors meeting minutes from November 15, 2021
- Accepting the ICVB Financial Reports for September and October 2021
- Review of Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Review of ICVB Cash Flow Report
- Accept the Irving Convention Center October 2021 Financial Reports

It was noted the ICVB September, and October 2021 Financial Reports were not available at the time of the Board meeting. Accounts are in the process of closing for year-end with the City. The ICVB Cash Flow Report is affected by the financial reports and will be available at the January 2022 meeting. Cole asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. On a motion from Board member William Mahoney and a second from Board member Karen Cooperstein, the Consent Agenda unanimously was approved.

## PRESENTATION

Executive Director Maura Gast gave an overview of the Tourism Economics Irving Hotel Outlook report.

- Pandemic impact on travel was rapid and severe. In a 30-year review, there was a drastic drop in RevPAR for 2020 and a surprising resurgence in 2021. The fourth quarter assumption is weaker due to holidays and less business travel.
- US hotel room demand is still below pre-pandemic levels. Third quarter 2022 is expected to increase to past peak levels.
- Economic Assumption – surge in consumer spending is underway with 8% growth. This is driving businesses to reopen and reinvest.
- Inflation will be uncomfortable for another six months. Consumer price increases are 6.8% and will remain higher than normal likely through the end of 2022.
- Employers face challenges in re-staffing. Reopening will be driven by finding the appropriate labor. Unfilled job openings are 1 in 10 in the food/customer service sector. Over time, it is expected hotels will find staff but may take time and higher wages.
- Intentions to travel remain high. More than 90% of people have plans to travel in the next six months. Business travel is slower to return. Omicron virus variant has made things even slower.

Irving Lodging Quarterly Forecast will be:

- A review of assumptions.
- An approach to the model based on analysis of historical STR data performance, travel recovery timeline and pricing gains, assumptions of new property openings
- Model is based on monthly STR hotel data by segmented demand and sub-markets
- Annual and Quarterly results through 2024.

Recap:

- Hotel performance in Irving is partway through a recovery, but it will take time to recover to pre-pandemic levels.
- The timing of the recovery remains uncertain, as this first report was modeled on data prior to the Omicron wave hitting.

Gast noted this is the first quarterly report that will be presented in detail at Executive Committee meetings. Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor noted it is important for Board members and City Council to understand the importance of the number and quality of Irving hotels and how it impacts RevPAR. Board member Greg Malcolm explained RevPAR is Revenue Per Available Rooms and ADR is Average Daily Rate. RevPAR is the most important statistic for hotels. Board member Nydia Hoskins added ADR performance at the Omni Las Colinas has held, but RevPAR is slow to recover and seems to hold true across Irving.

## BOARD REPORTS

### COVID-19 AND AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT UPDATE

- Gast reported ICVB is meeting with City staff/City Finance/Arts and Culture and City Manager's Office on how to move forward with operating expenses being funded by ARPA.
- Working with City staff to have everything documented accordingly and in order from a procedural standpoint, so that all are prepared should there be an audit.
- City Manager's Office is working on refining the submittal form and direction on how to proceed for documentation.

#### CHAIR REPORT

- The FY2022-26 Strategic Recovery Plan for the Irving CVB Board goals and objectives are included in the packet, along with the Board Committee assignments and 2022 Board meetings and activities schedule.
- There was a call for Board Committee members, and anyone interested in serving on a Committee is encouraged to complete the Sign-Up form. Cole suggested Board members attend Committee meetings and decide where the best fit for individual's passion lies.
- Congratulations to Pfaff on being awarded the Irving Schools Foundation Legacy Award.
- The next Board meeting will be held on Monday, January 24, 2022, at the ICC.

#### Board Development Committee

Committee Chair Richard Stewart, Jr. reported:

- The next Committee meeting originally was scheduled for December 3 but has been postponed until January 7 at 9:00 a.m.
- The Committee will discuss Strategic Plan Committee goals and plans for the year.

#### Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Karen Cooperstein reported:

- The next Committee meeting date is scheduled for January 11 at 11:30 a.m.
- The Committee will discuss Strategic Plan Committee goals and the High Spirited Citizen program.

#### Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- The next Committee meeting date is scheduled for February 11 at 11:30 a.m.
- The Committee will discuss Strategic Plan Committee goals and R-AB Ordinance update.

#### CITY REPORTS

Update on Pension Obligation Bonds for TMRS and Supplemental Benefit Plan

City Manager Chris Hillman reported:

- The City is reviewing ways to reduce pension obligations with three different plans. There is existing liability relative to pensions and the City is able to finance and issue bonds with very low interest rate of 2.65%, compared to 6.5%, which is a significant savings.
- Overall savings for the City is \$60 million over the next 20 years. ICVB savings anticipated is \$800,000 over next 20 years. Taking 10% of savings to create a market risk litigation fund.
- Knocking off four years of payments with the interest rate savings.
- Supplemental Benefit Plans can save another \$5 million.
- Moving forward with Fire Pension Fund and contract will be presented to City Council in the next few months. Hoping to go out to market for those bonds in April/May 2022.
- The goal is to issue these from a position of strength.

Mayor Pro Tem and Council Liaison Kyle Taylor reported:

- Thanked Cooperstein for her leadership as Board Chair and congratulated Cole as new Board Chair. He also congratulated Pfaff for the ISF Legacy Award and noted how proud he was of the foundation that enriches lives in Irving.
- The R-AB Ordinance was on the last Council meeting agenda and was well received. A vote should happen in January and finalize the item. Supporting the process of changing the legislation and has been a team effort with robust discussions and the support of the ICVB Board. Taylor expressed his appreciation to the City Finance team for behind-the-scenes actions.
- Using the R-AB process as a road map to tackle short-term rentals. It is an important issue that directly affects the ICVB and Hotel Occupancy Tax.
- Thanked the Parks Department and City events staff for the holiday events in the City.
- DCURD Dallas Burke gave a presentation at City Work Session on Canal enhancements with a dream and a wish list that has challenges but will re-energize the area.
- Election season is starting – there is one at-large and two single district elections in May.
- Looking forward to working this next year in making the City a better place.

Councilman Oscar Ward reported:

- Appreciates the City Manager and all the work on pension savings.
- Suggested having Burke give the DCURD water transportation feature presentation at a future Board meeting. Chairman Cole indicated that the Destination Development Committee would welcome the presentation.
- Congratulated Pfaff on the ISF Legacy award and acknowledged all her efforts.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- Last year was a mix of challenges with the pandemic, the winter storm and social unrest. The City emerged successful, but not out of the woods yet.
- Food banks and food drives are continuing to happen weekly in Irving.
- Businesses have stepped up for heat and rental assistance and making sure citizens can have comfort of life.
- Stopfer is proud of the community and noted it is rewarding to see the community care and love. Holiday season food and toy drives for non-profits were well supported by citizens.
- Thanked City staff and employees during the winter storm and freeze last February. Libraries were open for residents to provide shelter.
- It was an amazing year of coming together, helping businesses grow, new businesses open.
- Sales tax revenue is relatively better than anticipated, housing sales are up as well as new construction.
- The new Starbucks in the Heritage District has Coffee with a Cop event, and their owners will be opening two more locations in Irving. They are also working with the Irving Schools Foundation to offer employees 100% education for four years with University of Arizona online. He also thanked Pfaff for her service with the Irving Schools Foundation.

DART Update:

- There will be changes to reflect bus route redesign to save time. Once completed, it will be an improvement for riders and commitment of 10-15 minutes for a driver at your stop, compared to 30 minutes currently.
- Also contracting with Uber and Lyft.
- It will be a major change, but majority of routes will stay the same.

City Manager Chris Hillman reported:

- The ICC building and food service look great. Hillman thanked the ICVB and ICC team for the great experience.
- Thanked Chief Financial Officer Jeff Litchfield and City Legal Department for the great effort on the pension savings.
- The Holidays at Heritage Park tree lighting and parade was a festive success. Heritage Park ribbon cutting was an astounding success. The park is beautiful with a \$6 million investment.
- Heritage District has launched a new marketing effort.
- Reconstruction of Irving Boulevard will be the backbone for all additional developments.
- Williams Square Plaza project is expected to open Spring 2022. The project is on time and on budget. The iconic Mustangs and fountain are being redone, and shaded seating areas, landscaping and an ADA-compliant access ramp are all being added.
- City staff participated in the annual Leadership Team Day of Service event, benefitting Irving Schools Foundation and their Food for Thought and Caring & Sharing programs. The team sponsored 40 students with toys and clothes, assembled bicycles and packaged 2,000 food bags.
- Hillman echoed the Mayor saying it has been a great year and congratulated Gast, the ICVB team and Board of Directors for navigating through a challenging year. He noted ARPA funds will help put Irving ahead of the curve.

Cole introduced City Secretary Shanae Jennings Conley and Deputy City Secretary Jennifer Phillips and welcomed them to the Board meeting.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- Gast thanked Pfaff for representing Irving and the ICVB with grace and passion and congratulated her on the ISF Legacy Award.
- Irving is chosen as location to host the inaugural 2022 USA Triathlon Multisport National Championships Festival, scheduled for April 28-May 1, 2022.
- Thanked ICC General Manager Tom Meehan and staff for their extra special touches for Board events, and Board acknowledged appreciation to Chef Eduardo Alvarez for the beautiful holiday lunch at the meeting.
- Gast noted that Assistant Executive Director Susan Rose is attending a training session at City Hall and the AirDNA Report is included in the packet.

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- Thanked the Board for their comments regarding the ICVB Sales team and their acknowledgement of their persistent hard work.

- Thanked City staff for their assistance in showcasing events and competitions, i.e., Triathlon Multisport event with nine different competitions at Levy Plaza, Club Corp Classic, and more.
- All groups that have had site visits in Irving are seeing the vision from Levy Plaza, Toyota Music Factory and Irving Convention Center all packaged and designed to accommodate city-wide events. All the hard work has benefited more than Irving residents, but also the visitors to Irving.
- There have been no sales cancellations lately due to the COVID variants. Attendee numbers have been affected.
- ICVB Corporate Sales Manager position has been posted and applications available on the City website and will be open until December 15.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communication Diana Pfaff reported:

- The complete Marketing and Communications report is available in the packet for review.
- Staycations generated 248,733 website sessions and 124,609 hotel referrals.
- Promoted Content Campaign has generated a combined 34,044 blog visits since 2001.
- In November, website traffic declined with 60,876 total sessions and 51,048 users to both websites.
- Social media gained 1,476 new followers in November for a total influence of 124,419 with Visit Irving Facebook page having the newest followers.
- There are several news clips in the packet, including a piece in *Texas Meeting Planner Guide*, highlighting ICVB Executive Director Maura Gast.
- Thanked everyone for their congratulations and noted that Gast encourages community involvement and leads by example.

#### IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- Attended the ASM Global corporate meeting held in conjunction with the International Association Exhibitions and Events Conference in Philadelphia last week. It was a successful way to acquire a feel for what is happening around the country. All locations have different positions based on their locale and pandemic mandates. The ICC is further ahead of the game than many other locations. The conference attendance is normally 2,100 and this year was a little low at 1,600.
- Finance report for October 2021 – the first month of the fiscal year and made budget.
- The forecast looks comfortable and achievable, depending on what happens with Omicron and whatever follows it.
- Challenges will remain in staffing and third-party vendor staffing.
- Food costs are up, and supply chain challenges are real.
- ICC has increased Rent and F&B Catering pricing.
- New menus should be available soon.

Director of Sales Matt Tungett reported:

- The new COVID variant has not shown as many cancellations thus far as the previous variant.
- A few events are looking to move their calendar dates to the second part of the fiscal year.
- Tungett also attended the conference in Philadelphia and noted it gives insight into how other destinations work. He thanked all for the support to attend.
- Revenue for late 2022 is being entered and leads are coming in for the Corporate market.

- In the final planning stage this week for Southwest Showcase event in January, with very good leads already.
- ZestFest has moved on to another location.
- Contracts for 2024-25 city-wide program have been achieved. Will keep the Board updated.

#### INDUSTRY PARTNERS

##### Hotel Partners

Board member Greg Malcolm reported:

- Hilton Garden Inn DFW South is reporting for November (only 28 days ending on December 4), Occupancy at 67.2%, Average Daily Rate is \$128.06, and RevPAR is \$86.04.
- South side of DFW Airport is doing well and on a good rebound.

Board member Nydia Hoskins reported:

- The Omni Las Colinas for November ended at 45% Occupancy with Average Daily Rate of \$186.00.
- RevPAR index is 20 points behind November 2019, but Hoskins is extremely optimistic for 2022.
- The last six months of the fiscal year is looking great and above budget.
- One cancellation in January, due to vaccination mandates.
- Strong last-minute leads that are headed to contract.
- Hired three Sales Managers, all are returning employees.

##### Restaurant Industry

Board Vice Chair David Cole reported:

- Staffing challenges continue. Lost four Managers in one week and now having to think outside the box for staffing. Rehired three past Managers in replacement.
- Food and supply chain challenges continue with everything in very short supply.
- Encouraged Board members to dine out but remember the situation and plan to pack patience.
- Menu items are being substituted or taken off menus.
- Will report next month on the local and state Restaurant Association Committee meetings that are happening this week.

##### DCURD

Board member Dallas Burke reported:

- Backup Emergency Generator Project continues with completion date set for March 2022.
- Construction of two new dams on Southfork Hackberry Creek is completed. This was a \$1.2 million project.
- Engineering underway for a new Lake Carolyn wall system and will be constructed from the lake side without disturbing existing properties or the promenade.
- Completed the busiest waterway maintenance program ever and have more projects scheduled for 2022.
- Irving Flood Control District I – completed major pump station renovations at the international Pump Station and major dredging projects in 2021 cleaned out 2 miles of flood control sump vital to handling floodwater in that system.
- Irving Flood Control District III – engineering underway for installation of new flood control tilting weir that will add 80,000 GPM to the flood control system without using electricity to do so.
- Other aging systems will be replaced in 2022.

- Overall, across the three districts, 100 tons of waterway debris was removed.

Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Chair John Nicks reported:

- Nicks commented on business ability to invite clients and vendors to travel again and replenish business travel opportunities. He noted it will improve but small steps like this can lead to big conventions once your customers or executives visit Irving.
- Congratulated Pfaff on ISF Legacy Award and Sam Reed on ICVB Board appointment.
- Economic Development – Chef Gordon Ramsay is relocating his North American restaurant headquarters to Las Colinas Highlands Office Tower, and working with QTS Irving-Dallas data center expansion, which is a \$40 million investment, along with several other projects.
- Proud to work with City partners on the Heritage District and reconstruction of Irving Boulevard.
- Unemployment in October for Irving dropped to 4.1%, compared to 5.4% in Texas and 4.6% for the nation. This is the lowest the unemployment rate has been since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020.
- Nicks encouraged all to support small business and participate in the Small Business Blitz. There are 1,000 small businesses throughout Irving and the blitz will be an opportunity to thank them for creating jobs in Irving.
- Legislative session filing deadline for March 1<sup>st</sup> primary is today at 6:00 p.m.
- Kevco Electrical Construction, Inc. ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening on December 16 at noon.
- Registration is open for the 2022 State of the City on January 25, 2022, at the Irving Convention Center.

Cole reminded the Board of the Hackberry Ranch historical marker ceremony on Wednesday, December 15 at 2:00 p.m. He thanked Pfaff for her continued community involvement. The Irving Cares New Year's Eve party charity event at the Irving Convention Center will support the local non-profit. He encouraged everyone to participate in the Irving Marathon events, with an opportunity to walk together on December 18 at the Irving Frost Marathon.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME  
Executive Director