

**MINUTES**  
**IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**IRVING CONVENTION CENTER – Junior Ballroom A-C**  
**June 28, 2021**

Attendance: Karen Cooperstein – Board Chair; David Cole – Board Vice Chair; Beth Bowman, Dallas Burke, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Herb Gears, Todd Hawkins, City Manager Chris Hillman, Julia Kang, Clem Lear, Rick Lindsey, William Mahoney, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Sam Reed, Roy Santoscoy, Richard Stewart, and Clare Venegas – Board members; Council Liaison Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor, Councilman Oscar Ward, and Councilman Mark Zeske – City of Irving Elected Officials; General Manager Tom Meehan and Director of Sales Matt Tungett – Irving Convention Center; Chief Financial Officer Jeff Litchfield, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff and Susan Rose – ICVB. Director of Museums Jennifer Landry, representing Executive Director of Arts and Culture Todd Hawkins. Heidi Sanders, Abby Sanders and Maggie Sanders - Guests.

Board Chair Karen Cooperstein called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approve the ICVB Board of Directors meeting minutes from May 24, 2021.
- Accept the ICC Financials for May 2021
- Accept the ICVB Financials for May 2021
- Review of Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Review of ICVB Cash Flow Report

Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. On a motion from Board member Clem Lear and a second from Board member Richard Stewart, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.

**INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION**

- Related Party Transaction Policy for Irving Convention Center

Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the Related Party Transaction Policy for Irving Convention Center as presented. On a motion from Stewart and a second from Board member William Mahoney, the item was unanimously approved.

- Formalizing the Irving Convention Center Bad Debt Policy

Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the Irving Convention Center Bad Debt Policy as presented. On a motion from Board member Roy Santoscoy and a second from Stewart, the item was unanimously approved.

- Approving the 2021-22 ICVB Budget and Marketing Plan

Executive Director Maura Gast gave a presentation on the 2021-22 ICVB Budget and Marketing Plan.

- Last ten years staff has been focused on growing visitor volume, which leads to visitor spending.
- Irving is moving the needle - Weekend Business.
- Occupancy in 2011 was 57.6% and 2019 grew to 71.3%.
- Average Daily Rate in 2011 was \$73.05, to 2019 at \$110.56.
- RevPAR in 2011 was \$42.06, to 2019 at \$78.78.
- She further reviewed:
  - Citywide Hotel Occupancy Tax Collection History.
  - ICVB Reserve Fund History and Net Operating Expenditure History.
  - Website traffic trends are increasing to pre-COVID numbers.
  - Blog and social media are keeping awareness alive.
  - ICC event leads for 2023 and beyond look more like pre-COVID pace.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Lost Revenue Estimates were reviewed and Gast noted ICVB lost revenues are captured on the City books, but ICC lost revenues are captured on ICC books. Total Lost Revenues for 2020-21 equals \$11,008,268.

The Hotel Needs Analysis Survey results were reviewed, noting that all group markets are needing help and 100% of respondents will participate in digital marketing campaigns with promotional rates/offers if funding can be provided. Gast noted recovery of rates may be quicker than after a typical "rate war" of 6-8 years for recovery, but it will still take a few years to get back to 2019 performance based on hotelier responses.

Gast reported this year's ICVB plan and budget process will be in two phases: Phase 1/today is based on August 2020 HOT projections and will be presented dually (with and without ARPA funds). Phase 2 will target either the July or August Board meetings when the availability of ARPA funds has been determined, along with updated HOT projections and collections through May 2021.

The proposed budget line items were reviewed along with key expenditure trend analysis (with and without ARPA funds). Key management goals were outlined with emphasis on replenishing Reserve funds. Each ICVB Department proposed program highlights (with and without ARPA funds) were presented.

In summary, the financial position of the General Fund, Reserve Fund, Computer Replacement Fund and Convention Center Reserve/Capital Projects Fund were outlined and the importance to replenish Reserve and ICC Reserve/Capital projects was noted.

Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the 2021-22 ICVB Budget and Marketing Plan as presented. On a motion from Lear and a second from Santoscoy, the item was unanimously approved.

- Approving the Irving Convention Center Capital Improvement Plan

ICC annual events history and primary space utilization history was presented, along with the ICC budget forecast for 2021-22, operating subsidy comparisons and ICC Capital Improvement Plan key goals and projections.

Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the Irving Convention Center Capital Improvement Plan as presented. On a motion from Mahoney and a second from Stewart, the item was unanimously approved.

- Accepting Year 3 Update to the ICVB Board 2018-21 Strategic Plan

Gast reviewed the updates to the ICVB Board 2018-21 Strategic Plan and reminded the Board that the Strategic Plan is an organization-wide plan of the Board's work, with the ICVB staff facilitating.

Cooperstein asked for a motion to accept the Year 3 Update to the ICVB 2018-21 Strategic Plan as presented. On a motion from Lindsey and a second from Kang, the item was unanimously approved.

- Accepting the Destinations International Code of Ethics

The Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) requires that each accredited organization adhere to this Code of Ethics to reinforce the need and demand for transparency and accountability within the profession. Gast reviewed the items in the Code of Ethics.

Cooperstein asked for a motion to accept the Destinations International Code of Ethics as presented. On a motion from Lear and a second from Stewart, the item was unanimously approved.

City Manager Chris Hillman added he will continue to work with Gast to strategize the use of ARPA funds. Chief Financial Officer Jeff Litchfield and team will look at the regulations and modifications. He appreciates the dual approach to the budget. At the City's August Budget Retreat, the City and Council will review and finalize the City's budget and strategy.

In response to a question from Santoscoy, Gast stated the \$1.3 million and Capital Improvement Projects were based on the value of the building and is a coincidence that it coincides with the Operating Subsidy. The exception of the past year and the first year of the building being open, numbers have always been better and have had the benefit of having a cushion to put back into the Capital Projects Reserve when the building has performed better than the required subsidy.

## BOARD REPORTS

### Chair Report:

- Congratulated staff for their work on Irving Olympic Day. She noted the team went above and beyond on top of their everyday jobs. She also thanked all who participated in the 5K race.
- Congratulated Assistant Executive Director Administration/Finance Susan Rose on her 30-year anniversary with the City.

- Independence Day parade is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 3 in the Heritage District. Live music and fireworks are scheduled for Sunday at Levy Plaza. Las Colinas Association is hosting a VIP tent. ICC is managing the event's beer garden, with staff supplying the manpower.
- ICVB Strategic Plan meeting is tentatively planned for September 23-24.
- The Board and Business Development Committee is working on the Board applicant recruitment process and job descriptions for Board Chair and Vice Chair. A taskforce will be formalized to complete the process. Anyone interested in serving as Chair or Vice Chair is encouraged to inform the taskforce.
- The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 19.

#### BOARD REPORTS

##### Board and Business Development Committee

Committee Vice Chair Richard Stewart reported:

June 11 Meeting Recap:

- The Committee discussed formalizing the ICC Bad Debt Policy and ICC Related Party Transaction.
- Texas Special Legislative Session will begin on July 8 and the Committee will be following the outcomes.
- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for September 10.

##### Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Clem Lear reported:

- Congratulated ICVB staff for their efforts on Irving Olympic Day and the ICVB Budget and Marketing Plan.
- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for July 13 and is open to all Board members. The Committee is hoping to discuss High Spirited Citizen nominations and scheduling presentations for past awardees.

##### Destination Development Committee

Gast reported for Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- Hotel Ordinance Hotelier Survey is included in the Board packet. The Board had previously forwarded a series of proposed changes to the ordinance to the City Council. Council requested a survey of Irving's hoteliers be conducted to get their input; the survey was postponed until this May due to the pandemic. Overwhelmingly, the hotels do not want to see the standards revised in the ways proposed. There were only a handful of the proposed changes that were acceptable. The survey results will be forwarded to the City Council in its Read File this Friday; CVB staff will work with City staff on next steps. Next Committee meeting is scheduled for August 10.

#### CITY REPORTS

Council Liaison Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor reported:

- City Council continues to work on the budget.
- The final draft of the Housing Study has been completed. The study is important to the City for preservation of production and to have the tools to maintain economic viability.
- Working on the Bond program and determining distribution of funds.
- Taylor is interested in receiving the results from the Hotel Needs Assessment Survey.
- Thanked all who worked on Irving Olympic Day, and he appreciates the input from the ICVB, City, Chamber of Commerce and Councilman Al Zapanta in getting visitors to Irving for this event.

#### Councilman Oscar Ward

- Echoed his thanks to the City Council and ICVB staff for Irving Olympic Day and noted it was a great event from Opening Ceremonies to completion.
- Ward attended the State Boxing Championship event and reported four finalists were announced and will move forward to Nationals in Nashville, Tennessee.
- Ward and Councilman Zapanta presented medals at the Water Polo event and noted this year in Texas, water polo will be an official high school UIL event.
- A Skateboarding event was held at Lively Park.
- He attended the Whataburger Texas Jam at The Pavilion on Saturday evening.
- The Housing Survey is completed and shows 100,633 properties, 58% are apartments, 42% are single family and duplex properties and 20% of those are rentals.

#### Councilman Mark Zeske

- He is encouraged looking at the future and appreciates everything the ICVB does for the City.
- He is attending a reunion at University of Dallas in October.

#### City Manager Chris Hillman reported on upcoming special events:

- A copy of the City's first Popular Annual Financial Report was distributed.
- The City as a whole is doing relatively well financially and coming out of the pandemic better than expected.
- Managing expenses and will continue to have healthy sales tax revenue.
- Thanked everyone who worked on Irving Olympic Day.
- Fire Station #4 had a grand opening recently. The new building replaces the existing 60-year-old station. The new station will secure and identify the heritage of the property and impact the Toler family had on the community.
- Thanked The Las Colinas Association for the new Paws Colinas Dog Park in the Urban Center.
- Christus Health broke ground on their new headquarters building, at the corner of 114 and O'Connor. The new building will have 15 stories of Class A office space.

#### BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

##### Sales and Services

##### Assistant Executive Director Lori Fojtasek reported:

- The Sales team is at 105% of their YTD goal.
- There were 66 leads generated this month; last year in May there were 48 and in 2019 had 127.
- It is a slow recovery, but inquiries and site visits are increasing.
- Currently working on two groups for the ICC in 2022.
- Recently awarded trust fund money for a Ladies Basketball Regional Championship Tournament in October, which will be held at Drive Nation.
- During this difficult time, she expressed her appreciation for the support of the City and Board partners.
- Omni Las Colinas renovation is completed and looks beautiful and is a great way to kick off the summer.

Marketing and Communications:

Assistant Executive Director Diana Pfaff reported:

- General Marketing
  - May was the third month in a row of record-breaking website traffic with over 72,000 website sessions to both websites.
  - Simpleview also shows that aggregated DMO website sessions finally broke through and passed same-date session totals for the 1<sup>st</sup> time since March 2020.
  - Blog traffic dropped slightly but was still at its second highest to date with nearly 12,000 pageviews. Top posts were “New Irving Restaurants are Ready to Welcome You,” “Top 5 Picnic Spots in Irving,” and “Five Splurge-Worthy Dining Destinations in Irving.”
  - Advertising engagement also dropped slightly too in May but was still the second highest to date with 33,800 site visits.
  - Social media remained high with over 2,000 new followers bringing total number of followers to 144,680.
- CARES Campaigns
  - The Staycations campaign has seen a recent surge, with advertising conversions nearing 55%. Since January, the Staycations campaign has generated nearly 120,000 website sessions and over 55,000 hotel referrals, which represents \$7.7 million in potential economic value.
  - The OTA campaign, which started in mid-February has generated over 15,000 in hotel room night bookings resulting in nearly \$1.5 million in direct hotel revenue.
  - Year-to-date, the Safe-Meetings campaign has generated 96 meeting inquiries and 14,000 website sessions.
  - And the promoted content campaign, which highlights local businesses through the blog and social media, generated nearly 14,000 blog visits and over 73,000 social media post engagements.

Finance and Administration:

Assistant Executive Director Susan Rose reported:

- April STR and AirDNA Data Reports:
  - For April there were 469 available listings, with an Average Daily Rate of \$214.81, which is an increase of 17.59%.
  - Hotel Occupancy for May shows 62.1%, which is higher than Texas and the U.S.
  - Current month Occupancy is reporting 125.7%, which is up from last year.
  - Average Daily Rate is \$92.37, up from last year.
  - June 13-19 STR totals show Occupancy at 67.5%, and last year was 32.8%. The highest Occupancy day was Saturday.
  - She congratulated the Marketing/Communications team on the Staycation campaign results.
- Administration and Finance Department:
  - Accounting Director Marianne Lauda continues to work on the budget. Rose expressed her gratitude for the hard work and great attitude.
  - The ICVB staff is returning to the office full time on Tuesday, July 6 with walk-in appointments available.

- The ICVB team participated in a Juneteenth project with Councilman Dennis Webb at Bear Creek Community Church. The team assembled toiletry bags for the homeless and viewed a video on the history of Bear Creek.

Taylor asked for an update on the hotel properties who are slow to pay Hotel Occupancy Tax. Litchfield responded there are two properties with large balances, and some have made partial payments. A penalty cannot be applied until the payments are a full quarter behind. They will be turned over to a delinquent tax collector and lien filings will be processed. Taylor expressed his appreciation for the work with staff to follow up on those payments.

#### IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

General Manager Tom Meehan:

- Even though May was the best month of the fiscal year so far with 15 events, it is compared to 128 events in previous years.
- Event Income for the year is \$869,000, compared to \$3.1 million last year.
- Catering reports \$164,000 YTD, compared to \$2.4 million last year.
- There is a long way to go but starting to see a slight increase.
- June was busy, starting off with the 11<sup>th</sup> annual ZestFest, a 700-person brunch for USA Gymnastics and staff flipped the room for a 900-person dinner that same evening.
- There were all hands on deck for the Texas Cornhole League Signature Series, including some ICVB staff manning cashier stations.
- Hosted Steubenville with 2,000 teenagers for a dinner on Friday and Lunch/Dinner on Saturday. Typically, the event has had 4,000 in attendance.
- There are eight events scheduled in July, including the ICC-staffed beer garden at the City's July 4 fireworks program.
- September is full with 18 scheduled events, which will be a good end to the year.

Lindsey gave his compliments to Irving and the ICVB team, with a shout out to Joe Moses for his participation in the Rotary flag distribution. He complimented Fojtasek and the Marketing/Communications team for their efforts with the arm-wrestling group at the Westin Irving Convention Center hotel over the weekend.

#### RESTAURANT UPDATE

Board Vice Chair David Cole reported:

- Cole announced the opening of the new Irving Starbucks in the downtown Heritage District at O'Connor and Irving Boulevard will be coming later this year.
- Working on the R-AB zoning proposed change to get a blanket ratio across the whole city.

#### DCURD

Board member Dallas Burke reported:

- Dallas flood control efforts reported 16.5 inches of rain for May/June.
- Upstream lakes are 3 to 8 inches high in flood pool, which makes Elm Fork higher than normal and is delaying some projects in creeks and channels.
- Projects – Watering maintenance projects in Southfork, Hackberry Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Lake Carolyn, and Beaver Creek.
- Storm Water Pump Station project is scheduled to be completed in September.



- Lake Carolyn and pump station keep the Urban Center from flooding.
- Unveiling the Back-up Generator Project in September, which is a \$10 million TIF-funded project. The Board will be invited to the ribbon cutting and pump station tour.

#### IRVING-LAS COLINAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber Board Chair Sam Reed reported:

- The Chamber Economic team for 2021 is reporting 15 wins, 9 recruitments, \$300 million in capital investment, which equates to 3,000 job opportunities and 1.3 million square feet of commercial space.
- There are 123 projects in the pipeline, \$150 billion, with 70,000 job opportunities, of which 25% are corporate headquarters.
- Texas unemployment for May decreased from 5.7% to 5.4%, and the national rate decreased from 6.1% in April to 5.8%.
- The Texas 87<sup>th</sup> legislative session ended May 31.
- Governor Abbott has called a special legislative session on July 8 and no agenda has been filed to date.
- Applications for the Chamber's Leadership Irving Class of 2022 are being accepted.
- July 7 Coffee Break will feature Account Manager Mary Kate Jeffries from Cooksey Communications.
- The chamber staff is returning to the office on Tuesday, July 6 with a 14-day rotation schedule.

#### IRVING ARTS AND CULTURE

Director of Museums Jennifer Landry reported:

- In-person and virtual summer camp art program are proving to be very popular.
- There has been an uptick in theater rental events.
- Large-scale dance competitions are starting to return.
- The first live performance in over a year at Main Stage is at 100% capacity.
- Guided tours in the Gallery have started.
- Last chance to attend Lonesome Dove: Photographs by Bill Wittliff. The exhibit ends July 10.
- The 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas & Neighbors Regional Art Exhibition is in the Main Gallery through July 10.
- Art Member Show is scheduled for July 24.
- Irving Archives and Museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and no reservations are needed. There has been an increase in group and meeting reservations.
- The team is preparing marketing materials for school trips.
- Construction and restoration starting soon at the Jackie Townsell Bear Creek Heritage Center.
- Two virtual talks for the National Bilingual Exhibition are planned.
- Spark!Lab is launching in-person programs soon.
- Seeing an increase in reservations for the Ruth Paine House. In May, there were 13 visitors and 42 so far in June.

Taylor encouraged everyone to visit the Courtyard Gallery for Robert Batson: New Works exhibit through September 25. Batson is an Irving resident, architect/artist, and long-time volunteer. He has a unique story, and his work is worth viewing.



LAS COLINAS ASSOCIATION

Board member Hammond Perot reported:

- A video of the Paws Colinas Dog Park opening was viewed. Perot noted there was a lot of participation, and he thanked all those who volunteered.
- The Las Colinas Association is sponsoring a VIP tent at the City's July 4 fire works event and all Board members are invited to attend.

With no further discussion, Cooperstein adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME  
Executive Director