



## Explore Lawrence

Board of Directors Meeting

April 25, 2025

Present: Drew Gaschler (chair), Kim Anspach, Executive Director, Heather Shull, Tina Tourtillott, Kirk Goodman, Andrew Holt, Luis Ruiz, Emily Peterson, Margann Bennett

Present online: Anthea Scouffas, Heidi Champagne, Commissioner Amber Sellers

Absent: Andrew Holt

Staff: Allison Calvin, Director of Marketing, Ruth DeWitt, External Affairs and Sales Operations Manager (note taker)

Drew called the meeting together at 1:05 PM

### WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS:

The board welcomed Margann Bennett to the board, introduced themselves. Margann will serve as the ex officio Chamber representative to the board, after Kathy Gertsner left in December.

### MINUTES/FINANCIALS:

Tina presented the financial report. TGT has not been included in the numbers yet. There was a minor code change from a meeting to a hosted event which has been moved to the correct line.

Kim shared the audit has been completed and shared printed copies of the audit report with the board.

Kim noted our accountants are currently above the FDIC insurance level, but is leaving it because it changes over time and it's easier than creating a separate fund. Margann offered the Chamber has a "roll over" account that automatically rolls funds into an account to keep the FDIC levels steady.

The report shows Q1 is pacing well with projected expenses. Kim feels confident the line items were well planned. There was a big shift to develop the MVIC lines, but that came in under budget due to longer than anticipated timelines taking ownership and registration of the vehicle.

The board accepted the financial report.

### GATEWAY DISTRICT PROJECT:

Kim shared a draft of the support letter the board agreed to send at last month's meeting.

One of the board's outstanding questions was whether or not the TGT rate remitted to the bond was negotiable. Heather Blank has since confirmed that, per the STAR bond statute, all TGT collected is required by law to be remitted to the bond repayment. Because this is non-negotiable, Kim removed it from the letter.

A second question of support was around the idea of transportation to and from hotels and connectivity to downtown. The board continues to support the position of requesting dedicated transportation between the hotels and the conference center.

The board discussed the letter, some expressing concerns about the funding of the project, others about the need for a new hotel in town. Other members are excited about the ability to bring large conferences to town that were previously turned away.

The board suggested Kim sign the letter as Executive Director, which will represent the organization, but not list each individual board member. Kim will submit to the commission as public comment for the agenda, but will not plan to make public remarks at the Commission meeting on May 6.

## **STAFF REPORTS:**

### **Marketing:**

Allison provided an update on the Mobile Visitor Center. We are working with McCullough Creative on developing an interior and exterior experience for visitors interacting with the van. Allison walked the board through an interactive opinion gathering exercise. She had the board answer various questions about Lawrence, what visitors should experience in town, what the visitor center means to them, etc. She will compile answers and forward.

Once McCullough designs the experience, they will hand over the details, and Le will do the build here in town.

Allison shared that Laurel has been doing an amazing job gathering content and creating reels and videos. One particular post on TikTok called “the perfect bench” has received an incredible number of views, passing the engagement goals for the year! The board was thrilled and congratulated Laurel on her hard work.

### **External Affairs:**

Ruth included a letter in the board packet thanking the board for their support of her professional development in sending her through Leadership Lawrence. The program surpassed her expectations and she recommended anyone going as a valuable experience on many levels.

Ruth thanked the board generally for supporting professional development opportunities to us, as a small staff, and cited the importance for us to grow in our roles as a fairly new team.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT:**

### **Annual Report:**

Kim distributed the 2024 Annual Report to the board. She urged the board to read through it, as it shows a strong visitor economy from the last year.

### **Tourism Economic EIC Calculator:**

Kim suggested the idea of replacing the Tourism Economic Impact Calculator with a new add-on tracking visitor spending data in Placer. The cost is negligible since it is an add-on with Placer, and we are not using the EIC as much because it is more of a predictive tool based on loose estimates.

Further, the Placer module is a reliable data-driven tool that gives us information on visitor spending in market without the delay we experience with the EIC. The board supported the change. No line-item transfer was necessary to switch to Placer from the EIC.

#### **TGT Conversation:**

Luis and Kim are still working together to convene a group of stakeholders to determine the level of community support around increasing the TGT and how that funding is used after the World Cup is over. Luis has approached Craig Owens about the idea, and Craig suggested the stakeholder group to gauge support. Kim and Luis are leading this initiative.

#### **National Fishing League:**

Kim is still working with the National Fishing League regarding the final bid fund payment amount. She believes they are close to an agreement since the tournament went from a four-day tournament to a three-day event.

#### **Organizational Health Committee:**

Kim will be convening the Organizational Health Committee of the Board on May 2. The committee will continue the conversation from last year around bylaws changes and expanding the board through approval by the City Commission. The group will also discuss the 2026 funding request for the organization budget.

#### **Freedom's Frontier:**

Freedom's Frontier, facing funding cuts with the federal government is going to be leaving our shared space by the end of May. They will be officeing at the Watkins Museum a couple of days/week. While this affects our income, it also opens up space for our staff and teams.

#### **STR and AirDNA Reports:**

Kim suggested the board look over the occupancy reports in their packets and offered to answer questions if they wanted to email her.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Drew requested a motion to adjourn (Heather, Kirk). The meeting adjourned at 2:03 pm.

Next meeting is May 30 at 1:00 pm in the Carnegie Building.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth DeWitt