

**eXplore Lawrence**  
**Board Minutes**  
**January 20, 2021**  
**Zoom meeting – 3:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Mike Logan, Danny Caine, Ryan Robinson, Peter Bobkowski, Heidi Champagne, Jamie Hays Szelc, Ivan Simac, Sally Zogry\*, Porter Arneill\* Stuart Boley\*

Members absent: Hugh Carter\*  
\*ex-officio members

Staff: Michael Davidson

Guests: Emily Lysen, Director of Development at Lawrence Farmer's Market

Meeting Materials provided by email: January 2021 Board Report, Strategic Planning Board Retreat Summary Notes, EL 2016 Executive Director Job Description, Executive Director search outline, Monthly STR Report

Meeting began at 3:32 p.m.

**Finance Report**

- December 2020 – Michael reviewed the December financial report
- Final payment for Lawrence Restaurant Grant and Hotel administrative fees.
- City paid EL the first quarterly payment for 2021
- Approved to apply for first round of funding for PPP Loan
- ELID loan allows for an increase from \$6,000 to \$10,000. Not action needed to be taken.

Introduction: Ryan Robinson, new board member, introduced himself

**Appointment of Board Vice Chair – Hotel designee**

- Discussion about the make-up of the executive committee, the year ahead and moving into 2022. Ivan and Heidi indicated that they are most interested in how they can serve the board.
- **Action:** Mike moved to approve Ivan as Vice Chair and Heidi as Treasurer; Peter seconded. Approved unanimously.

**Staff Reports**

- Michael – Threshold 360 Project – 360 tours of hotels and attractions in Douglas County paid for by CARES funds. Going well, about 50 so far.
- We be sponsoring a virtual FAM for the Women in Travel Summit
- Staff did a great job coordinating and administering the Hotel, Tourism and Marketing and Lawrence Restaurant Association Grants. . .

## Resolutions

- Michael explained that there is a signatory requirement for the SBA loan. He asked for board approval on the resolution to authorize the Executive Director to sign on behalf of the board for the SBA Loan.
- Mike moved to approve. Jamie seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Also seeking approval to sign documents related to:
  - CARES Act
  - 401K
- **Action:** Heidi moved to have the executive committee review and approve the related agreements; Danny seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Michael spoke about how benefits were paused during pandemic and the desire to bring back staff and to review and reinstate benefits. He asked to appoint a committee of board members to review and begin appropriate planning. Heidi and Sally volunteered. Sally will also ask Hugh.

## Review of Board Retreat Findings

- The summary document from the facilitator, Jonathan Morris were distributed before the board meeting.
- Five focus areas for the organization:
  - Proposed Focus Areas or “Buckets” for grouping related Goals:

Focus Area 1: Finances	Focus Area 4: Sales and Marketing
Focus Area 2: Partnerships	Focus Area 5: High Performing Org.
Focus Area 3: Events and Activities	
- Opportunity for board members to identify areas of interest.
- Michael expressed that there should be an emphasis on sales as marketing is in good shape currently. The sports market will be important going forward.
- Mike spoke about maximizing efforts in these areas and developing ways to monitor performance.
- Mike agreed to reach out to all board members by February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Mike asked for Jonathan to join us at the February meeting to provide further information and answer questions.

## Executive Director Report

- Anticipate receiving PPP first round within the next few weeks
- Receiving congratulatory calls and emails in reference to the retirement announcement.
- Hotel, County/Health Department, and City meeting Friday, January 22 regarding being locked out of holding sporting events. Asking them to define how events can be held. Other regional municipalities held events but with cancellations due to the county health order, we have lost many events and revenue since May, 2020. How can we be safe and hold events too?

### Executive Director Search

- Michael has announced his retirement in April. A press release went out last week.
- Happily, Michael is leaving on good terms and is happy to assist with the transition.
- Plan to initiate a national search to find the best candidate.
- Want to mirror city best practices and will seek guidance from City HR through Porter.
- Assemble a hiring committee.
  - Ivan, Jamie, Danny, Sally and Heidi volunteered. That leaves one to two at-large positions. Michael suggested an arts community and/or restaurant community representative.
- Need to check the City agreement about approving the position.
- Stuart reminded the board to be aware of Kansas open meetings requirements and not violating - email chains, etc.
- Peter asked if there had been any consideration about possibly delaying the position until things settle from the pandemic, both for practicality and economics.
- Mike offered that from prior experience, it makes sense to get the prospectus out and get the process rolling.
- Heidi pointed out that having a strong individual in this roll who has experience during challenging times to help move us through this time will be invaluable.
- Craft a prospectus and publish it by early February.

### Other Items

Mike and Michael spoke about the "Belgian Waffle," and a local group that is partnering with this well-known bike race group from 3 places in US for October 2021. A multi-day race event and festival.

Emily spoke about her grant-funded roll at the Farmer's Market and her history in Lawrence. Looking toward educational opportunities, children and family engagement. Building connections. Looking for a more permanent location.

Heidi moved to adjourn; Ivan seconded.

Ended meeting at 4:53 p.m.

Next meeting February 17, 2021 - 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.