

**Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau
D/B/A South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority
Minutes of February 17, 2023**

Board of Directors of the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Met in a **REGULAR MEETING**
Indiana Welcome Center
7770 Corinne Drive, Hammond, IN 46323
Friday, February 17, 2023 at 11:00 A.M. (CST)

PURSUANT TO AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BYLAWS AND
STANDING RULES

MEETING MINUTES

I. REPORTS

A. Roll Call

Chairman Andy Qunell called the February 17, 2023 regular meeting of the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau to order at 11:01 A.M. (CST). Secretary Chareice White called the roll.

The roll call was as follows:

Board Members Present: Vice Chairman Brent Brashier, Christine Cash, Tom Dabertin (via Zoom), Sal Espino, Fred Koegel, Nikki Lopez, Darnail Lyles, Treasurer Matt Maloney, Matt Schuffert, Doug Spencer, Secretary Chareice White and Chairman Andy Qunell.

Board Members Absent: Taryl Bonds, John Bushemi, Bernie Grisolia, Peter Klideris, Pat Reardon, and Terry Velligan.

Staff Present: President/CEO David Uran, Chief Operations Officer Greg Falkowski, Chief Marketing Officer Heather Becerra, Chief Sports and Leisure Officer Megan Goodan, and Accounting Manager Megan Grezovski.

Also Present: Attorney Scott McClure and Parliamentarian Andrew Kyres.

B. Pledge Of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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C. Report of the Executive Committee

None to Present.

D. Report of the Standing Committee

1. By-Laws Committee – Update: None. Member and committee chairperson John Bushemi was absent.
2. Legislative – Update

President/CEO David Uran indicated that his report below would also provide an update on legislative matters. However, he noted the following updates:

SB 434 was moving forward from the Senate to the House for further review and discussion. This bill was amended from its original submission and appears to have gained momentum. Member Tom Dabetin asked President/CEO Uran to develop an outline/talking points about the project and how members could discuss this bill with their appointing authorities and the public.

HB 1599 regarding Tourism Improvement Districts has stalled in the House.

Chairman Qunell noted that the officers, President/CEO and Member Matt Schuffert met following the January meeting and reviewed several potential lobbying firms. This group selected Bose Public Affairs as the SSCVA's new lobbyist.

E. President/CEO Report – Attached

Staff Board reports were also attached for board members to view in individual iPads during the meeting.

A Move to Indiana update was also provided electronically in the board packet.

II. OLD BUSINESS

None to Present.

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III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Addition of New Items to Agenda

None to Present.

B. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

1. Executive Session Meeting Minutes From January 20, 2023

Chairman Andy Qunell asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the executive session meeting minutes held on January 20, 2023. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Brent Brashier, and seconded by Member Sal Espino.

Secretary Chareice White called the role for a roll-call vote.

Ayes: Vice Chairman Brent Brashier, Christine Cash, Sal Espino, Fred Koegel, Nikki Lopez, Darnail Lyles, Treasurer Matt Maloney, Matt Schuffert, Doug Spencer, Secretary Chareice White and Chairman Andy Qunell.

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Tom Dabertin participated via Zoom, was not available at the time of the vote.

Motion carried 11-0-0.

2. Regular Meeting Minutes from January 20, 2023

Chairman Andy Qunell asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the regular board meeting held on January 20, 2023. Motion was made by Member Matt Schuffert, and seconded by Vice Chairman Brent Brashier.

Secretary Chareice White called the role for a roll-call vote.

Ayes: Vice Chairman Brent Brashier, Christine Cash, Sal Espino, Fred Koegel, Nikki Lopez, Treasurer Matt Maloney, Matt Schuffert,

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Doug Spencer, Secretary Chareice White and Chairman Andy Qunell.

Nayes: None

Abstain: Darnail Lyles

Tom Dabertin participated via Zoom, was not available at the time of the vote.

Motion carried 10-0-1.

C. Finance Report

1. Approval of Claims: APV #27200-#27303 in the Amount of \$818,026.51.

President/CEO David Uran gave a brief explanation of the voucher amounts for the month.

Chairman Andy Qunell asked for a motion to approve claims #27200-#27303 in the amount of \$818,026.51. Treasurer Matt Maloney made the motion, which was seconded by Member Matt Schuffert.

Secretary Chareice White called the role for a roll-call vote.

Ayes: Vice Chairman Brent Brashier, Christine Cash, Sal Espino, Fred Koegel, Nikki Lopez, Darnail Lyles, Treasurer Matt Maloney, Matt Schuffert, Doug Spencer, Secretary Chareice White and Chairman Andy Qunell.

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Tom Dabertin participated via Zoom, was not available at the time of the vote.

Motion carried 11-0-0.

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D. Resolutions

1. None to Present.

E. Other New Business

1. CFO Seeks Extension to April 20, 2023: LCCVB Employee Compensation and Benefits as per Resolution No 2020-10-12: A Resolution Outlining The Process For Notifying The Public Of LCCVB Employee Salaries And Benefits

As per the resolution, this information is to be presented to the Board of Directors and the DLGF annually by February 28. However, the CFO is currently working from home due to foot surgery and has requested additional time to complete this project while also completing other year-end reporting requirements.

Chairman Andy Qunell asked for a motion to approve this extension as outlined above. Member Matt Schuffert made the motion, and it was seconded by Vice Chairman Brent Brashier.

Secretary Chareice White called the role for a roll-call vote.

Ayes: Vice Chairman Brent Brashier, Christine Cash, Sal Espino, Fred Koegel, Nikki Lopez, Darnail Lyles, Treasurer Matt Maloney, Matt Schuffert, Doug Spencer, Secretary Chareice White and Chairman Andy Qunell.

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Tom Dabertin participated via Zoom, was not available at the time of the vote.

Motion carried 11-0-0.

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2. **Cancellation of Outstanding Warrant: #28018 George Buck \$9.59 dated 10/14/2020**

Check can be voided two full years after December 31 of the year of issuance

This outstanding warrant qualifies for cancellation per the information as noted above.

Chairman Andy Qunell asked for a motion to cancel outstanding warrant #28018 with the details noted above. Vice Chairman Brent Brashier made the motion, and it was seconded by Member Fred Koegel.

Secretary Chareice White called the role for a roll-call vote.

Ayes: Vice Chairman Brent Brashier, Christine Cash, Tom Dabertin, Sal Espino, Fred Koegel, Nikki Lopez, Darnail Lyles, Treasurer Matt Maloney, Matt Schuffert, Doug Spencer, Secretary Chareice White and Chairman Andy Qunell.

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried 12-0-0.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

1. None to Present

V. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

- A. Public Comment - None
- B. Next Regular Meeting - Thursday, March 16, 2023.
President/CEO David Uran has indicated that Culinary Misfits in Crown Point, Indiana is a new partner and willing to host our business meeting at 5:00 p.m with a dinner following the meeting. President/CEO Uran asked board members if they

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were agreeable to moving the monthly meeting to the evening timeframe and the group was receptive.

VI. FINANCIALS

Board report attachment.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing of no other business to come before the board, Chairman Andy Qunell asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motioned by Member Darnail Lyles, and seconded by Member Matt Schuffert. The meeting adjourned at 11:57 A.M. (CST).

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Approved:

Andy Qunell, Chairman

Date

Attest:

Chareice White, Secretary

Date

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President/CEO notes:

1. Good of the Order:

- a. Indiana Society of Chicago - event planning meeting will take place on March 8, 2023
- b. Crown Point's nighttime St Patrick's Parade - SSCVA will have a float / March 17
- c. Ivan Garcia - Maintenance - 3rd Year Work Anniversary - February 20
- d. IN INDIANA / Move to Indiana Campaign is going well - February 8 Event with the Times Media was a great success.
- e. Senate Bill 434 Update - Lake County Convention Center
- f. HB 1599 Update - Tourism Improvement District

2. Facilities Update:

- a. SSCVA Welcome Center has been approved by ATC for a full liquor license!
- b. We will begin compiling a list of non valued or outdated equipment - this list will be forward to the board for approval of removal from our inventory - we will be using GOV deals to see if we can capture any dollars on these items.

3. NITDC Report

- a. Next meeting will be on February 23 at 2 pm - March will have additional information to share

4. SSCVA Community Outreach:

- a. Bookings for the Welcome Center are underway - a updated booking calendar will be created and shared beginning in March

5. Indiana Welcome Center / Gift Shop

- a. Indiana Welcome Center Visitors
 - i. January 2023 (3,539)
 - ii. January 2022 (2,781)
 - iii. 37% increase in attendance
- b. South Shore Gift Shop
 - i. January 2023 - \$3,450.12
 - ii. January 2022 - \$2,447.93

6. Sports & Leisure Board Report Update:

SPORTS/SPECIAL EVENTS

- a. The 26th annual American Cue Sports (ACS) Indiana State Billiards Championships will take place April 26-30 at Horseshoe Casino, Hammond. Expecting 400-500 participants per day for 4 days.

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- b. Providing support to the City of Hobart as they look into the development of a multi-purpose field complex near 65 & 30.
 - i. Has a preliminary call with the Sports Facilities Companies (SFC) and Perfect Game (PG) - they will begin to work on preliminary market research, develop a PG events/inventory forecast (which will outline economic impact, direct spending and non-local visitation to the marketplace on an annual basis) as well as complete the build out of the facility program & opinion of cost for the development of the field complex.
 - c. The 2024 Firefighter Challenge Bid Opens February 20.
 - i. The SSCVA will partner with the MAAC Foundation to put in a bid to host this event that provides our nation's firefighters with an opportunity to come together to compete and share ideas between departments.
 - d. **"Savor the South Shore"** Restaurant Weeks takes place February 27-March 12.
 - i. All restaurants are encouraged to submit a 3-course prix-fixe menu at a discounted price.
 - ii. Currently there are 28 restaurants participating throughout Northwest Indiana.
- PARTNERSHIP**
- e. **New partners:** Super 8 Merrillville, White Hawk Country Club, Culinary Misfits, Square Roots, Fenwicks Distillery, Halls of St George, Sip Coffee House & Artisan Cafe and Lake County Courthouse Museum.
 - i. 17 NEW partners & 93 renewals for a total of \$120,104.00 total sales so far in 2023.
 - f. SSCVA will host a "Group Tour Summit" Tuesday, February 28 at the Mascot Hall of Fame from 9:00 a.m. - Noon.
 - i. All SSCVA partners are invited to hear from industry experts about what it takes to attract motorcoach business to our community.
 - ii. Key speakers include Sonya Nash, Executive Director Visit Shipshewana & Lois Stoltzfus, Group Sales Manager for Ohio Star Theatre Dutchman Hospitality Group.
- HOUSING / SERVICING**
- g. Rooms booked through meeting max 2023: 664 YTD
 - h. Candace & Barb will attend the Heartland Travel Showcase, March 10-12 in Cincinnati, Ohio and

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Circle Wisconsin, March 19-21 in Wisconsin.

7. Office of Marketing:

Data Reports/Research

a. Occupancy was down but ADR was up for December.

i. December 2022 Occupancy - 50%

ii. December 2021 Occupancy - 53.3%

iii. December 2022 ADR - \$94.83

iv. December 2021 ADR - \$92.31

b. We met with Lance at the Griffith/Highland Chamber to discuss Datafy reports and where visitors

to those communities are coming from. He wants to create a program for his members to drive

more traffic to their businesses when there are sporting events, festivals and other special

events in town.

Website

c. SEO Highlights for January

i. The site received 24,480 organic sessions in January which was up 3% compared to last year.

ii. Events page saw a 274% increase year over year with 888 sessions and the Indiana Dunes Vacation Rentals page had an increase of 1,207% year over year with 353 sessions.

iii. A to Z List of Things to Do This Winter in Northwest Indiana saw an 82% increase year over year with 324 sessions.

Communications/Social-Media

d. Visit Indiana Media Marketplace

i. SSCVA will have a booth at this event on March 13th.

ii. We will also be hosting one of the journalists on March 15th.

e. Social Media Reels

i. Instagram - We have been getting some great engagement on our Instagram page.

1. A-Z Winter Activities Reel - 4,011 video views, 168 likes and 15 comments.

2. Region Cat Cafe Reel - 3,757 video views, 141 likes and 6 comments.

Marketing Campaign Highlights

f. 12th Annual Black Film Festival

i. We have assisted with graphics/advertising for this event.

ii. Event is February 17-18 at the Glen Theatre in Gary.

g. Savor the South Shore

i. Campaign begins on February 20th

ii. Media buy includes digital, social media, digital billboards, streaming audio and a wrap

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around the NWI Times newspaper.

h. Spring Getaways

i. Finalizing the creative elements.

ii. Campaign begins on February 27th.

iii. Media buy includes digital, social media, digital billboards, streaming audio, connected

TV and cable.

40-Year Anniversary Logo

i. New logo designed to use throughout the year (Display the logo)

8. SSCVA Upcoming Speaking Engagements:

a. Highland/Griffith Chamber meeting on March 14, 2023

This concludes my Executive Report!