

HAMILTON COUNTY VISITOR AND CONVENTION COMMISSION

37 E. Main Street, Carmel, IN 46032

Thursday, August 21, 2025

Commission members in attendance: Jack Russell, Perry Williams, Sotiris Hji-Avgoustis, Kerstin Sommer-Raza, Jamie Hopwood, Rachel Quade, Bob DuBois, Kelly Tabeling, Kelly Sujka, Lisa Hanni, Sydnee Cseresznyes

Commission members attending online: Andy Card

Also in attendance: Karen Radcliff, Brad Lynn, Todd Bolster, Sarah Buckner, Hayley Sears, Chou-il Lee

I. Welcome and Introductions

J. Hopwood called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

J. Hopwood introduced T. Bolster, Hamilton County Tourism's new Executive Vice President of Sales & Marketing, to the tourism commission.

II. Review of the Minutes of the May 2025 Meeting

J. Russell made a motion to approve the May 2025 minutes as presented. P. Williams seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

III. Visitor & Financial Metrics

A. 2025 Visitor Report

K. Radcliff provided a preliminary report on the LIV Golf Tournament. The tourism commissioners shared positive reviews of the experiences. K. Radcliff shared that previous research was showed that 2025 would be a flat year, however Hamilton County is currently seeing a healthy revenue stream. Data shows a 200% increase in short term rentals. Expected to hit appropriation level in September 2025.

B.2025 Tax Report

B. Lynn shared the tax numbers have surpassed the forecasted amounts by \$337,000. About 3.7%. Current expectations are just over \$2 million dollars, which would go to 2026 appropriations. The BEST Fund is also surpassing the forecasts.

1. Audit Report Update

B. Lynn shared that audit report is not yet available. It is still in review and will be ready in November 2025.

C. 2025 Tourism Commission Financial Report

B. Lynn reviewed the financial position of the Hamilton County Visitors and Convention Commission. No liabilities at this time. B. Lynn shared the statement of activity. A. Card inquired if the cash is in an account to earn interest. B. Lynn shared it is a money market account, earning about 4%. A. Card asked if it is protected funds, B. Lynn stated it is state protected funds, the PDIF.

D. 2025 HCT Financial Report

B. Lynn presented the HCT Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss document as of June 30, 2025. Revenue and spending are on track.

B. DuBois motioned to approve the financials as presented, R. Quade seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

IV. Old Business

A. Community Capitals Update

K. Radcliff shared an update on the Community Capitals exercise that several board/commission/staff members as well as elected officials participated in to best understand how to measure the impact of HCT's work. R. Quade asked for more information about the return on investment for implementing art. K. Radcliff shared that is part of the work that will be done. J. Russell suggested looking at assessed value of spaces within Hamilton County that have invested in place making.

B. 2026 Intent to Renew Funding Amendment

J. Hopwood discussed the notice for renewal for the of funding agreement between the Hamilton County Tourism Commission and Hamilton County Tourism, Inc. J. Hopwood shared two minor edits that should be made. One edit is to update the budget amount from last year, the other is for a date update. Two more renewal years are contracted, 2026-2027. Another funding agreement will be required in 2028.

J. Russell motioned to approve to commission giving notice to renew the funding agreement, S. Cseresznyes seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

V. New Business

A. HCVCC Amended Ordinance

J. Hopwood provided an update on the amended ordinance, changing the structure of the tourism commission. This amendment will change the BEST distribution funds and the appointment requirements between the cities and county.

B. BEST Grant Awards 2026

K. Radcliff reviewed the three applications that came in for BEST support. First discussed is the Indianapolis Executive Airport and the need for a customs office to support international travel. The airport is currently managing a study to determine the return on investment for a customs space. Difficult to say what the hotel impact will be from this project, the review committee feels the full ask is not necessary and suggests \$500,000 with a contingency that the airport gets federal approval. The committee feels this will increase corporate growth.

S. Cseresznyes motioned to approve to provide \$500,000 in support for the Indianapolis Executive Airport, K. Sommer Raza seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

K. Radcliff shared the USA Gymnastics Training Center on the agenda project has been pulled at this time, will need to reapply.

K. Radcliff shared the Westfield Ice Facility request for funds. This is Westfield's allocation for the .5% of the BEST funds. This request is based on studies that have been completed in the past that showed ice projects will be competitive for tourism. Potential to be a top ten location in the country with this project. The agreement does allow for pre construction.

J. Russell motioned to approve to fund the City of Westfield Ice Facility at the full earned amount, P. Williams seconded. J. Hopwood recused himself from the vote, due to guidance provided to the City of Westfield. A. Card has also recused himself from the vote as a potential developer. S. Cseresznyes disclosed she has a client involved in the project. No further discussion, motion passes.

J. Hopwood requested a volunteer for the Treasurer role, vacated by J. Russell. The commission would like to vote in a new treasurer in the November meeting.

VI. Adjourn until November 13, 2025 at HCT Office

J. Russell motioned to adjourn the meeting, P. Williams seconded. No further discussion, meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.