

HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM, INC BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
37 E. Main Street, Carmel, IN 46032  
**Friday, March 7, 2025**  
**8:30-10:15 a.m.**

**Board attendance:** Scott Spillman, Norman Burns, Michael Balcolm, Susan Miller, Mark Truett, Andrew Newport, Kayla Arnold, Chris Stice, Jimia Smith, Vince Dora

**Board attending online:** Bob DuBois

**Also in attendance:** Anne Poindexter/counsel, Brad Lynn, Karen Radcliff, Tina Rodgers, Betsy Ekelof, Ashley Ledford, Sarah Buckner, Mike Thibideau, Laura Kelner, Carl Daniels, Mari Sandifer, Gabby Blauert.

### **I. Welcome**

S. Spillman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

S. Spillman announced K. Radcliff as the new President & CEO of Hamilton County Tourism.

S. Spillman took a moment to thank N. Burns for his time as the former HCT board chair.

S. Spillman welcomed M. Sandifer to the HCT staff as the Senior Manager, Grants and Accounting.

### **II. Minutes of the February 2025 Annual Meeting & February 2025 Regular Meeting**

N. Burns made a motion to approve the minutes for both the February 2025 Annual Meeting and the February 2025 Regular Meeting. K. Arnold seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

### **III. Financials & Metrics CONSENT AGENDA**

#### **A. Tax Remittance Report**

B. Lynn reviewed the tax remittance report. Overall, we are up \$100,000 over last year. February was soft, but still expected to beat the forecasted amount as \$500,000.

#### **B. HCT Financial Report**

B. Lynn reviewed the balance sheet. C. Stice asked for the current interest rate. B. Lynn shared it was 5.28%, another 4.75%. Brad will have current numbers before the next board meeting. M. Truett suggested if it is a variable money market to continue investing. V. Dora agreed to maximize interest. \$4.5m in cash reserves. B. Lynn reviewed the P&L. Nothing major to report. No further discussion.

#### **C. Visitor & Lodging Report**

K. Radcliff presented the lodging report. Current report is just for January. Organic and social are good, website sessions were down in January due to no advertising. Hotels doing better than short term rentals. National trends show GenX is planning for leisure travel and Millennials are planning for business travel. M. Balcolm asked if we have plans to connect with Ireland on the direct flight. HCT is in talks with County Kildaire in Ireland as well as the Indianapolis Airport Authority about a collaboration to cross promote. Karen showed an attribution summary.

C. Stice made a motion to approve the financials and metrics, M. Truett seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

### **IV. New Business**

#### **A. HR Updates**

T. Rodgers presented on the 401k trustee update. HCT needs to update the trustee with the new name for the President & CEO, K. Radcliff.

C. Stice made a motion to approve updating the 401k trustee documents. K. Arnold seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

T. Rodgers presented the need to update the whistleblower policy with the new name for the President & CEO, K. Radcliff.

N. Burns made a motion to approve updating the whistleblower documents. V. Dora seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

B. Nominations

S. Spillman informed that we need to update the At-Large role and suggested K. Arnold due to her leadership over the last six months.

1. At-large Director—Kayla Arnold

C. Stice made a motion to add K. Arnold as an at-large director. M. Truett seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

2. Open Board Seat

S. Spillman reviewed the need for one additional board member. N. Burns recognized that Grand Park is a key player and deserves representation. K. Arnold advocated for additional representation for Westfield. Hotel experience was a key factor discussed, as was taking into consideration where HCT was headed and what experience is needed to get there. Board members reviewed three nominations and deliberated at length the tremendous talent of each. Board members also recognized how fortunate HCT is to attract this level of interest in leadership.

- a) Matt Trnian
- b) Tyler Upshaw
- c) Kelly Mulder

Recognizing the many years of collaboration with Grand Park and its importance as a tourism asset, C. Stice made a motion for Matt Trnian to join the board. N. Burns seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

C. 2025 World Aquatics Bid

C. Daniels shared an update on the 2025 World Aquatics. HCSA received \$250,000 from Indiana State Bid Fund and requested that HCT amend the budget to support the event at \$40,000. Indiana Sports Corp encouraged HCSA to host this event. K. Arnold asked about HCT's incentive pool. HCT has \$300,000 available for the support.

N. Burns made a motion to move \$40,000 from the incentive pool into HCSA's budget to support this event. V. Dora seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

D. Noblesville Exit 210 Master Plan RFP

K. Radcliff discussed the need for an entertainment district master plan for the City of Noblesville, looking at a study area around the I-69, exit 210 retail site. This study could be in the \$250,000 range. A. Newport recused himself from further discussion since Ruoff Music Center is inside the study area. C. Stice asked for more details on the scope. K. Radcliff informed on the study area, similar to the scope of the Grand Park Master Plan that was completed. K. Arnold believes this will help Noblesville identify themselves separate from the other nearby communities. C. Stice asked if this is related to Hunden study, asked about Target that is coming, will this change planning or ordinance zoning. K. Radcliff said this is a visionary study for tourism asset building and site branding for the area. V. Dora would like this study to include demand generators, not just add hotels for taxes. The plan would include tourism attraction potential as well as office and walkable retail.

M. Truett made a motion to release up to \$250,000 for the study. C. Stice seconded. No discussion. B. DuBois and A. Newport recused.

E. Grants

1. Community Grants

S. Buckner requested funds to grant to three organizations: Hamilton County Soil & Water District, Noblesville Creates, HAND, Inc to receive community grants to market projects such as water quality, difficult storytelling and workforce housing.

M. Truett made a motion to approve the Community Grants as presented. K. Arnold seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

2. Tourism Gives Grants

S. Buckner presented the 2025 Tourism Grant recommendations.

C. Stice made a motion to approve the Tourism Gives Grants, with the exception of the Large Tourism Related Nonprofits. K. Arnold recused herself from the vote. M. Truett seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

V. Dora made a motion to approve the Tourism Gives Large Tourism Related Nonprofits Grants. C. Stice, N. Burns and M. Truett recused themselves from the vote. K. Arnold seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

3. HCSA Sports Club Grants

C. Daniels presented the sports grants.

K. Arnold made a motion to approve Sports Grants with the addition of the \$1,500 for Cicero Parks, M. Truett seconded. S. Spillman recused himself. No further discussion. Motion passed.

**V. Old Business**

A. Marketing Update

S. Spillman asked to amend the agenda to allow for time. K. Arnold made a motion to amend the agenda. C. Stice seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.

1. Marketing update on International Media Marketplace - TABLED
2. Marketing update on Influencer Strategy - TABLED
3. Fever and Ignite

Ashley Ledford presented an updated Fever collaboration plan that focused more on player social media endorsements of Hamilton County rather than signage at Fever player arrival hallways. Concerns were shared about staff capacity to take on the digital content needed to execute this strategy as well as the return on investment on the \$5,000/post cost and the \$1 million commitment over two years. Discussion ensued about promotions that would not occur on behalf of the county and cities and tourism businesses with the amount of funds directed to a singular marketing program. The board thanked the staff for this exercise in searching for a better plan, however there was no support to move forward with this partnership.

B. Tourism Commission Updates (BEST) - TABLED

C. Noblesville Creates - TABLED

VI. Adjourn until 8:30 a.m., May 2, 2025

N. Burns made a motion to adjourn until Friday, May 2 at 8:30 a.m. M. Truett seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.