HAMILTON COUNTY VISITOR AND CONVENTION COMMISSION
37 E. Main Street, Carmel, IN 46032
Thursday, November 13, 2025

Commission members in attendance: Perry Williams, Sotiris Hji-Avgoustis, Kerstin Sommer Raza, Jamie Hopwood, Rachel Quade, Bob DuBois, Kelly Tabeling, Lisa Hanni, David Boyer, Kevin Walter

Commission members attending online: Sydnee Cseresznyes

Also in attendance: Karen Radcliff, Brad Lynn, Todd Bolster, Sarah Buckner, Chou-il Lee, Megan Baumgartner, Matt Light/Sarah Reed, Jennifer Sommers

I. Welcome and Introductions

J. Hopwood called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

New commission member David Boyer, Assistant County Attorney, Hamilton County was introduced to the group.

The BEST grant recipient guests were introduced to the commission.

II. Review of the Minutes of the August 2025 Meeting

P. Williams made a motion to approve the August 2025 minutes as presented. B. DuBois seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

III. BEST Investment Fund Reports

K. Radcliff invited the BEST grant recipients to provide an update on their projects. The commission heard updates from the City of Fishers, City of Noblesville and Conner Prairie.

A. City of Fishers
M. Baumgartner shared an update on the Fishers Event Center project. The FEC just hit the one-year mark of the opening. 427,000 tickets were sold to 89 events (not including the private events). Only 20% of tickets sold are within Hamilton County. P. Williams inquired if the early projections were met. M. Baumgartner shared they exceeded goals.

B. City of Noblesville
M. Light & S. Reed provided a progress report on the Arena at Innovation Mile, which recently celebrated the grand opening – on time and within budget. 3,600 guests have gone through the building for various events. The Arena was built with the FEC in mind because of the BEST study. Events are booked through 2028. K. Sommer Raza asked how they plan to partner with Ruoff. S. Reed stated they have checked with Ruoff on pre-concert activations and opportunities to co-promote.

C. Conner Prairie
J. Sommers informed on the status of the Conner Prairie Museum Experience Center. First events are tentatively set for late March/early April 2026. Impact cannot yet be measured, but they have measurement tools in place when the experience opens to note increased attendance and dwell time. The commission did not have any questions for Conner Prairie at this time.

D. BEST Financials
B. Lynn shared the tracking document for the BEST Grant Awards financial worksheet, including projections for 2026. B. Lynn made note that if all projects come to fruition, there may be barriers to overcome, however that is not expected. If so, the plan will be revisited.

E. Letters of Notification

K. Radcliff provided details on the remaining projects that came through the BEST program but have not yet received funds. There are no current standards in place for timing on projects, which should now be established and communicated with the following projects:

a. Koteewi Funding Agreement – snow making equipment has not yet been purchased
b. Carmel Union Food Hall LOI – no new progress on this project
c. Forest Park Aquatic Center LOI – no new progress on the fundraising that was required
d. Hamilton County Fairgrounds LOI – they have made progress on the fundraising required for the arena
e. Grand Universe LOI - no new progress has been made for the fundraising requirement
f. Carmel Christkindlmarkt Award but no LOI – award was paused due to restructure of the board/staff/governance

R. Quade moved to authorize Letters of Notification to the entities above, with a deadline to provide updates to the BEST Committee to satisfy award requirements, K. Walters seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

IV. Financial Metrics—CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

A.2025 Tax Report

B. Lynn presented the most up to date 2025 Tax Report. 5% hit the appropriations in September, $1.7 million rollover for next year. The 3% will hit the appropriation amount in December.

B.2025 Tourism Commission Financial Report + 2025 HCT Financial Report

B. Lynn reviewed the department budget updates and then opened for questions on the previously distributed materials. J. Hopwood asked if the remaining marketing funds will cover any holiday campaigns, K. Radcliff shared that

K. Tabeling moved to approve the consent agenda as presented, K. Sommer Raza seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

V. Old Business

A. HCT Audit and 990s Report

B. Lynn presented the audit findings, which was a clean audit. J. Hopwood shared the auditors were impressed with the processes and procedures and thanked the operations team. Reserves policy states we should be at 30%, we are currently at 28% but will hit the 30% at the end of 2025. The same numbers transfer to the 990s. HCVCC Accountants' Compilation Report, which is a clean report.

B. 2026 Tourism Commission Governance

a. Nomination for Treasurer

J. Hopwood shared that the Treasurer position became vacant when J. Russell moved to the Vice President role. S. Cseresznyes is the nomination for the role.

L. Hanni moved to nominate S. Cseresznyes to become the Commission Treasurer for the remainder of the term. K. Tabeling seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

b. Perry Williams retirement

J. Hopwood acknowledged that P. Williams commission term has ended. The commission celebrated and thanked him for his time with the organization. P. Williams commented on his nine years and acknowledged the growth during his tenure.

c. Renew County appointments in portal

K. Radcliff shared with the commission on how to renew their appointments online. J. Hopwood reminded the group that the county appointees will increase at the end of 2026. The City will appoint someone to replace P. Williams throughout 2026.

VI. New Business

A. 2026 HCT Business Plan & Budget Review

K. Radcliff shared the HCT Board approved 2026 plan. Business intelligence and community partnerships will be areas of focus in 2026. Key highlights of the presentation include that a new Data Analyst will be onboarded in 2026, a strategic plan will be completed, a marketing & design transformation, sports & sales support after a 70% growth in sports economic impact, and an emphasis on quality of life. R. Quade encouraged the team to consider an audio tour for the Hubway Trails. The budget for 2026 was shared, the numbers are informed by the plans.

K. Walters made a motion to accept the plan 2026 business plan as presented, R. Quade seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

B. 2026 Tourism Commission Budget

B. Lynn reviewed the 2026 tourism commission budget. If the funds go over, the plan is to request the additional funds during the year of the increase.

K. Sommer Raza made a motion to accept the plan 2026 tourism commission budget as presented, B. DuBois seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

C. 2026 Tourism Commission Meetings Calendar

K. Radcliff shared the 2026 tourism commission meeting calendar.

The commission will meet four times a year, on Thursdays, the dates will be February 19, May 21, August 20, November 19. Calendar invites will be sent out.

R. Quade made a motion to put K. Sommer Raza on the BEST committee. K. Walters seconded. No further discussion, motion passes.

VII. Adjourn until February 19, 2026 at HCT Offices, 37 E. Main Street

K. Tabeling moved to adjourn the meeting, R. Quade seconded. No further discussion, meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.