



**Friday, October 6, 2017**  
**Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.**  
**HCCVB, 37 East Main Street, Carmel, IN 46032**  
**(317) 848-3181**  
**HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**

**Attending the Meeting:** John Hughey, Judi Johnson, Emily Lovison, Bob DuBois, Jeremy Geisendorf, Jimia Smith, Gary Miller, Jeffrey Brown, Andrew Newport and Norman Burns.

**Also attending:**

Staff members Brenda Myers, Karen Radcliff, Tina Rodgers, Ashley Ledford, Betsy Ekelof, Laura Kelner, Sarah Buckner, Sarah Billman; and, Christine Altman, legal counsel.

**I. Welcome**

President John Hughey opened the special meeting of Hamilton County Tourism, Inc. Board of Directors at 8:30 a.m.

**II. Review of the Minutes of the August 2017 Meeting**

J. Hughey then asked for approval of the August 2017 regular meeting minutes.

Jeffrey Brown moved to accept the minutes as presented; Emily Lovison seconded. Motion passed.

**III. Metrics & Finances**

Brenda Myers presented current financial metrics.

**A. Tax Collections**

- \$4,058,942 gross received through October deposit; goal is \$4,811,408
- \$3,840,719 net received through October deposit; goal is \$4,550,000 goal
- Tax revenues w/ 2016 carryover – 4% over appropriations
- Tax revenues w/o 2016 carryover (FYI) – 1% under appropriations
- Estimated year-end additional taxes = + \$140,000

**B. Occupancy Reports**

- 11% more rooms sold through August
- 11.2% more rooms available through August
- 69% occupancy year-to-date
- 64.9% weekday (down 1.5%)

**C. HCT 2017 Budget**

*Heading into Q4 through September*

Expenses 70% at about 75% of the way through the year.

Staff reviewed all categories and identified money not to be spent, which will allow us to support an additional grant request.

**Line Item Transfer Requests** were recommended to help cover phase one of a two-phase grant to the City of Westfield to improve facilities at the Grand Park Event Center and distribute the expenses over two years. They included transfers totaling \$150,000 to Community Development-Special Projects in November to pay in December providing we are tracking as planned. Drawing from:

- \$5,000 Postage (new guide costing less)
- \$35,000 Visitor Experience

- (information wall expensed over multiple years but budgeted 2017)
- \$50,000 Employee Benefits & Wages
- (did not fill a position that left in summer, health care not all used, etc.)
- \$25,000 Marketing (held back projects when concerned over revenue)
- \$5,000 Sales
- \$25,000 Computers/Operations (various, primarily due to expensing)
- \$5,000 Miscellaneous savings throughout the budget

J. Brown moved that the line item transfers be made as requested. Andrew Newport seconded. Motion passed.

#### **D. Dashboard Report**

Tina Rodgers reported that the suggested eligibility language had been added to incentive pay program and sent back to the board after the last meeting. Employees sign that they understand the parameters for the incentive pay program, and this was included. There were no further questions. The next dashboard report for Q3 will be presented at the November meeting.

Norman Burns moved that the financial report be approved as presented. Jimia Smith seconded. Motion passed.

### **IV. Old Business**

#### **A. Building/LOI Update**

K. Radcliff reported that the new building contract proposal came in higher than the budget allows. Also, the common area maintenance was higher than expected. Much discussion took place as to what was most important to HCT and its staff: 1) efficiency; 2) mission focused; or, 3) timing. The Board weighed the options and decided that efficiency would win out over everything and that could be an interim efficiency decision (lease short-term some space as part of a transition or until something optimal opens up), or a stay put until a long-term decision could be made. The Board asked the staff to make its recommendation at the November meeting, and to not wait until February if building was under consideration. N. Burns moved that we reject the contract offer and move forward with the new plans; A. Newport seconded. Motion passed.

#### **B. Kincaid House Update**

- The land owner to the south is in master planning that should be completed by the end of the year; the owner considers the acreage, but not necessarily the house, as part of its property. No terms have been negotiated yet.
- B. Myers asked the board if it would be willing to give cash to a contractor who wants to move the house, if the HCT came out ahead financially. The board agreed that is an option and to consider it available.

#### **C. Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad**

- The railroad operator is exploring purchasing the equipment and leasing it back to the non-profit railroad programming entity, the Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad, Inc.
- The length of rail restoration will be shortened to about 6 miles to reduce risk, lower costs and allow for all things happening south to work themselves out
- This puts the rail restoration costs at about \$200,000
- Banks interested in funding wish to have HCT be a co-signer for the loan to secure it
- B. Myers asked the Board of Directors to agree to co-sign the loan, noting that while the terms are longer (up to 10 years), the total amount of debt service (about \$50K a year) is still less than what has been committed over five years to this project (\$100K annually).
- The HCT Board agreed in principal to co-sign the loan, keeping the loan amount as low as possible to reduce exposure.

#### **D. White River Regional Master Plan**

- B. Myers presented an update on HCT's participation in this ambitious, visionary, creative and expensive plan, noting that she was fundraising to support the goal but that if that fell short, she would come back to the board for additional financial support to ensure this collaboration moves forward.

#### **E. Grand Park Events Center Grant Request**

- B. Myers reminded the Board that they had moved approximately \$150,000 in line-item transfers moved to Community Development Special Projects earlier in the meeting.
- \$138,000 in 2018 budget (to follow)
- Request award \$150,000 of \$313,000 grant request as the work on phase one will begin in 2017 and phase two be complete in 2018
- J. Smith moved that Phase 1 of the grant be authorized as presented; A. Newport seconded. Motion passed.

## **V. New Business**

### **A. 2018 Preview**

- K. Radcliff started the 2018 preview by looking at the Vision 2025 compass and reminding the board that this living document serves as the inspirational guide for all the departmental planning.
- Each department then presented its 2018 planning goals, which will be formalized for the Board in a 2018 Business Plan. These goals help inform the budget.
- The 2018 preview then ended with B. Myers presenting the draft budget and noting changes in the budget informed by the planning just reviewed.
- B. Myers also presented a draft reserves policy plan for the Board to review for potential approval at the next meeting.
- There were no questions, and J. Hughey asked the Board to review the plan when sent to them, and the budget for final approval in November, the last meeting of the year.

### **VI. Department Updates**

- The department update for marketing was handed out for reading.

### **VII. Adjournment**

E. Lovison moved that the meeting be adjourned at 10:30 a.m. Jeremy Geisendorf seconded. Motion passed.