

ENTERTAINMENT AND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
September 30, 2020

A Regular Board Meeting was held Wednesday, September 30th, 2020 via Zoom.

Board Members Present: Chair Karen Pionk, Vice Chair Pat Mullen, Secretary Lynne Williams, Roz Randorf, Martha Bremer, Peter Singler, Mary Finnegan, Laura Mullen, Bill Nelson, Don Ness, Carrie Heffernan

DECC Staff Present: Roger Reinert, Caty Kaups, Renae Matt, Jeff Stark, Mary Sullivan, Steve Rankila, Wade Abrahamson, Sue Ellen Moore

Others Present: Steve Hanke – Duluth City Attorney and Media

CALL TO ORDER and QUORUM: Pionk called the meeting to order at 11:32 AM. A quorum of directors was present.

The Board took time to make introductions and welcome new board member, Laura Mullen.

MOTION: Pionk reviewed the agenda and Nelson made a motion to approve. Bremer seconded. The agenda was approved unanimously.

MOTION: Mullen made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the regular meeting on August 26, 2020 and a special meeting on September 11, 2020. Randorf seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Finance Report

Caty Kaups [Finance Director] notified the Board that the last payment of \$100,000 from the MN Historical Society Legacy Grant for the painting of the William A. Irvin was received. An overview was given of the August financials, as well as a 9-month budget outlook which covered the COVID-19 saliva testing site, significant staffing changes, and tenant payment schedules.

Heffernan joined at 11:40 AM.

The Board took time to discuss part-time staffing expenses, unemployment liability, and the “We Have the Space” campaign. There was discussion on Bentleyville and their plan for queuing cars without using the DECC parking lot. The Board took additional time to discuss the check run.

MOTION: Finnegan made a motion to approve the August 2020 Finance Report and check run. Singler seconded and the motion carried.

Committee Reports

Finance: The Finance Committee reported that they now have a regular monthly meeting scheduled. They have been reviewing finances closely and will be focusing on capital expenses, parking rates, the purchasing process, and the City Council budget presentation.

Governance: The Governance Committee reported that they will be meeting monthly and working in subcommittees. They are reviewing the DECC’s Mission Statement, the orientation process for new board members, policies, and potential legislation changes.

Personnel: The Personnel Committee reported that three proposals have been received to organize an executive director search. An overview was given regarding each and it was stated that they will hold any further action until given the directive from the Executive Committee.

Executive: The Executive Committee reported that they met with three executive committee members from Visit Duluth with Noah Schuchman as acting facilitator to review common goals and principles between the organizations. Additional meetings have been scheduled to continue conversations and the Executive Committee requests that any search for an executive director be on hold until there is a better understanding between the DECC and Visit Duluth.

There was discussion on the possibility of drafting the annual strategic plan in sections and working within smaller groups to bring back to the full board for review.

Additionally, it was reported that the rescindment period for Chelly Townsend's separation agreement has expired, making the agreement final as of September 26, 2020.

Staff Reports

Interim Executive Director: Roger Reinert reported that the current operations staff has been organized into two groups. The Internal Operations Team led by Steve Rankila is focusing on the maintenance and preservation of the fiscal assets and the External Operations Team led by Jeff Stark is focusing on how to use those assets in innovative ways to bring in earned revenue.

The Board was given an update on the payment arrangement with Vista Fleet, the status of an outstanding invoice at Fraser Shipyards, and ongoing conversations regarding utility expenses at MN Power. It was added that UMD has agreed to pay \$105,000 as an advance to their 2021 lease agreement.

There was additional discussion on the potential for off-site learning labs for students and other potential revenue opportunities.

The Board was notified of two additional full-time furloughs that went into effect last week. Additionally, the process has begun to notify almost 400 currently furloughed employees of a permanent layoff.

The Board was informed that the City Council made approved the City Attorney Office to offer limited legal support as well as legislative support for potential federal funding. The City Attorney Office will review the Ticketmaster renewal contract before moving forward with its execution.

The Board took some time to discuss these reported updates and changes.

External Operations: Jeff Stark [Director of Venue Operations] gave an update on the COVID-19 saliva testing site and answered questions related to this event. Mary Sullivan [Director of Event Planning] gave an overview on the results of recent conferences held at the DECC, the first since the closure due to the pandemic. She also answered questions related to the Catering Policy and future event bookings.

Internal Operations: Steve Rankila [Director of Building Maintenance] gave an overview of equipment and systems that are in need of repairs and how the team is working to prioritize the necessary updates. Wade Abrahamson [Chief Engineer] briefly updated the Board on the fifty-four year old transformer and the needed chiller upgrade. The Board took some time to discuss these systems and estimated costs.

Old Business

No report.

New Business

City Attorney Agreement: An agreement with the City Attorney Office was reviewed and there was an introduction of Steve Hanke [Attorney with the City of Duluth]. There was discussion regarding the differences and similarities in the agreements with other Authorities and clarification on how the expense compares to outsourced legal counsel.

MOTION: Randorf made a motion to approve of Reinert moving forward with the City Attorney Agreement. Williams seconded. The motion carried.

Policy Drafts: The Board reviewed the draft of the **Data Practices Policies** and took some time to discuss information related to requests. It was determined that the Governance Committee would review these policies and how they relate to the employment policies, then bring it forward for approval at the October meeting.

Williams logged off at 1:07 PM.

An overview was given on the **Public Use of Space Policy**. A recommendation was made for Reinert to work with the Personnel Committee, then potentially other Committee Chairs, to initiate focuses on the Strategic Plan draft.

Mullen logged off at 1:10 PM.

Public Access of Board Information: It was requested to have the DECC staff review what type of information could be posted on the website for public access and bring a recommendation to the Board in October.

ADJOURNMENT: Bremer made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Singler. The meeting adjourned at 1:12 PM.

Upcoming Meetings

Next board meeting will be a regular meeting on October 28, 2020 at 11:30 AM. Location to be determined.

Minutes reported by Renae Matt, Executive Assistant.

Submitted by:

Karen Pionk, Chair

Lynne Williams, Secretary