

DULUTH ENTERTAINMENT AND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
November 30, 2020

A Special Board Meeting was held Monday, November 30th, 2020 via Zoom.

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

DECC Staff Present: Roger Reinert, Renae Matt

Others Present: Guests Steve Hanke, Noah Schuchman – City of Duluth, Guests Anna Tanski, Jessica Stauber, Jason Vincent, Brianna Vander Heyden – Visit Duluth, Members of the Public, and Media

CALL TO ORDER and QUORUM: Pionk called the meeting to order at 11:33 AM. A quorum of directors was present.

The Board took time to acknowledge those in attendance.

Singler and Finnegan joined at 11:34 AM.

AGENDA ITEM

DECC and Visit Duluth Working Group Report Discussion: Each Board member was given time to share their perspectives regarding the report that had been presented to them from the DECC and Visit Duluth Working Group during the regular meeting on November 18th.

Heffernan joined at 11:37 AM.

Board members took time to discuss their perspectives, review the pros and cons of the proposed joint operating agreement, and show appreciation to the working group for the time they have devoted to this process. Several members shared support of the proposed joint operating plan while others brought forward concerns. Some agreed there was not enough access to data or sufficient time to review the plan thoroughly. Conversations seemed to support both sides and the consensus was that more discussion and information was needed.

Questions were brought forward about the details of the agreement. It was stated that, should the Board vote to approve the joint operating agreement, the proposed transition team would be responsible for reviewing operational details, such as staffing considerations. The transition team would then bring recommendations to the Board. The Board took time to discuss the process of searching for and hiring a permanent executive director and how this may play into the decision and timeline of the joint operating agreement.

The Board took time to hear from Reinert, Tanski, and Schuchman to consider their perspectives of the proposed joint operating agreement. The Board was then given time to direct questions to Schuchman, members of the Visit Duluth Board, and consider the perspectives of Visit Duluth's community partners.

A request was brought forward asking for additional time to review the proposal and to assign a transition team, prior to holding a vote, to pull hard data and introduce a more detailed recommendation to the Board. There was also discussion regarding the enabling legislative language, the options that are available regarding this potential agreement, and how it relates to the current DECC operations.

The Board took time to get clarification on what the next steps would be, should the DECC Board and Visit Duluth Board vote against moving forward with the proposed joint operating agreement. Additionally, there was a request for clarification on what the Board was specifically being asked to vote on, and whether or not it was necessary to hold the scheduled special meeting on December 2nd.

There was additional discussion on allowing a transition team to move forward compiling data right away, and hold the vote until the December 30th. The Board discussed who should be on the transition team at this phase and it was agreed it should be board members only at this time. A request was made to have a rough draft of the joint operating agreement and additional hard data on sales, cost savings, and additional considerations.

There was a recommendation to have the current working group to do this work instead of assigning a transition team since the working group is familiar with the details of the agreement as they have already been a part of this process and have the base knowledge. A request was made for board members to send any questions they would like answered to the working group as soon as possible.

It was generally agreed that the working group would compile the information and send a draft, or key points, of the proposed joint operating agreement to the full board by December 23rd for review. Board members agreed they would postpone the scheduled vote on December 2nd to be held during the regular meeting on December 30th.

There was question whether the scheduled special meeting on December 2nd should be canceled.

MOTION: Ness made a motion to have the Executive Committee re-evaluate the need to meet on December 2nd after Visit Duluth was able to hold their board meeting. Singler seconded and the motion carried.

The Board took time to discuss the upcoming Visit Duluth Board Meeting and it was agreed that a recap would be sent to DECC Board Members after the meeting, as well as a notification if the December 2nd meeting would be canceled.

ADJOURN: Pionk adjourned the meeting at 1:19 PM.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 2nd at 11:30 AM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for December 30, 2020 at 11:30 AM via Zoom.

Minutes reported by Renae Matt, Executive Assistant.

Submitted by:

Karen Pionk, Chair

Lynne Williams, Secretary