



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, January 20, 2021

NOTE: DUE TO THE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS CAUSED BY COVID-19, THE JANUARY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED AS A VIRTUAL MEETING

Commissioners Present: Amish Das, Vice Chair; Lauren Becker, Secretary/Treasurer; Miles Greathouse; Sherricka Day; Dan Gilbert; Donna Hix; Marianne Richter; and Jamie Waters.

Commissioners Absent: Mamie Pound

Special Invitees: Timothy Bragg, Cunningham Center; Amy Bryan, Columbus Chamber of Commerce; Helena Coates, Uptown Columbus; Norm Easterbrook, RiverCenter for the Performing Arts; Pace Halter, W.C. Bradley Real Estate/Power House; Merri Sherman, Columbus Sports Council; Hayley Tillery, Columbus Convention & Trade Center; Holly Wait, National Civil War Naval Museum at Port Columbus; and Ed Wolverton, Uptown Columbus.

Staff Present: Peter Bowden, Carter Flynn, Shelby Guest, Andrea Smith, and Carrie Beth Wallace, and Ashley Woitena.

Call to Order..... Peter Bowden

- The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Peter Bowden, as this was the first meeting of the New Year and officers have yet to be elected.
 - Mr. Bowden began by welcoming newly appointed Board members, Sherricka Day and Dan Gilbert.
- At this point, Mr. Bowden reminded the Board that in November 2020, they were presented with a slate of officers for 2021. He then asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. There being none, he presented the nominations of Amish Das as Chair, Lauren Becker as Vice Chair, and Jamie Waters as Secretary/Treasurer. A motion to approve the slate of officers was made by Marianne Richter and was seconded by Jamie Waters. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.
- Mr. Bowden then closed the meeting and turned it over the Amish Das.

Call to Order..... Amish Das

- The meeting was called to order by Amish Das where he asked for the minutes and financials to be presented to reviewed. He reminded the Board that there had been no December meeting and that minutes from the November meeting along with financials for both November and December needed to be approved.

Approval of Minutes & Financials Jamie Waters

- Jamie Waters asked the Board members present if there were any questions regarding the minutes from the November meeting. There being none, a motion was made by Lauren Becker to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Jamie Waters. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved.
- Mr. Waters then went over the financials for November 2020, discussing changes reflected in the Balance Sheet, reviewed the hotel/motel tax income, and highlighted the net/loss for the month. He then asked if there were any specific items needing to be discussed concerning the financials and hearing none, he called for a vote to approve. Miles Greathouse made a motion to accept the financials as presented. Lauren Becker seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

He then reviewed the same details for the December 2020 financials, asked for any questions or items that might need further explanation and there being none, he called for a motion to approve. Marianne Richter made the motion to approve and was seconded by Jamie Waters. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Chair’s Report Amish Das

- **Welcome New Board Members**
 - Mr. Das took the opportunity to welcome new Board members Sherricka Day and Dan Gilbert to the Board. Each took a few moments to introduce themselves and share why they are excited to serve. Other Board members, special invited guests, and CVB staff introduced themselves to Ms. Day and Mr. Gilbert.
 - Mr. Das also reminded each Board member to read the Conflict of Interest Agreement and the Board Agreement. He explained that each of these documents needed to be signed and sent to Peter Bowden to be placed in Board records.

President’s Report..... Peter Bowden

- **FY 2020 Impact Analysis**
 - Mr. Bowden began his report with an update on the tourism impact analysis for Columbus for FY 20. He reminded the Board that each year staffs work with Columbus State University’s (CSU) School of Research where they produce a destination analysis, which indicates how VisitColumbus and tourism has performed. VisitColumbus concentrates on Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to include visitation, visitor spending, jobs, household savings, etc. Mr. Bowden shared the latest numbers produced by CSU and explained even with the effects of COVID-19, KPIs still yielded positive results: 1.9 million visitors, \$266 million in local visitor spending, more than 3400 jobs supported, \$88 million in estimated payroll, and more than \$32 million in sales & lodging tax revenue. Conversely, as part of his report, Mr. Bowden also discussed the reality the pandemic has had on tourism in Columbus. Visitation numbers are now back to what they were in FY 18. The economic impact is even more jolting with visitor spending levels being less than what they were prior to FY 2005, meaning the industry lost over 15 years of economic growth due to the pandemic —with most of this impact happening in the last 4 months of FY 20.
- **Tourism Recovery Plan (TRP) Update**
 - Shelby Guest gave an update and overview of Phase One of the TRP, to include a discussion on the upcoming virtual press tour for travel writers, as well as a report from Carrie Beth Wallace on how our social media channels have performed. (See attached for complete presentation.)

- Ashley Woitena delved into Phase Two of the TRP, focusing on the status of the meetings/conventions/group market segments and how they are trending and how staff is (and will) marketing to these groups, especially working with Digital Edge and the program they have developed marketing specifically to these segments. (See attached for complete presentation.)
- After these presentations, Mr. Bowden thanked the staff for not only compiling and sharing this information with the Board, but to the staff as a whole for their dedication and hard work during this time.

Other Business Group

- Mr. Bowden let the Board know the CVB would be honoring Cameron Bean for his 6+ years of service to this Board with a token of our appreciation. A gift has been purchased and the CVB will set up a time to present this to him when appropriate.

Adjournment Amish Das

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.