



# VisitColumbusGA

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
Wednesday, May 17, 2023

**Commissioners Present;** Lauren Becker, Chair; Jamie Waters, Vice Chair; Miles Greathouse, Secretary/Treasurer; Amy Bryan, Sherricka Day, Dan Gilbert, Pace Halter, Michelle Spivey, Mayor Skip Henderson

**Commissioners Absent:** Peter Jones

**Special Invitees:** Norm Easterbrook, RiverCenter for the Performing Arts; Haley Tillery, Columbus GA Convention & Trade Center; Merri Sherman, Columbus Sports Council; Ed Wolverton, Uptown Columbus, Inc.

**Staff Present:** Peter Bowden, Shelby Guest, Kim Gonzalez, and Ashley Woitena

**Call to Order ..... Lauren Becker**

- The May 2023 meeting was called to order by Lauren Becker at 3:30 pm.
- Ms. Becker introduced special guest, Paul Pierce with the Springer Opera House.

**Approval of Minutes & Financials ..... Miles Greathouse**

- Miles Greathouse presented the consent agenda which included minutes for the April 2023 meeting, as well as financials for April 2023. He asked if there were any questions or discussion. There being none, a motion was made by Jamie Waters to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Sherricka Day. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

**Chair’s Report..... Lauren Becker**

- Ms. Becker then asked Mr. Pierce to come forward. Mr. Pierce explained the importance of the Columbus Cultural Arts Alliance and its relationship with VisitColumbusGa. He complimented the staff for its management of its resources which includes overseeing a tourism related arts grant which is administered once a year and how the grants are used for programming to attract tourists to the area. Peter Bowden, President-CEO of VisitColumbus, added that over \$4 million in grants have been awarded over the years.
- Ms. Becker then recognized the staff for their efforts to recognize the hospitality industry during National Tourism Week. She explained that “tourism works here” signs were placed at attractions and hotels to remind the community that tourism is a part of economic development

in Columbus and that those businesses are a part of that work. Staff also teamed up with Franks Alley to provide lunch Wednesday through Friday to the community.

**President’s Report.....Peter Bowden**

- Next, Ms. Becker turned the meeting over to Peter Bowden. Mr. Bowden asked Ashley Woitena to review the portion of the Sales Report – Tentative & Definite Booking. This review of reports is a continuation from the last few months to help break down staff’s various reports included in the board packet to help the board have a better understanding of what is tracked for the destination and why.
- Mr. Bowden gave an update on the Destination Research that is currently being conducted by Gray Research Solutions. Overall the research is 75% complete with the final report expected to be delivered by Fall 2023.
- Shelby Guest then provided commentary on the travel writers which have visited and those still yet to come to Columbus for year. Ms. Guest spoke about all the positive feedback received from writers and earned media the destination has received.

**Other Business.....Group**

- Ms. Becker informed the board that the June meeting would be the Columbus Museum to include a hard-hat tour of Museum’s renovation.

**Adjournment.....Lauren Becker**

With no further business, Ms. Becker adjourned the meeting at 4:19 p.m.