



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
Wednesday, November 17, 2021

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Donna Hix, Mamie Pound, Mayor Skip Henderson

**Special Invitees:** Cyndy Cerbin, National Infantry Museum; Merri Sherman, Columbus Sports Council; Hayley Tillery, Columbus GA Convention & Trade Center; Holly Wait, National Civil War Naval Museum; Ed Wolverton, Uptown Columbus

**Staff Present:** Peter Bowden, Shelby Guest, Ashley Woitena

**Special Guest:** Andy Redmond/National Civil War Naval Museum

**Call to Order ..... Amish Das**

- The meeting, held at the Columbus Convention & Trade Center, was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair, Amish Das.

**Approval of Minutes & Financials ..... Jamie Waters**

- Mr. Das reminded the Board approval of Minutes & Financials is by way of a consent agenda.
- Mr. Waters then reviewed the consent agenda and asked the Board if there were any specific items from either the minutes or the financials needing additional discussion. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. A motion to approve was made by Miles Greathouse and was seconded Lauren Becker. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

**FY 2021 Audit..... Amish Das**

- Mr. Das introduced Bo Taber with Robinson, Grimes & Co., CPA to present the annual fiscal 2021 audit. Mr. Taber reviewed the audit report with the Board and asked for any questions or comments. There being none, he deferred to Mr. Das to call for a vote to approve. There being no discussion, a motion was made by Lauren Becker to approve the audit as presented and it was seconded by Miles Greathouse. A vote was taken, and the audit was approved.

**Chair's Report..... Amish Das**

- For this month’s Stakeholder Spotlight, Mr. Das introduced Andy Redmond, Executive Vice President of the National Infantry Museum for an update on the impact of COVID-19 on the facility and precautions taken during the pandemic. Mr. Redmond went over the mission of the museum, its history, attendance (pre-pandemic as compared to current), discussed COVID timeline, etc. He also mentioned the facility is scheduled for a full public re-opening on November 23, returning to normal operating hours. He also highlighted annual public events to include paver dedications (Memorial and Veterans Days), FreedomFest, the 1775 Society Gala, and the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Rededication. He concluded with citing recent accolades the Museum has received including the Best Free Museum in the Country, as well as Best History Museum.
- Mr. Das provided an update on the American Rescue Plan Funding. He stated that VisitColumbusGA is still working with the Columbus Consolidated Government on when funds may be available to help with the losses incurred during the pandemic.
- The final items on the Chair’s Report included a reminder that the Board normally does not meet in December, with the Board agreeing to follow this schedule; consideration for a nominating committee for Board vacancies for calendar 2022; and a special thank you to Marianne Richter, departing Board member and her service for the past six years.

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

- First on the agenda was a presentation from Film Commissioner Joel Slocumb with an update on projects with the film & entertainment industry in Columbus. He explained that none of the projects that took place since this past April did not require use of Film Fund grant.
  - Projects pending for Columbus include a film based on a college campus, telling the story of an occurrence in the 1970’s
  - A possible project with developer Robert Starling highlighting Horace King and John Godwin—with the working title of *Bridge Builders*. Mr. Starling has been in Columbus for site visits.
  - Mr. Slocumb also spoke about the recent site visit with a group out of Austin, TX who are looking to do an animated series based on the collection of “Brave Books.”
  - He also touched on the upcoming filming of the Very Vera Show, which is currently broadcast in 14 markets with 17 million viewers. The Columbus schedule calls for her to film at several local restaurants, highlight other aspects of the city, along with a prize giveaway. The show is slated to air April 23 & 24, 2022 and repeat 6 months later.
  - Other items of discussion included creating and updating the current marketing plan, the search for a marketing representative, the recent site visit with Michael Feifer, producer, writer and director, a project with Jeep Nation TV, and a discussion about music and digital entertainment.
- The next item was an update from Peter Bowden on the Annual Visitor Analysis and the impact of the COVID-19 on the tourism industry in Columbus. Visitation numbers are trending up with other numbers/categories following.

- Mr. Bowden then asked Ashley Woitena for a recap of the recent announcement from the Georgia Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus (GACVB). Ms. Woitena explained to the Board that Columbus had been awarded and will host the 2022 GACVB Annual Meeting (January 31-Feb 2). The Conference will include approximately 150 attendees. GACVB Executive Director Jay Markwalter has already conducted a site visit to begin the planning process.

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

- Cyndy Cerbin (National Infantry Museum) was recognized as this is her last meeting due to a move out of state; Hayley Tillery (Trade Center) introduced her new Director of Sales; and Ed Wolverton (Uptown Columbus) gave an update on upcoming projects and events.

**Adjournment.....Amish Das**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.