



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
Wednesday, September 15, 2021

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Mayor Skip Henderson; Donna Hix; and Mamie Pound

**Special Invitees:** Norm Easterbrook, RiverCenter for the Performing Arts; and Hayley Tillery, Columbus GA Convention & Trade Center

**Staff Present:** Peter Bowden; Carter Flynn; and Ashley Woitena;

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

- The meeting, held at the Columbus Convention & Trade Center, was called to order at 3:34 p.m. by Chair, Amish Das.

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

- Mr. Das reminded the Board that the approval of the Minutes & Financials is by way of a consent agenda.
- Jamie Waters then presented the consent agenda for Board approval, asking 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 was made by Miles Greathouse and was seconded by Sherricka Day. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.
- Mr. Waters then asked President-CEO Peter Bowden to present a revised the FY 2022 Budget.
- Mr. Bowden gave a report regarding how revenue was outpacing what had been original projections The revision included reinstating employee benefits and compensation that impacted staff during the beginning of COVID-19. Mr. Bowden also reported on the savings from a new premium in health benefits, and an increase in staff budget from a contracted employee. He reminded the board of a \$50,000 commitment for co-op grants and that based on current funding sources the adjustment should not adversely affect the revised budget and that staff would continue to monitor expenses against revenue. A motion for approval was made by Miles Greathouse and seconded by Marianne Richter. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

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

- For this month's Stakeholder Spotlight, Mr. Das introduced Shawn Cruzen, PhD., Director of the Coca-Cola Space Science Center for an update on the impact of COVID-19 on the facility, precautions taken during the pandemic, and the property's three-phase approach to re-opening safely. Dr. Cruzen also discussed virtual activities and guided tours the Center was able to take advantage of during the pandemic.

- Mr. Bowden then gave a report on behalf of Merri Sherman of the Columbus Sports Council. The Sports Council has offered to take on VisitColumbusGA’s financial ask for the annual Fountain City Classic to include a \$5,000 contribution to the Sports Council from VisitColumbus to increase the Sports Council’s total sponsorship package. A motion for approval was made by Miles Greathouse and seconded by Dan Gilbert. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.
- Mr. Das reported that the FY 2021 audit was underway.
- Next on the agenda was an update on the American Rescue Plan Funding. Mr. Das explained that the staff continues to work with the Columbus Consolidated Government on a plan to receive ARF for VisitColumbusGA.

**Staff Report..... Peter Bowden**

- Mr. Das then asked President-CEO, Peter Bowden to present the Staff Report.
  - First was an update on the status of the Meetings and Conventions market. Ashley Waitena, Senior, Vice President, presented data and research noting that trends show that most meeting planners are ready to get back to in-person events. Ms. Waitena then presented a new film that VisitColumbusGA has made in conjunction with Northstar and its meetings and convention program of work.
  - Mr. Bowden then invited the Board to the September Film Commission Quarterly Meeting presented by VisitColumbusGA.
  - Mr. Bowden also explained that would be presenting to City Council at its Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. An invitation was extended to everyone present to attend that meeting.

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

- No Other Business discussed

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

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.