

Columbus Sports & Entertainment Authority

Minutes

April 13, 2026 • 1:00 pm

Columbus Civic Center, Hospitality Suites

400 4th St, Columbus, GA 31901

ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members Present – Andy G. Luker (Chair), Robert L. Wadkins Jr. (Vice Chair), Ashley Woitena (Secretary), Herman E. Lewis, Jr (Treasurer), Morgan Moore, Mike Welch, Jim Rutland, and Gerald Miley.

Voting Members Absent – Will Taylor

Ex-Officio Members Present – Charles Auer, Lt. Kelly Phillips, Assistant Director Jeremy Miles, Director Holli Browder (Teams Meeting), and Jeff Croop

Ex-Officio Members Absent – Deputy City Manager Lisa Goodwin & Director Ryan Pruett

Visitor(s) Present: Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge (Teams Meeting)

1. Call to Order

- Andy Luker, Chair, called the meeting at 1:02 pm.

2. Roll Call

- Authority Department Secretary – Zeanne Abano, Civic Center

3. Approval of Minutes

- Minutes for March 9, 2026, approved. Mike Welch made the motion. Robert Wadkins second.

4. Management Plan Discussion Options: Executive Director vs. Private Management Firm

- The Board took turns to bring in their opinion about the management plan option. Majority lean towards hiring an executive director for long-term vision, community engagement, and control.
- Gerald made the motion to move forward with Executive Director route for management plan. Ashley second.
- Private management firms offer faster ramp-up and industry expertise but may reduce control and community connection.
- Concerns about maintenance responsibilities and capital improvements under private management.
- RFP process needed for management firm; Executive Director route seen as quicker and more familiar approach.
- Five search firms contacted the executive director to search for proposals. The Board favored Prodigy Search – National Sports & Entertainment Firm; agreed to work within budget, charging 30% of first year's fund.
- Avoiding RFP process preferred to expedite hiring; RFP could be delayed by six months.
- Previous directors' search was done internally without a search firm; no successful hire resulted.

5. RFP Needs:

- Discussed issuing an RFP for 4 AC units and a concrete slab, estimated around \$100,000.
- Concern over high cost for concrete slab; need detailed specs for accurate RFP.
- Current AC units are over 30 years old; they aim to start replacement process with RFP pricing.
- Kanise Wiggins estimated total replacement cost of nearly \$400,000.
- Specs for concrete slab (size, thickness, material) requested but not yet received.

6. Events Update:

- Kanise coordinated early meetings with the Sheriff's Department, Clingstones Team, Parks & Rec team for the yearly event planning for ingress and egress traffic.
- Tickets provide event seating; SEA badges allow venue all access and event observation.
- Ticket requests will be prioritized for the Board members before public sales upon email request.
- Multiple promoters have reach out; one of them is BPC (Black Promoters Collective) considering a return with successful past shows.
- Upcoming events include Misbehaved Circus (May 28 – June 7), MercyMe Fall Tour with Awakening events (October), WWE (June), Monster Trucks pending due to hockey schedule.
- Recent events like Spring Fling had high attendance during the week with over 10,000 + attendees, minor traffic complaints, recommendation for more law enforcement for traffic control during large events.
- Positive feedback on traffic management from law enforcement during the opening weekend (with Clingstones, Spring Fling and Softball tournaments)
- Kanise provided the Board with an example of a Promoter Tech pack that provides general information about Columbus Civic Center. The Board suggested to improve photo quality in promotional materials for better presentation to promoters, correction in wording (Fort Moore to Fort Benning).

7. Public Comment – Jack Rosenhammer, Dragons Den Pro Shop

- Women's hockey events are growing, including Columbus Classic with 12 teams in October. Ice Rink attracts out-of-state visitors like New York, enhancing sports profile.
- Question brought up to the Board considering in putting a budget for Ice Rink upgrade like lockers to accommodate hockey teams during competition or practice.

8. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm. Morgan made the motion. Gerald second.

Minutes Recorded by: Zeanne Abano, Civic Center, Authority Department Secretary

*Next meeting is scheduled for **Monday, May 11, 2026, at 1:00 pm.***

Columbus Civic Center, Hospitality Suites, 400 4th St, Columbus, GA 31901