

**MINUTES**  
**ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**  
**PUBLIC MEETING OF THE**  
**COMMISSION AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**Friday, November 13, 2015**  
**8:00/9:00 a.m.**  
**Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
**219 Caravan Drive**  
**Elkhart, IN 46514**

**PRESENT:** Ms. B. Ronzone, Commission  
Mr. S. Baker, Commission  
Mr. D. Boecher, Commission  
Mr. A. Patel, Commission  
Ms. G. Patel, Commission  
Mr. D. Shoup, Commission  
Mr. D. Bearss, Board of Directors  
Ms. E. Billey, Board of Directors  
Ms. K. Clarke, Board of Directors  
Mr. B. Hoffer, Board of Directors  
Mr. L. King, Board of Directors  
Ms. D. Lawson, Executive Director  
Ms. J. Hughes, Staff Recorder

**ABSENT:** Mr. R. Jenkins, Commission  
Mr. J. Siegmann, Board of Directors

I. Ms. Ronzone called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

II. **Motion to approve minutes of the September 2015 meeting was made by Mr. King and seconded by Ms. Billey. A vote was taken and motion passed with all in favor.**

III. Ms. Clarke presented the Financial Report for the period ending October 31, 2015. She reported cash of \$900,000 and noted receivables are on target and liabilities are minimal. Although the organization has received its budget allowance for 2015 she reported that the financial situation is good through the year and into January.

**Ms Billey moved to approve the Financial Report as presented. Mr. Shoup seconded. A vote was taken and passed with all in favor.**

IV. Ms. Ronzone presented nominations for 2016 ECCV Commission officers: President, Ms. B. Ronzone; Vice President, Mr. D. Shoup; Secretary/Treasurer, Mr. R. Jenkins

**Mr. Shoup moved to close nominations for 2016 officers of the ECCV Commission. Mr. Patel seconded. A vote of the Commission was taken and nominations were closed with all in favor.**

- V. Mr. Hoffer presented nominations for the 2016 officers for the Board of Directors: President, Mr. L. King; Vice President, Ms. E. Billey; Secretary/Treasurer, Ms. K. Clarke

**Mr. Bearss moved to close nominations for the 2016 officers for the Board of Directors. Ms. Clarke seconded. A vote of the Board of Directors was taken and nominations closed with all in favor.**

- VI. Bureau Update was presented by Ms. Lawson the October Board Report was distributed.

Economy – Area hotels are doing well and travelers on the Indiana Toll Road continue to be a crucial segment. The Toll Road will be working on travel plazas in 2016 that should have positive advantages for Exit 92. The CVB will be utilizing new tools to talk to this audience about Exit 92 and alert travelers to special offers, etc. – moving ahead while still keeping traditional channels of communication with this audience.

In 2016 the CVB will be testing new tools including tracking preferences of visitors to our website and customizing website experience to their interests. What we're doing will be clearly communicated in the 2016 Business Plan.

Community Foundation – The CVB and the Community Foundation are collaborating in partnerships with downtowns. All downtowns are focusing on future enhancements, growth and retention, and all are in need of paid staff. Currently there are no directors and management is the responsibility of volunteer boards. As sponsors of this endeavor, the CVB and the Community Foundation will be at the table to oversee progress.

Vibrant Communities – This is the next phase of Horizon 3.0. The Elkhart Chamber intends to take the lead working with Project Next. The CVB's position as advocate has put us in a good place. Trust is key.

Regional Cities – Everyone involved has worked hard on this project. Recently representatives of the seven applying regions went to Indianapolis to present their proposals to authorities to be evaluated. Our region with representatives from Elkhart, St. Joseph and Marshall Counties had the largest group attending. Currently our region, Ft. Wayne and Evansville are in the final three. If selected, our region should be ready when funds are ready.

Economic Development Corporation – Mark Dobson is the new CEO of the EDC. He was once a St. Joseph County commissioner and CEO of their chamber of commerce. Most recently he was the CEO of the Kosciusko County Chamber of Commerce. He understands what the CVB does and wants to have a collaborative relationship with us.

New Administrations – Every city in the county will have a new mayor in 2016. We anticipate changes yet positive working relationships with all the new administrations. Overall all the communities are ready to be collaborative.

VII. Other business –

Ms. Lawson stated that she has been contacted by the director of the Ft. Wayne CVB concerning a collaboration of Indiana CVBs not under the uniform law to collectively seek an increase in the innkeeper's tax. Ft. Wayne has had contact with the chair of Ways & Means who encouraged and would support the action to go forward in the upcoming short session. This is not part of the state's uniform legislation and there are approximately 16 counties that would be involved. Although the ECCVB does not currently need to seek an increase, the advantage is that the CVB would not have to go in individually if needed in the future. We have not pursued an increase for many years, and it is not an easy endeavor.

Ms. Lawson sought feedback from the Commission and Board relative to their position on this. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that further discussion was needed. It was decided that those interested should get together later to discuss at length.

VIII. The next regular meeting was set for January 8, 2016.

IX. Mr. Bearss moved for adjournment. Mr. Shoup seconded. The motion passed and meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Submitted by:  
Jackie Hughes  
Staff Recorder