

MINUTES
ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
COMMISSION AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Friday, September 11, 2015
8:00/9:00 a.m.
Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau
219 Caravan Drive
Elkhart, IN

PRESENT: Ms. B. Ronzone, Commission
Mr. D. Boecher, Commission
Mr. A. Patel, Commission
Ms. G. Patel, Commission
Mr. R. Jenkins, 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. S. Baker, 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 May 2015 meeting was made by Ms. Billey and seconded by Mr. Shoup. A vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.**
- III. Ms. Clarke presented the Financial Report for the period ending August 31, 2015. She noted that year-to-date room tax revenues amounted to \$1,445,380 and reminded that group that the final revenue payment from the county will come in September. The Travel Guide income totaled \$193,000 which reflects 100% collections. The Travel Guide pays for itself with a net profit between \$70,000 and \$80,000. Expenses are on target with the budget. Referring to the balance sheet Ms. Clarke reported \$1,000,000 in cash with receivables in line with projections.

Discussion ensued on the positive economic impact of RV rallies in the area and the fact that although there are larger rallies happening in the nation our destination is currently at its maximum capacity.

Discussion also ensued on Notre Dame Games and the effect St. Joseph County's increased capacity may be having on Elkhart County hotel properties for home games. Consideration on how to address this may be needed in the future.

Mr. Hoffer moved to approve the Financial Report as presented. Ms. Patel seconded. A vote was taken to approve the Financial Report and passed unanimously.

V. Bureau Update was presented by Ms. Lawson, and the August Board Report was distributed.

Advocacy: More commission and board members are encouraged to attend the advocacy breakfast discussions that take place on the 4th Wednesday of each month, 7:30am, at Granma's House of Pancakes.

Budget and Salaries: Ms. Lawson announced that Ms. J. Hughes will be retiring from the ECCVB at the end of the year. The job description is changing to that of a Communications Director with responsibilities in several different areas coming under one person. We have candidates and one in particular that the CVB would like to have in place by the end of October for familiarization and training. Ms. Lawson requested approval for an increase in the CVBs salary line item for the remainder of 2015 to accommodate additional staff for this time period.

Mr. Hoffer moved on behalf of the Board of Directors to approve an increase in the 2015 salary line item to allow for the transition of staff and training of a new employee. Mr. Bearss seconded. A vote of the Board was taken and passed with all in favor.

Mr. Boecher moved on behalf of the Commission to approve an increase in the 2015 salary line item to allow for the transition of staff and training period for a new employee. A vote of the Commission was taken and passed with all in favor.

SRMA Tour of Elkhart/Goshen: Elkhart County is starting to see some Shipshewana businesses also opening businesses in the downtowns of Goshen and Elkhart, and thought it would be a good idea to create a broader awareness among Shipshewana retailers about what's happening in our downtowns.

Mr. King extended an invitation from the ECCVB to members of the Shipshewana Retail Merchants Association members to tour the downtowns of Elkhart and Goshen on September 16.

Regional Cities: The RDA Board goes to Indianapolis to make a presentation on behalf of our region in October. The announcement will come in December regarding which two cities were chosen.

Downtown Initiative: The ECCVB has had discussions with the Community Foundation regarding a partnership to assist downtown organizations beginning 2016. The ECCVB would commit \$100,000 per year for a period of three years and the Community Foundation would also commit \$100,000 per year over a three-year period to help downtown organizations have a professional staff person. Similar partnerships with community foundations are happening in St. Joseph and LaPorte Counties. These organizations are never going to be self-sustaining and successful downtowns are important to tourism. Of course, there will be accountability and oversight, and the organizations will have to report at least annually. Community Foundation funds would become available April 2016 and we'd start the program at that time.

Horizon 3.0/Quality of Place: The Community Foundation has asked the ECCVB to partner in support of a community forum with speakers addressing quality of place and vibrant communities. A consultant has been selected for a cost of around \$100,000. Dallas Bergl has agreed to co-chair the process which will start soon and go public in January. Considering naming it Vibrant Communities of 3.0 Initiative.

North Pointe: Recent initiatives including Regional Cities and Blue Zone discussions have shifted focus for a sports complex on the north side of Elkhart to a downtown sports complex redevelopment with the Y property and expanded school sports opportunities. The city is beginning on sidewalk and street lighting improvements in North Pointe and we are working with city redevelopment on using TIF for the continued improvement of the North Pointe neighborhood.

- V. Other Business: Commission and Board members were extended an invitation to attend the Elkhart Symphony performance at The Lerner free of charge.
- VI. The next meeting was set for November 13, 2015.
- VII. Meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Submitted by:

Jackie Hughes, Staff Recorder