

**ST. JOSEPH COUNTY HOTEL MOTEL TAX BOARD**  
**FRIDAY, MAY 28, 2021**  
**CENTURY CENTER**  
**8:30 A.M.**

**Members Present**

John Anthony  
Greg Downes  
Mark McDonnell  
Scott Rieth  
Carmen Piasecki  
Gary West  
Ron Zeltwanger

**Members Absent**

Jenny McNeil  
Dan Parker  
Paul Phair

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by President Anthony. Jeff Jarnecke conducted roll call of board members. President Anthony welcomed Scott Rieth to the board. Scott is the new Executive Director of Hospitality for the University of Notre Dame.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Anthony entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2021 meeting. Mark McDonnell moved to accept; Greg Downes seconded, and motion carried.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mr. Zeltwanger referenced the distributed financial report and noted the current \$2.9M operating budget. The current budget includes \$581,000 in carryover funds from the FY20 budget. In the first quarter, \$550,000 was collected in revenue while nearly \$1M in expenses were incurred. The current cash reserve is \$3.7M. Mr. Zeltwanger plans to review the budget in approximately 30 days with the committee to determine if budget adjustments for the current fiscal year are warranted. Mr. Downes inquired about the County budget process and noted the potential requirement for approval if adjustments are made.

Mr. Downes moved to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Ms. Piasecki seconded and motion carried.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Anthony again welcomed Scott Rieth to the board. He noted the increased hotel activity in St. Joseph county during the second quarter. Mr. Anthony also noted the success within the state of the enabling legislation to increase the local hotel rate from 6% to 8%. Discussion around the timing and local process ensued.

**AGENCY REPORTS**

**POTAWATOMI ZOO**

Josh Sisk shared that \$4.6M of the needed \$6.3M has been raised and the Zoo is now moving to focus on the funding for the new lions' habitat. The Zoo is also working to create a new master plan, which includes \$37M in projects. While the Zoo is working through some growing pains associated with construction and great attendance, the work associated with a new café space is increasing. Staffing issues remain a concern as does parking for Zoo guests.

**VISIT SOUTH BEND MISHAWAKA**

Rob DeCleene reporting that March/April of 2021 was better from an occupancy standpoint than 2019 although the rate extended is still sluggish. Youth sports, especially hockey, is a working

strategy within our community. Rob's team is focusing on digital marketing and recently published their annual report, which can be found online.

#### CENTURY CENTER

Jeff Jarnecke provided an update and shared some renders associated with the Morris 100 Neverending Encore capital campaign for the Morris Performing Arts Center. He also shared financial updates on both the Century Center and Morris noting that both operations had stabilized for the current year and that Q3 and Q4 looked promising but that it will still likely be a financially challenging year. Jeff also provided an update on esports stating further enhancements within the Bendix Arena should be done by June 11 and that national tournaments and events have been secured for August, October, November and December of this year. A title sponsor could also be confirmed in the coming weeks.

#### MISHAWAKA SPORTS COMPLEX

Ken Prince provided an update on the Mishawaka Sports Complex and noted that a feasibility study was underway regarding the potential of adding ice rinks to the complex. Mishawaka is still working on property and infrastructure planning on the proposed land and they could potentially break ground on the facility as soon as this fall. Ken noted the process with the City of Mishawaka and stated the priorities included the indoor space first followed by the ice rinks. The outdoor components of the proposed facility are the third priority and make not ultimately make sense for the project.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Zeltwanger commented on the potential of available cash for projects via the Cares Act and the American Rescue Plan funding. He shared the revenue enhancement committee is working through some thoughts and will ultimately share a plan with the County of potential uses by the Hotel Motel Tax Board. Mr. Zeltwanger thanked Rob DeCleene, Aaron Perri and Jeff Jarnecke for their work on drafting some ideas, which included a hotel grant program, capital improvements, investment opportunities for hospitality projects, and reimbursement of losses by agencies. These four areas totaled \$7.6M. He noted the committee would meet again soon and would finalize a plan to share with the County Council, which will distribute any funds.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Downes provided an updated on the Morris100 campaign and encouraged board members to visit [Morris100.org](http://Morris100.org) for more information. The campaign is off to a good start. He noted the various subcommittees and specifically noted the important work of the equity in the arts, nextgen and celebrations committees, which are all meeting and performing quality work. Mr. Downes thanked the VPA staff for their continued hard work.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Mr. Anthony adjourned the meeting at 9:36 a.m. after a motion by Mr. McDonnell and a second by Ms. Piasecki.

JA:jsj

