

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY HOTEL MOTEL TAX BOARD
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2024
MISHAWAKA FIELDHOUSE, 6155 VETERANS PARKWAY, MISHAWAKA, INDIANA
8:30 A.M.

Members Present

John Anthony	Paul Phair
Rob DeCleene	Carmen Piasecki
Becky Fletcher	Gary West
Mark McDonnell	Kyle Willis
Jenny McNeil	Ron Zeltwanger

Members Absent

Micki Kidder

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by President Anthony. Mary Ellen Smith conducted roll call of board members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President John Anthony entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the 8/1/24 meeting. Mark McDonnell moved to accept; Jenny McNeil seconded; and motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ron Zeltwanger reviewed the Financial Report ending 9/30/24. The Mishawaka Sports Complex/Fund 4926 had a cash balance of \$672,209.68. The Potawatomi Zoo Capital/Fund 4927 - \$981,015.11; Morris PAC Capital/Fund 7403 - \$826,205.59; Tourism Capital Investment/Fund 7404 - \$2,153,397.48. The Hotel-Motel Tax/Fund 7304 started 2024 with a cash balance of \$6,606.445.88 plus Q1/Q2/Q3 receipts of \$4,192,531.08 minus Q1/Q2/Q3 disbursements of \$6,023,301.41 which leaves a net cash balance of \$4,775,675.55. There remains \$5,16,136 to be disbursed in Q4 and projected Q4 receipts are \$1,800,000, leaving a projected 12/31/24 ending balance of \$6,059,540 in the account. (Total receipts 2023 Q4 – 2024 Q3 were \$6,184,888 and total receipts 2022 Q4 – 2023 Q3 were \$6,116,877.)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Anthony thanked Tony Stearns and Nick Kleva at the Mishawaka Fieldhouse for hosting the meeting. He reported that the new Indiana Dinosaur Museum had 29,000 guests already per Mark Tarner. The new LINK trail connecting Notre Dame to downtown South Bend opens today.

AGENCY REPORTS

VISIT SOUTH BEND MISHAWAKA

Jeff Jarnecke, Executive Director, reported that the entire state of Indiana hotel occupancy was down in September. The STR report shows that overall demand for St. Joseph County was down 1%; however, the average daily rate was up 1.4% (\$126 vs \$124). A Select 15 hotels had occupancy at 61%; demand was up 2% and average daily rate was \$162.

Leisure Marketing YTD hotel revenue was \$24M; 2.6M hotel searches; 148,673 room nights and 29M impressions. The 2025 marketing strategy has a target driving audience of South Bend, Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Chicago, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Cincinnati and Columbus. The 2025 total media budget of \$422,605 includes Viant/\$114,971; Kayak/\$75,246; Gumgum/\$73,117; Meta/\$64,900; Google search/\$57,317; Spaceback/\$21,951 and Tiktok/\$15,049.

The new LINK trail connecting Notre Dame to downtown South Bend opens today. Board members were invited to walk the trail today with Notre Dame students and City of South Bend staff starting at 4:00 p.m. at the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center on the Notre Dame campus to South Bend. Board members were invited. VSBM is working with the City of South Bend Venues Parks and Arts (VPA) to distribute maps

Staff will be attending the American Bus Association Marketplace Show 2/1-4/24 in Philadelphia. The "Bones to Buggy Tour" initiative is being organized with bus tour organizers for trips from Shipshewana, IN, to St. Joseph County attractions. VSBM has billboards along the Toll Road at Exit 77, outside Laporte and in Elkhart County. The Indiana Dinosaur Museum/South Bend Chocolate Factory has 10 billboards. Mark McDonnell commented that the Downtown South Bend Dining Alliance is considering billboards.

The CSL Tourism Master Plan for St. Joseph County committee met a couple of times and reviewed applications. The decision was made to not award grants in 2024 and that money will roll over into 2025.

Jarnecke noted that the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel in downtown South Bend \$9.2 million renovation starts 2-3-25 with 80 rooms to be completed at a time and completion planned before football season.

POTAWATOMI ZOO

Josh Sisk, Executive Director, was unable to attend the meeting.

MISHAWAKA SPORTS FIELDHOUSE

Nick Kleva, Director of Events, Marketing and Sponsorship, reported that the Fieldhouse grand opening was held 10/23/24 with news media coverage by 3 stations. The Mishawaka Midwest Open held 10/25-27/24 had 403 players in 24 divisions (Women's, Men's, Mixed) representing 14 states and had 15 tournament sponsors. The pickleball tournament partnered with H2 Pickleball and VSBM. The event is planning to grow in 2025.

The Northern Indiana Volleyball Association (NIVA) is hosting tryouts this month expecting 1,800 players, 50 travel teams, 130 rec teams and 5 boys teams. Practices start later this month and tournaments start in January. A Rust Buster clinic was held last week with 315 players.

5Star Basketball had tryout last month with 92 players and are expecting to have 5 winter teams. A ball handling clinic with 68 participants is being hosted now and youth development starts next with 91 participants.

Pickleball memberships are now open on Court Reserve to reserve courts for open play. There were 85 members who signed up in 6 days. Clinics and leagues are starting in the coming weeks. (Other sports are club and team based.)

Canes started practices last week with 254 players between 18 baseball teams and 6 softball teams. Turf programming will be rolled out after the first of the year for soccer, lacrosse, flag football and more.

The website homepage is officially live with information on the facility, employment, clubs, events: www.Mishawakafh.com. January – May 2025 there are 20 of 22 weekends booked with 12 volleyball tournaments/events, 4 basketball tournaments, 1 cheerleading event, 1 futsal tournament. Six fieldhouse sponsors are secured so far with more conversations taking place. Part-time and hourly staff are being hired for positions for pickleball, food and beverage and building support. Kleva closed by inviting everyone on a Fieldhouse tour after the meeting. John Anthony suggested having Notre Dame assistant coaches lead one-day camps.

CENTURY CENTER

Amber Schisler, Interim Co-General Manager of Venues, reported that Century Revenue income ending 9/30/24 was \$1,889,952.15 and Expenses of \$2,307,771.32 leaving a net loss of -\$417,819.17. Many expenses for Q4 events were processed in Q3 and income for Q4 events will event out the net loss. October large events included: Raydia Food Group Holiday Show with 400 attendees; Jurassic Quest with 14,876 attendees; Star Martial Arts with 1,354 attendees; Grand Design RV University with 785 attendees; Ramencon with 2,058 attendees; and Cops and Goblins with 15,230 attendees. The Capital Fund 671 had income (interest earnings) of \$29,305.88; expenses of \$197,549.96 leaving a net loss of -\$168,244.08. Capital expenses are at 71% of the annual budget and interest earnings are 30% over expectations. Capital purchases are on hold due to reduction in Operating Funds in 2024. The Energy Conservation Fund 672 had income of \$436,583.67; expenses of \$196,491.03 leaving \$240,092.64. Expenses are at almost 50% of Annual Budget, and revenues are performing at 96% of budget. Current YTD number of events is 13,391 with a total of 16,581 events projected through 12/31/24.

Placer calculation for total attendance up to 9/20/24 is 17,756.2 with 115.3k with 15.4% staying in downtown hotels (7.7% at DoubleTree and 7.7% at Courtyard.) Attendees also visited Hoard Park, Island Park and Eddy Street Commons. Projected room nights in 2025 for currently booked events is 12,758 (an increase of 20% since May 2024.) Century Center is working with VSBM to book 2 major 2025 events -- Sustainability Conference in August with 1200 attendees (300 people for 4 days) and Combat Tournament in June with 450 room nights.

MORRIS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Schisler reported that the Morris Capital Fund 416 revenue ending 9/30/24 was \$1,500,205.36 less expenses of \$562,224.39. Ground was broken in Q3 for the new Raclin Murphy Encore Center. The project is slightly behind schedule due to discovery of existing infrastructure utility cables during excavation.

The Morris Operations Fund 602 revenue ending 9/30/24 was \$1,586,176.49 less expenses of \$1,542,870.87 leaving income of \$43,305.62. Income is 82% of Budget, which is consistent with historic seasonal income. Expenses are at 71% of budget for the year. Some financials have been streamlined so there will be fewer revenue categories in the future. There are generally fewer events in Summer and several large events in Q4 so there is usually an income increase in Q4. Placer.ai data shows 7,020 estimated Morris 2024 YTD hotel room nights and Q4 data shows an additional 1,500 room nights.

PALAIS ROYALE

The Palais Royale revenue ending 9/30/24 was \$106,304.40 less expenses of \$141,567.36 leaving a net loss of -\$35,262.96. Expenses are 65% of Budget going into Q4. Income is at 67% of Budget. This is consistent with expectations due to a larger number of events in Q4 than in Q2-Q3. The Historic Preservation Fund 450 had Revenue of \$18,610.63 (Catering Commissions/\$14,742.67 and Interest Earnings/\$3867.96.) The fund is 114% of budget for the year. Placer.ai data shows YTD 1,490 estimated room nights and Q4 data shows an additional 165 room nights.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

President Anthony announced 2025 meeting dates: 2/18, 5/29, 7/31 and 11/6. With no further business Anthony entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jenny McNeil motioned to adjourn the meeting; Gary West seconded; and the meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

JA:mes