

**CIVIC CENTER BOARD OF MANAGERS
THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025
CENTURY CENTER – RECITAL HALL
8:30AM**

Members Present

Aaron Perri Randy Kelly
Heather Goralski Canneth Lee
Judd McNally Jill Scicchitano
AJ Patel Austin Gammage

Members Absent

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. by President Aaron Perri.

Consent Agenda

President Perri entertained motion to approve the consent agenda, including (1) Minutes of the 2/19/25 meeting; Judd McNally motions and Canneth Lee seconds, motion carries.

President's Report

Morris Construction Update

Construction at the Morris is progressing rapidly and visibly. The team was commended for maintaining a robust schedule while continuing to support events and activities.

Business Items

- **Duality of Interest Forms:** Casey Krempec has circulated these forms. Everyone is urged to complete them promptly.
- **Disclosure:** Austin disclosed a professional relationship between his business, Gammage Solutions, and the MLK Dream Center, involving community engagement projects focused on health, wellness, and youth. This has been reviewed by city legal and does not affect board business, but is noted due to departmental overlap with Venues, Parks, and Arts. Aaron emphasized that Austin will not receive favorable treatment for any events and that this disclosure will be reflected in the minutes.

Board Updates

- Farewell was previously given to Linda Doshi.
- Cari Shine is a likely candidate to replace Linda, currently attending in an unofficial, volunteer capacity.

Agenda Item: Downtown 2045 Master Plan

- Caleb Bauer, Executive Director of the Department of Community Investment, was invited to speak, along with Tim Corcoran.
- The meeting focused on a specific segment of the Downtown 2045 Master Plan, particularly the area surrounding the Morris.

Caleb Bauer and Tim Corcoran reported, summarized below:

Downtown South Bend 2045 Master Plan: Overview

- The Department of Community Investment is developing a long-term master plan for downtown South Bend, currently in draft form (April 21 version).

- The plan is shaped by extensive public engagement and aims to guide development over the next 20 years.

Four Core Goals

1. **Reinvigorate the Heart of Downtown**
Focus on the Michigan Street corridor, retail, restaurants, and public events.
2. **Attract Jobs and People**
Increase residential and employment density downtown.
3. **Add Housing Diversity & Infill Neighborhoods**
Projects like the Rabbi Shulman block will offer mixed-income housing.
4. **Create a World-Class Connected Riverfront**
Inspired by Mishawaka's Riverwalk, the plan includes new pedestrian bridges, trail loops, and enhanced access.

Key Development Areas

- **Heart of Downtown (Purple):** Michigan Street corridor, Gridiron, Hall of Fame reactivation.
- **Neighborhood Nodes (Yellow):** Residential growth areas like Riverfront West and Madison Lifestyle District.
- **Innovation & Institutional Catalysts (Blue):** Memorial Hospital expansion, Notre Dame's tech district, Four Winds Field upgrades.
- **Public Realm Enhancements (Gray):** Streetscape improvements, gateway beautification, pedestrian-friendly design.

Hall of Fame Concepts

- Adaptive reuse, market-style additions, or new mixed-use construction.
- Goal: Reestablish the Gridiron as a vibrant town square.

Century Center Vision

- **South End:** Reconnect Jefferson Blvd., add structured parking, hotel, and ballroom.
- **North End:** Enhance riverfront access with options ranging from trail improvements to major structural changes (e.g., removing the Bendix Theatre wing).

Riverfront Activation

- Develop looped trail systems for walking and biking.
- Add gathering spaces on the west side of the river to complement Howard Park.
- Explore riverfront dining and event venues.

Phasing & Next Steps

- **Phase 1:** Stabilize and redevelop the 200 block of Michigan Street, Raclin Murphy Encore Center surroundings.
- **Phase 2:** Hall of Fame reimagining, Everwise block, Jefferson Blvd. reconnection.
- **Long-Term:** Century Center transformation, riverfront park, and Art Museum relocation.

Public Engagement

- Updated drafts will be posted to <https://together.southbendin.gov>, the city's public engagement platform.

President Perri expressed his thanks for the presentation and his general enthusiasm of the plan's direction. Specifically, as it related to Century Center, he said the board would want to be more engaged with the conversation. He underscored that several items may hurt the building's ability to operate effectively or to attract clients, including detaching the DoubleTree Hotel and cutting off access to the loading areas for Discovery Hall and Convention Center.

Venues Report

Palais Royale

Dezha Moore, General Manager of Venues, reported, summarized below:

Operating Budget & Financial Position

The Palais Royale is technically operating at a net loss, however, when factoring in the Joint Licensing Fund with Navarre Hospitality—currently holding \$59,000, the venue is operating at a net gain.

Event Performance

- **Quarter 1 (Q1):** 10 events were held, marking a 25% increase from the previous Q1. However, this is still significantly lower than the 80 events held in partnership with Navarre Hospitality last year.
- **Quarter 2 (Q2):** 21 events are scheduled, including:
 - 14 weddings
 - 3 high school proms
 - 3 university events

Community Trends: Open Bar Packages

There's a notable increase in open bar package adoption:

- 2024: 54%
- 2025: 75% This aligns with a rise in events hosting **200+ guests**, indicating stronger community engagement and upscale event preferences.

Morris Performing Arts Center

Dezha Moore, General Manager of Venues, reported, summarized below:

Financial Snapshot

- **Fund 416 (Capital Fund):** High expenses due to ongoing Raclin Murphy Encore Center construction.
- **Fund 602 (Operational Fund):** Quarter 1 shows a net loss, attributed to:
 - Unexpected repairs (Fatbird door, stairs, fire door).
 - Fewer pre-sales compared to 2024 (e.g., Amy Grant, Jeff Dunham, Salute to Freedom).

Revenue Insights

- Monthly revenue data from 2021–2024 shows growth trends, though pre-COVID data is unavailable.

- Ticket sales revenue currently exceeds **\$1 million**, with **17,000 tickets sold** this year.
- Historic preservation fees are excluded from these figures. **Ticket Fee Transparency**
- **Ticket Fee Transparency**
- In response to the **FTC ruling effective May 12, 2025**, Morris removed its \$5 order fee.
- The **historic preservation fee** was increased from \$3.50 to **\$4.75**.
- Patrons buying 4 or fewer tickets will see a **net decrease in fees**.

Guest Experience Enhancements

- A **legroom seat map** is now available on the website, helping guests choose seats based on comfort.

Student Discount Program

- Students of all levels can receive **50% off Broadway tickets** by visiting the box office 2 hours before showtime.
- This is part of the **American Theatre Guild's Staging the Future** program.

Community Engagement

- **South Bend High School Musical Festival** featured 250+ students.
- **Equity in the Arts** program gave away 250+ tickets to *Ain't Too Proud*.
- Hosted the first **Authors Event: Manuscripts in May**, spotlighting 3 local authors.

Upcoming & Past Events

- **First Friday Sneaker Event** in partnership with VPA.
- Successful shows: *Umpfrey's McGee*, *Bob Dylan* (first sellout since 2023), *Kevin James* (82% attendance).
- **Fridays by the Fountain** will tour:
 - June: Leeper Park
 - July: Howard Park
 - August: Seitz Park

Broadway Season 2025–2026

- Shows include *Hadestown*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *Clue*, and *Beetlejuice* (Dec 2025–June 2026).

Granada Rental Fee Update

- Proposed change from \$250/day flat rate to:
 - **\$115/hour**
 - **\$460/day flat rate**
- Aligns with VPA and Howard Park pricing, pending legal approval.

Century Center

Capital Funds Overview

- **Fund 671:** Capital expenses at \$37,000 and revenue at \$15,000.
- **Fund 670:** Includes the **Hotel Motel Tax Board capital line item** of \$1.25 million, with \$350,000 allocated to the Century Center.

Maintenance Highlights

- **Iris**, the venue's "puppy patrol," is actively working to manage geese waste on the island.
- **Garage re-keying** is underway.
- The maintenance team, led by Scott and Dan, has been commended for their proactive work.

Ameresco Energy Savings Report

The energy efficiency initiative has yielded impressive results:

- **Gas Savings:** Guaranteed at 3,000 therms; actual savings reached 8,000 therms—exceeding the target by 5,000.
- **Cost Savings:** Guaranteed \$247,000; actual savings \$255,000—an overage of \$7,000.
- **Rebates Received:**
 - \$15,000 from Indiana Michigan Power
 - \$10,000 from NIPSCO
 -

Century Center

Rebekah Love, General Manager of Century Center, reported and summarized below:

Year-to-Date Performance Highlights

- **Attendance:** Over **112,000 guests** have visited the Century Center so far this year, with projections of **another 100,000** expected before year-end.
- **Events Hosted:** Already **7 Proms, Pet Palooza, MFL, Auto Show, Ginuwine concert, Summer Activities Fair, South Bend Fire Department graduation, Youth Service Bureau, and Leadership Graduation** have taken place.
- **Hotel Room Nights:** Actualized at **4,706** so far, with projections exceeding **17,000** for the year. Tentative bookings for 2026 already surpass **13,000**, marking a **17% increase** from February's forecast.

Upcoming Events (Q2 Focus)

- **Latino Concert:** First of its kind since COVID, expecting **1,800 guests** and **300 cases of Modelo** ordered. Collaboration with Zamora could yield **\$50,000+ in beer sales**.
- **First Tech Challenge Michiana Premier:** Robotics event with **96 teams from 8 countries** including Kazakhstan, Italy, Romania, and Vietnam. Estimated **2,400–4,800 hotel room nights**.
- **North American Water Rescue Conference:** International event with **300 attendees** and **600 hotel room nights**.
- **Irish Classic Gymnastics (Jan 2026):** Proposed event with **400 hotel room nights**.
- **Builder Show (June):** Pending confirmation, projected **800 hotel room nights**.

Financials & Revenue

- **Q1 Income Statement:** Currently negative due to seasonal trends, banquets and conferences are typically low in Q1.
- **Notre Dame Commencement Ball:** Generated a **\$135,000 invoice**, expected to offset Q1 losses.
- **Food & Beverage:** Currently at **25%**, it is projected to reach **30%** next quarter. Century Center is the **top performer in F&B** across all ASM venues

Metrics & Feedback

- **Net Promoter Score:** Currently at **77%**, with increased response rates from show promoters.
- **In-the-Moment Survey:** Year-to-date satisfaction at **98%**, well above national averages

Raclin Murhpy Encore Center

Patrick Sherman was unable to attend, President Perri gave a brief summary:

Project Status

- The project is on time and on budget.
- One component was even under budget, as highlighted by Patrick.

Visuals & Renderings

- Time-lapse footage and renderings are being prepared for future review.
- The final pages of the proposal include sample renderings of the parking garage and apartment concepts—described as some of the most attractive parking garages seen.

Phase III Development

- The city received two bids for the parking garage and apartment portion of the Morris Performing Arts Center expansion.
- These proposals will proceed through the Board of Public Works for contractor selection.

Century Center Management Contract Subcommittee

Jill Scicchitano gave an update on this subcommittee:

Subcommittee Formation

- A resolution was presented and approved at the last board meeting to form a **subcommittee** focused on the **Century Center management contract**.

Subcommittee Members

- The appointed members are:
 - Jill Scicchitano
 - Judd McNally

- Heather Goralski
- Aaron Perri

They are collaborating with **VPA administration and legal**.

Progress & Next Steps

- The subcommittee has held **two meetings** since the last board session and is making **good progress**.
- The **next meeting is scheduled for June**, where **firm updates** are expected.

Adjournment

President Perri made the following closing comments:

City Budget Process

- The **city budget process** has officially begun and will continue through to **October approval**.

Board & Executive Committee Planning

- The **Board meets again in July**.
- An **executive session** is planned for the **Executive Committee** to review financials:
 - This will occur **after the mayor's draft** but **before the Council draft**.
 - A **full readout** will follow that session.

Celebration

- A special note: **Happy 160th birthday to the City of South Bend!**

With no further business, President Perri adjourned the meeting at 9:45am. **The next scheduled meeting is for 8/27/25 at the Century Center.**

AP: CLK