

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – MAY 13, 2020**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (“MECA”), a Nebraska nonprofit corporation, was called to order by Chairwoman Diane Duren at 1:12 p.m. on May 13, 2020, in the MECA Board Room at CHI Health Center Omaha, 455 N. 10th Street, Omaha, Nebraska.

Roll Call:

Present: Chairwoman Diane Duren, Mr. Tom Kelley and Mr. Jay Noddle. Participating via teleconference were Ms. Susie Buffett and Ms. Dana Washington.

As a reminder, both the City and State have waived applicability of the ‘public meeting’ requirements that would otherwise apply, and therefore the two Board members who were attending the meeting by telephone were eligible to participate.

Proof of Publication:

Notice of the meeting was published in *The Daily Record* on May 6, 2020, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on May 6, 2020.

A copy of the Open Meetings Law was posted on the table near the side entrance to the MECA Board Room.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Noddle moved for approval of the minutes of the April 13, 2020, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 5-0.

President/CEO Report:

Mr. Roger Dixon stated that MECA has been busy working to reschedule events since the first restrictions were put in place due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. There were initial postponements, followed by more cancelations and further rescheduling of events which is pushing business back to the end of the year and into 2021.

While there have been encouraging conversations with the governor’s office, MECA is still waiting for guidelines to lift restrictions. At this point, no restrictions have been placed on football in the fall, and Mr. Dixon is hopeful that basketball will begin as well. The NCAA has indicated that a start of these sports will be driven locally.

MECA’s Lot D continues to be the site location for ‘Test Nebraska’, a drive-thru testing facility for COVID-19. It is uncertain how long the testing facility will remain on campus, but MECA is proud to help.

Other Business:

Convention Center Sales & Marketing Update

Ms. Denise Niebrugge stated that there are currently 98 events on the books, utilizing 180 event days for the fiscal year 2019-2020. Since the April 13, 2020 Board meeting, 9 events and over 2,600 hotel room nights have been added for the next five years. In addition, 4 license agreements have been signed.

Events continue to reschedule with some pushing out into future years. Ms. Niebrugge noted that it is better to reschedule a large meeting later than to host a smaller meeting now. Meeting planners are asking numerous questions and are considering future dates as most annual business is moving to the fall.

MECA is currently preparing health and safety planning documents to publicize information regarding cleaning procedures and food and beverage precautions that will be implemented throughout both facilities.

Corporate Sales & Marketing Update

Mr. Tom O’Gorman reported that talks continue with concert industry leaders, Live Nation and AEG, to learn about what they are doing around the country. Live Nation plans to hold the first test concert in mid-May in Arkansas, filling about half of a 1000 seat theater. Smaller theaters and event spaces are among the first to try reopening while monitoring public reaction. Another idea Live Nation is pursuing this summer is converting some of their amphitheaters into drive-in concerts.

Presently there are no new details concerning the NCAA National Volleyball Championship. If restrictions due to social distancing are still in place then the event will need to be restructured due to a sold out crowd.

The NCAA is considering another company for ticket sales at TD Ameritrade Park Omaha (TDAPO).

Mr. Noddle inquired if social distancing remains in place, how will events such as basketball (that have a high percent of season ticket holders) be affected. Mr. O’Gorman responded that there have been no conversations or decisions made regarding basketball, but theoretically you would have to go back to the groups, refund their money and start the ticket process over again.

Operations and Technology Update

Mr. Kevin Raymond reported that this time is being treated as a typical slow period, and operations are trying to capitalize on an empty building and move ahead on cleaning/projects. Staff continue to do maintenance work - everything from painting the parking lot lines in the garage to retrofitting electrical outlets in the exhibit halls, reconditioning concession stands and working in areas that typically are not open for any extended period of time. As the weather improves, staff will begin to mow, trim, plant seeds and turn on irrigation systems.

The security vehicular bollards are nearly complete with just a bit of concrete work and landscaping to finish the project.

Additionally, the up-lights on the south arena drum have been received. Some rewiring must be completed prior to installation, and then weather permitting they will be switched out. The pitch clocks for TDAPO have also arrived but must be modified as the housings protrude 6' beyond the wall pads. Once electrical work is complete, then testing will begin.

Levy Food & Beverage Update

Ms. Chris VanDorn stated Levy continues to work through department check lists for teams, planning goals for managers, as well as updated training and professional development that is required by Levy and Compass. Significant focus has been placed on menu planning and redesign along with recipe cost outs, which are in line with some post COVID-19 plans. At the corporate level, many suppliers have indicated a reduction in the number of items being carried in their warehouses in order to minimize their own risk and exposure in the future. Therefore, Levy is also working on reducing the number of items used on a regular basis in order to partner with local suppliers to ensure immediate access to what is most important to operations. Besides reviewing regularly ordered items to keep stock at a minimum, Levy is also taking a look at what items can be eliminated entirely, which items can be transitioned to special request and what can be cross utilized between departments in order to streamline items that need to be kept in stock.

Levy is currently working with specific group sales clients who have been inquiring as to what menus will entail for their events in the future. A modified menu has been designed based on current restrictions. It is likely to change again as events near due to restrictions being changed or eliminated.

Levy's home office and regional project teams are working now through minimum standards and best practices and will reach out to all locations to develop detailed plans for each specific location. Ms. VanDorn noted that internal discussions have already begun, then Levy will work with MECA on final strategies for the facilities.

Public Relations Update

Ms. Kristyna Engdahl reported the status of events continues to change, which has required internal coordination to ensure meeting planners are provided with the information they need; as well as external communication, when it comes to the cancelation or postponement of concerts. MECA has leaned heavily on both social and traditional media to communicate all event changes, especially since second-round postponements have begun with Jeff Dunham moving originally from April 2 to July 31, now to October 2.

Work has begun on a document to share with meeting planners that outlines health and safety practices at the CHI Health Center Omaha. Event coordinators are receiving plenty of questions and providing a thorough handout helps ensure MECA is delivering a consistent message, outlining the precautions taken and what procedures will be in place. There are still some social-distancing decisions to be made before that document can be finalized but having those discussions now will prepare for the future. Ms. Engdahl noted that this is also an opportunity to promote MECA's IT and AV teams' ability to assist with meeting streaming services.

Roger Dixon was featured on a radio town hall broadcast on *1620 The Zone* within the last month. He was among several prominent community voices discussing the current state of the Omaha community in a segment called “The New Normal”. The community is interested in learning how MECA has been impacted by the sudden loss of so many events this fiscal year, but this also presented the opportunity to touch on how both facilities benefit the entire city.

Soon MECA will put together some social media campaigns to showcase ‘what we’ve been up to’ while guests have been away.

Committee Updates:

Internal Governance Committee

Mr. Tom Kelley reported that the Internal Governance Committee met via teleconference on Friday, May 8, 2020, at MECA’s offices. In attendance were Chairwoman Duren, Mr. Bob Freeman, Mr. Kelley, Ms. Diane Mills, Mr. Dixon and Mr. Stephen Curtis, City of Omaha Finance Director.

The Committee reviewed the March 2020 Financial Statements. After overviews from and discussions with Ms. Mills, the Committee found the report to be consistent with standard MECA accounting practices. Mr. Kelley noted that, as expected, financial statements are not looking great due to lack of revenue.

Mr. Kelley thanked management and the former Board of Directors for foresight on keeping a solid reserve account to draw upon during uncertain economic times. Although reserves are not unlimited, they are allowing MECA not to defer maintenance or furlough employees and continue to be business as usual despite restrictions in place. Mr. Kelley is hopeful funds may become available that could assist MECA with lost revenues in a form of government aid. More items are being discovered in the CARES Act and another relief package is being reviewed in Congress.

Real Estate Committee

Mr. Jay Noddle reported that activity and advancement continue in construction in the downtown area.

Contract Approvals:

Chairwoman Duren indicated there are no contracts requiring Board approval.

Next Board Meeting

The next MECA Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 9, 2020, at 1:15 p.m. in the MECA Board Room.

Executive Session

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 1:31 p.m. and invited a Motion to enter into closed Executive Session for purposes of discussing personnel, real estate and potential claims matters.

A Motion to go into Executive Session for these specified purposes was made by Mr. Kelley, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 5-0.

Adjournment

At 2:10 p.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Mr. Noddle seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 5-0

Adjournment 2:10 p.m.