

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION  
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – JUNE 9, 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 1:06 p.m. on June 9, 2020, in the MECA Board Room at CHI Health Center Omaha, 455 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Omaha, Nebraska.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Chairwoman Diane Duren and Mr. Tom Kelley. Participating via teleconference were Ms. Susie Buffett, Mr. Jay Noddle 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 three 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 June 2, 2020, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on June 2, 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. Kelley moved for approval of the minutes of the May 13, 2020, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 5-0.

**President/CEO Report:**

Mr. Roger Dixon stated MECA’s Lot D continues to be an active site location for ‘Test Nebraska’, a drive-thru testing facility for COVID-19.

Mr. Dixon was contacted on Sunday, May 31 by the Omaha Police Department (OPD) requesting that Lot A be made available for the National Guard to take up residency because of the protests that began in Minneapolis and spread across the country. By Monday, the National Guard asked to move inside the facility. In an overabundance of caution and to avoid expected congestion from planned demonstrations, the entire campus was vacated on June 1 and 2, and then again on June 5. OPD shut off access to 10th Street at Dodge Street and were successful in protecting the City’s assets.

On June 1, Governor Pete Ricketts announced the first phase to allow events to begin to take place in larger venues. At this time, MECA can reopen with 25% of capacity, up to 3,000 guests. MECA prepared and submitted a detailed health and safety plan to the Douglas County Health Department which has been received.

Chairwoman Duren inquired if any rioters had entered the RiverFront construction sites during protesting. Mr. Dixon stated that he had received a telephone call from Mayor Stothert who was concerned about a pallet of bricks located at 10<sup>th</sup> & Douglas Streets for a BRT Station being constructed there. MECA was unable to remove them due to fresh concrete being poured, but Kiewit was able to get a tarp over the bricks and it wasn't an issue.

Mr. Kelley asked if MECA has any other firm dates for events in the convention center or the arena. Mr. Dixon stated that yes, events are slowly returning but Ms. Niebrugge will address this in her report to the Board.

### **Other Business:**

#### **Convention Center Sales & Marketing Update**

Ms. Denise Niebrugge stated that there are currently 96 events on the books, utilizing 178 event days for the fiscal year 2019-2020. Since the May 13, 2020 Board meeting, five events and over 3,700 hotel room nights have been added for the next five years. In addition, five license agreements have been signed.

CHI Health Center Omaha (CHIHCO) has one firm event scheduled in the middle of July, but the outlook for August is better and September even more. July will be a good first test event with the new suggested health regulations. There are numerous events that moved into 2021, and 2023 looks now to be a great year in the convention center.

#### **Corporate Sales & Marketing Update**

Mr. Tom O'Gorman reported many venues have been working with Ticketmaster on surveying fans to better understand their perceptions, behaviors and intent when it comes to returning to live events.

Initial findings show that that:

- 94% say that they will return to a live music event.
- 87% of fans with refund eligible tickets are holding on to them.
- 85% of fans predict a return to live events within three months of sanctions lifted – the Nebraska region specifically indicated returning one month after sanctions lifted.

Mr. O'Gorman noted that communicating what steps and precautions MECA is taking to make events safe will be essential, with an opportunity now to engage fans in creative ways, keeping them connected to the event experience.

Club Seat and Suites renewals have been completed at TD Ameritrade Park Omaha (TDAPO). 233 Club Seats renewals decided to roll over into the next year and 305 refunds were processed. There were 16 rollovers in the Suites with 10 refunds. Although a difficult circumstance now, going forward this may prove beneficial since renewals won't be up all at one time.

Conversations continue with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to discuss the former February agreement for Club Seats and Suite renewals at TDAPO. Due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, MECA is now formulating a new sales plan regarding cost structure.

Suite invoices for CHIHCO are being mailed this month. Contracts were up for a 3% escalator this year. MECA is going to forgive that 3% and the next immediate 3% escalator for all clientele, be it next year or in the future.

Plans move forward for Creighton Prep's commencement ceremonies. Mr. O'Gorman met with Prep and presented a floor plan that included room for social distancing. At this point, it has been decided that each student will receive 10 tickets to ensure that all guests will be seated in the lower bowl properly.

Chairwoman Duren inquired if guests would be mandated to wear masks. Mr. O'Gorman stated that MECA will not require masks but encourage them. All staff will be wearing masks at CHIHCO.

Mr. Noddle asked about the NCAA's position regarding events that were won in prior bids but now are cancelled. Mr. O'Gorman responded that MECA will be required to rebid them again. Mr. Noddle indicated that the NCAA's final determination should be received in writing. He also asked if the NCAA would consider extending the 25-year contract for the Men's College World Series (CWS) by one year. Mr. Dixon responded that this request would be appropriate to make in the partners meeting scheduled for next spring.

### **Operations and Technology Update**

Mr. Kevin Raymond reported staff continues to do maintenance work in the arena and focus is now shifting back to the convention center side with painting and repairs to sound panels. The soffit lights in the grand ballroom are being changed out to LED in preparation for reopening. Installation of the up-lights in the south arena drum have been completed, and testing has begun with the pitch clocks in the stadium.

Orders have been placed for masks, gloves, face shields, and protective suits and footwear for deep cleaning in anticipation of reopening soon. Signage and stickers are being created to post around the campus to remind and encourage guests to social distance.

### **Levy Food & Beverage Update**

Ms. Chris VanDorn stated that with Phase II of the Directed Health Measures in place as of June 1, the Levy team is focusing on the changes that need to be made in each area in order to welcome both team members and guests back to the building.

In a coordinated effort with the MECA team, Levy provided the Food and Beverage Health & Safety Best Practices Plan to the Douglas County Health Department for consideration of re-opening plans.

As a company, Levy is continuously monitoring CDC, federal, state and local requirements and Ms. VanDorn has been in direct contact with the Health Specialist at the Douglas County Health Department to confirm service expectations and requirements specific to CHIHCO.

Starting this week, Levy managers are all participating in six modules of Levy's return-to-work training that will then be administered live or on-line with team members either prior to or on the first day back. This training is designed to teach the Levy team everything needed to keep themselves and guests safe when work resumes.

Chairwoman Duren inquired if Levy had received any feedback from Douglas County Health regarding guidelines. Ms. VanDorn confirmed that Douglas County Health has approved a 'grab & go' environment, which will work out fine since many of the events in July and August have requested to offer prepackaged or boxed type meals. Ms. VanDorn added that there will be frequent cleaning and sanitizing throughout. There will also be access points for guests to utilize hand sanitizers, and Levy is looking to implement self-service for guests with a touchless option on coffee service.

### **Public Relations Update**

Ms. Kristyna Engdahl reported that much of MECA's efforts over the past month have been focused on the creation of the health and safety documentation, which was distributed to the Board about two weeks ago. That document was submitted to the Douglas County Health Director for consideration, along with example diagrams for the CHI Health Center arena and convention center and TD Ameritrade Park club level meeting space. It also included samples of social distancing signage.

This document was also used to create a meeting planner document that event coordinators might share with clients. MECA's websites have all been updated with this information so all precautions that were taken are accessible to the public.

News coverage over the past months has transitioned from safety efforts to curiosity about lost business. Both KMTV and the *Omaha World-Herald* featured the CHI Health Center in stories at the end of May, after the announcement that business may resume at local music venues with social distancing standards in place. Mr. Dixon was also quoted in an article for the NCAA about a summer without the College World Series.

MECA will be supporting the NCAA and CWS of Omaha, Inc. in their efforts to keep the 'spirit' of the CWS alive this weekend with a series of social media campaigns and efforts. Pertinent information will also be shared with their ticket holders.

Lastly, KETV is currently putting together a 30-minute Chronicle episode about the evolution of local tourism in the wake of COVID-19. Mr. Dixon participated in a Zoom interview yesterday where he discussed how MECA's buildings serve as economic engines for the community, and the importance of return to business – with the appropriate measures in place. This is a message that continues to be important for the Omaha community.

## **Committee Updates:**

### **Internal Governance Committee**

Mr. Tom Kelley reported that the Internal Governance Committee met via teleconference on Monday, June 8, 2020, at MECA's offices. In attendance were Chairwoman Duren, Mr. Bob Freeman, Mr. Kelley, Ms. Diane Mills and Mr. Dixon.

The Committee reviewed the April 2020 Financial Statements. After overviews from and discussions with Ms. Mills, the Committee found the report to be consistent with standard MECA accounting practices.

Finance is attempting to devise a budget for the next fiscal year and copies will be provided to the Board. Mr. Kelley noted that due to the difficulty with the lack of revenue, it may need more of a dynamic budget that is contingent on public health guidelines.

### **Real Estate Committee**

Mr. Jay Noddle reported that activity and advancement have temporarily slowed in the downtown area due to the unfortunate events occurring in Minneapolis and then in Omaha.

## **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, July 7, 2020, at 1:15 p.m. in the MECA Board Room.

### **Executive Session**

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 1:34 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 Ms. Washington.

Motion carried: 5-0.

### **Adjournment**

At 1:57 p.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Mr. Kelley seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 5-0

Adjournment 1:57 p.m.