

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION  
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

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 1:15 p.m. on February 16, 2021.

**Roll Call:**

Present and participating via teleconference were: Chairwoman Diane Duren, Mr. Thomas Warren, Ms. Susie Buffett, and Mr. Jay Noddle.

As a reminder, during the continuing pandemic, both the City and State had waived applicability of the ‘public meeting’ requirements that would otherwise apply, and therefore all 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 February 9, 2021, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on February 9, 2021.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Warren moved for approval of the minutes of the January 13, 2021, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 4-0.

**President/CEO Report:**

Mr. Roger Dixon stated Nebraska’s Governor Pete Ricketts has restored MECA’s event capacity back to 100% for indoor events (outside events are already at 100%).

MECA has been awarded all sessions for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Women’s Volleyball Championship. The month of April will bring 48 teams to Omaha to begin play. Details for the event are being formulated and at this point the NCAA will follow their format of limiting event capacity to 25%. MECA is hopeful that the NCAA’s COVID-19 Committee will increase capacity to a higher number given the Governor’s announcement.

USA Swimming announced a revised plan and schedule for the U.S. Olympic Swim Team Trials. The Olympic Trials will be divided into two competitions, with Wave I on June 4-7, 2021 and Wave II on June 13-20, 2021. Following the extraordinary events of the COVID-19 pandemic, USA Swimming developed a revised plan to conduct Trials in a reduced capacity. Given the current events, and the need to address concerns related to over-crowding in the athlete areas, warm-up pool and seating areas, the decision was made to divide the event into two. At this time, the anticipated capacity at the CHI Health Center Omaha (CHIHCO) for this event is currently set at 75%.

Discussions continue with USA Swimming and the Omaha Sports Commission (OSC) with Omaha still in the running to host the Olympic Swim Trials in 2024. Omaha is the only city without a dome, and believed to be competing against San Antonio, St. Louis, Indianapolis and Minneapolis.

The NCAA Men's College World Series is scheduled to begin play on Saturday, June 19, at TD Ameritrade Park Omaha (TDAPO), with capacity currently capped at 25% by the NCAA.

Beginning next year, the Men's College World Series will revert to the format that was used from 2003-2007 with competition beginning on Friday, June 17 and with the best-of-three finals starting (the next weekend) on Saturday, June 25. Since 2008, the CWS has started on Saturday with the finals beginning the following Monday.

### **Other Business:**

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

Ms. Denise Niebrugge stated that there are currently 41 events on the books, utilizing 107 event days for 2021. Since the January 13, 2021 Board meeting, 18 events and over 22,000 hotel room nights have been added for the next five years.

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

Mr. Tom O'Gorman presented an overview of Ticketmaster's digital ticketing services. Digital parking passes for the garage and Lot B will be available soon.

The Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) State Wrestling Tournament begins on February 17 with capacity set at 50%. Tickets sales came in at just over 30 thousand compared to last year selling 58 thousand. These tickets were available in digital only form.

Mr. O'Gorman and Mr. Raymond continue weekly volleyball calls with the NCAA to discuss and determine operations and set up of the courts for the upcoming championships. There will be 16 practice courts assembled in Hall C, and competition courts available in Halls A and B. First and Second Rounds will be hosted in the arena.

#### **Operations and Technology Update**

Mr. Kevin Raymond reported that with the primary focus on events returning to the campus, MECA will be hosting a job fair this month. One of the biggest challenges with events is bringing back event staff. Some are no longer available, some are not comfortable working around crowds, and still others are waiting for the vaccine before resuming employment with MECA. The job fair has been advertised on the radio, pictured on a few billboards and posted on MECA's social media accounts.

#### **Levy Food and Beverage Update**

Ms. Chris VanDorn stated she is following up on inquiry from the January 13 Board of Director's meeting about guests being able to use Venmo services for payment. Levy's Corporate office has determined Venmo is not available on the pin-pad devices that are integrated with the Point of Sale

(POS) systems at CHIHCO and TDAPO. Those systems offer a variety of payment options and work with debit and credit cards, as well as Apple and Google Pay. Communication with Levy and Venmo would require additional equipment to be placed at every POS. At this point, it is not cost effective due to equipment costs; however, Levy's corporate office will revisit the issue should the need arise.

Since the last BOD meeting on January 13, Levy's team has been busy with girl's volleyball tournaments and Creighton University's Men's Basketball games, going from little activity to 12 event days with significant attendance. Concessions for volleyball flowed well and worked to facilitate social distancing for guests. The number of cashier stations were tripled during peak times to alleviate lines.

Ms. VanDorn was happy to announce that six non-profit groups, as well as approximately 50 part-time team members have been brought back for these events.

### **Public Relations Update**

Ms. Kristyna Engdahl stated MECA has been busy putting out information for prospective visitors about the new cash-free policy and mobile ticketing, as well as reminding people about clear bag requirements. Last week, the *Omaha World-Herald*, *KETV*, *WOWT* and *KPTM* were all on-site to participate in a quick tutorial of MECA's Cash 2 Card machines and learn about the many COVID-19 precautions both MECA and Levy have in place with guests back in the building. This information is being repeatedly covered on social media, especially ahead of the NSAA State Wrestling Championships.

There has been lots of exciting news over the past month, with the announcement of the entire NCAA Women's Volleyball Tournament choosing the CHIHCO and Omaha; approval from the Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) for more club volleyball tournaments over in the exhibition halls; and, an event plan for the U.S. Swim Trials announcing USA Swimming's intentions to proceed with their trials regardless of what happens in Tokyo, along with their procedures to limit the number of people within the building at one time.

Lastly, there are a lot of excited families talking about the upcoming return of Disney on Ice which went on sale last week and will be back in the building March 11-14.

### **Committee Updates:**

#### **Internal Governance Committee**

Chairwoman Duren reported in Mr. Tom Kelley's absence that the Internal Governance Committee met via teleconference on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, at MECA's offices. In attendance were Chairwoman Duren, Mr. Bob Freeman, Mr. Tom Kelley, Mr. Roger Dixon, Ms. Diane Mills, and Mr. Stephen Curtis, City of Omaha Finance Director.

The Committee reviewed the December 2020 Financial Statements, discussing a slight improvement in results as activity started picking up in the arena with Creighton University's Men's Basketball, albeit with a much-reduced attendance, and in the convention center with a few events returning. After overviews from and discussions with Ms. Mills, the Committee found the report to be consistent with standard MECA accounting practices.

Ms. Mills presented several analyses of MECA's financial situation comparing December 30, 2020 to December 31, 2019, with the discussion of the COVID-19 pandemic impact on both income statements and balance sheets. Items identified included revenue declines, expense reduction activities, expenditures for personal protective equipment (PPE) and relief payments. The Committee will continue to monitor, anticipating the positive impact of the vaccine resulting in increased events at CHIHCO and TDAPO.

In addition, the Committee addressed the Shuttered Venue Operators grant program, which will be administered by the Small Business Association (SBA). To date, while there has been funding announced, the SBA has not opened the application process, but Ms. Mills will continue to monitor and will be prepared to submit an application as soon as possible.

### **Real Estate Committee**

Mr. Jay Noddle stated there have been no new developments to report.

### **Contract Approvals:**

Chairwoman Duren indicated there is one contract requiring Board approval.

#### **Doll Construction**

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Doll Construction to provide all labor, equipment and supplies for snow removal services at CHI Health Center Omaha and TD Ameritrade Park Omaha, as set out on the attached summary, is hereby approved, and Roger Dixon as President/CEO is authorized on behalf of MECA to execute the Agreement following its finalization in a form reasonably approved by counsel.

Chairwoman Duren invited public and Board comment and asked for a motion.

Moved by Mr. Noddle seconded by Mr. Warren.

Motion carried: 4-0

### **Next Board Meeting**

The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. in the MECA Board Room.

### **Executive Session**

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 1:43 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. Noddle, seconded by Mr. Warren.

Motion carried: 4-0.

**Adjournment**

At 1:53 p.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Ms. Buffett, seconded by Mr. Warren.

Motion carried: 4-0

Adjournment 1:53 p.m.