

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION  
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – SEPTEMBER 14, 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 9:19 a.m. on September 14, 2021.

**Roll Call:**

Present or participating via teleconference were: Chairwoman Diane Duren, Ms. Susie Buffett, Mr. Tom Kelley, 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 September 7, 2021, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on September 7, 2021.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. Buffett moved for approval of the minutes of the August 19, 2021, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 4-0.

**President/CEO Report:**

Mr. Roger Dixon stated that he and Ms. Katie Bassett had an opportunity to meet with all City Council members this month to provide an update on the current status of MECA, as well as the The RiverFront.

MECA has been focused on the implementation of different protocols that concert promoters for the Eagles and James Taylor are requesting. There are six events before the end of December, and so far two of them are requiring restrictions. MECA will need to purchase additional personal protection equipment (PPE), bring in more contractors and increased staffing. Hiring staff is still a critical issue and will add to the difficulty. There has been not yet been an indication of what protocols Creighton University will require for men’s basketball.

Concert promoters are beginning to develop many protocols that they will ask of their venues. Mr. Dixon believes that more stringent protocols and amendments to agreements will be seen in the upcoming months. These will require legal involvement because of potential liability considerations for CHI Health Center Omaha (CHIHCO). There is talk within the industry that all performers will require vaccination cards be uploaded, or negative COVID-19 test results to be provided prior to concert entry.

USA Swimming and the College World Series (CWS) have officially closed out for 2021. USA Swimming did not perform as well as 2016, and it is unclear where Omaha is ranked for the 2024 decision. CWS did well with schools Vanderbilt and Mississippi State in the finals, as both teams brought lots of fans to Omaha. It was a record year in attendance at CWS even though there were challenges on opening weekend with the new digital scanning system and lack of cleaning personnel.

The Charles Schwab Corporation is moving to rename TD Ameritrade Park Omaha before the start of CWS 2022. The corporation acquired TD Ameritrade Holding Corporation in October 2020.

Mr. Kelley and Mr. Noddle about the newly announced protocols by the Eagles, and impact on ticket sales. Mr. Dixon responded that several hundred fans had requested a refund.

### **Other Business:**

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

Ms. Denise Niebrugge stated that there are currently 100 events on the books, utilizing 174 event days for the current fiscal year. Since the August 19, 2021 Board meeting, five events and over 1,000 hotel room nights have been added and eight contracts have been signed.

Most events currently on the schedule are moving forward. Participant counts are down, but that is to be expected.

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

Mr. Tom O’Gorman reported that coordination efforts continue with a COVID-19 testing company in order to comply with the Eagles restrictions for back-of-house staff. Everyone who will be working in close proximity to the show will be required to test on event day. Although not publicly announced, fans that arrive with a ticket, but without having the proper documentation will have an opportunity to test in order to stay for the concert.

Mr. Noddle questioned the entry protocols for patrons attending the Eagles concert. Mr. Dixon responded that fans will be required to show proof of vaccination, or a negative COVID-19 test (within 24-48 hours) in order to enter the facility. Mr. Kelley asked if a digital image of the vaccination card can be shown via their telephone. Mr. O’Gorman stated that yes, at this time, a photo image is acceptable.

Mr. O’Gorman stated there are two sponsorships on the agenda for Board approval today. There are two more left to be filled which will put MECA back to 100%.

Only eight club seat accounts remain up for renewal at CHIHCO. Focus is changing to the numerous club seat renewals for TDAPO.

The changeover from Pepsi to Coca-Cola is in progress at TDAPO. By the end of next week the new signage should be available. Levy has helped by pulling out all the Pepsi fountain drinks and replacing them with Coke.

Mr. O’Gorman was excited to announce that there will be a few more concert announcements in the next couple weeks.

### **Operations & IT Update**

Mr. Kevin Raymond stated that the focus right now is on the new requirements for concerts. Part of that includes working through the logistics with check points in the building to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test results (24-48 hours). There will be a designated area for rapid COVID-19 testing in case a guest arrives unaware of the procedures. These changes (which may evolve into normal procedure) will take time for guests to become familiar with, similar to walk-thru screening, clear bags or last year’s temperature checks. MECA wants the process to be efficient and get guests in the building as quickly as possible. There are some areas and positions in back of the house that will require proof of vaccination to work, as well as requiring rapid testing on-site the day of the event.

Mr. Dixon added that the Eagles are pushing the expense of these restrictions back to MECA. If this practice continues within the industry, MECA will consider raising the facility fee to offset cost. Although MECA itself is not mandating any restrictions, it is understood this is what needs to happen in order to open back up for business. Live Nation pointed out that venues either comply with restrictions or the industry will be back to rescheduling or canceling events. Concession prices will also increase due to cost of product. Mr. Noddle noted the increase of costs is unavoidable in order to hold a budget.

Another primary challenge is staffing. Right now, between CHIHCO and TDAPO, MECA is down ten full time positions and could use an extra 100 event staff. The additional staff needed for COVID-19 verification could prove to be a challenge for the upcoming concerts.

The Security Barrier Agreements have all been signed. Kiewit will secure the order for the bollards. Mr. Raymond and Mr. Dixon are meeting monthly with Union Pacific Railroad regarding the mitigation for removal of contaminated soil in Lot B. Staff is beginning to take inventory and listing guidelines for the Charles Schwab Corporation rebranding of TDAPO. Conversations have begun with Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) about opening another COVID-19 vaccination clinic and could start soon and run through January. The clinic will be located on the north end of Lot D. Clinic will not be open on event days. The new arena seats at CHIHCO are partially installed. Shipping and delivery have turned into a significant challenge. At this point the November completion date has been pushed back to January.

Chairwoman Duren inquired as to which entity will be responsible for the cost of the name change and rebranding at TDAPO. Mr. Dixon responded that the Charles Schwab Corporation will pick up that cost. There is a contract in place with inventory listed and any request beyond that will come with a separate price tag. Mr. Noddle asked how much time remained in the existing agreement. Mr. Dixon answered eight more years.

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

Ms. Chris VanDorn reported Levy is currently working with Coca-Cola at TDAPO to transition all beverage equipment over to Coke. A team will come this week to stock coolers with product

for the September 25 First Responder's event, as only bottled beverages will be served. The new Coke fountain machines will be in place for the beginning of Creighton baseball season.

Levy is working through the planning dashboard for the arena to ensure success for the Creighton Basketball season. The areas of focus include menu development and pricing, human resources and staffing, COVID-19 protocols, and supply chain and operations strategies. Ms. VanDorn continues to work with Levy corporate and DCHD on all health and safety protocols, including the additional measures that are requested on an event-by-event basis. Levy is coordinating with all team members, not-for-profit groups, and all temporary staffing agencies to ensure that Levy is continuing to comply with all the expectations.

### **Public Relations Update**

Ms. Kristyna Engdahl stated that the changing vaccination and COVID-19 testing protocols for upcoming concerts has been the focus of outward communications this month; James Taylor, making restrictions known from the start, and the Eagles announcing their intentions just within the last week. As the Eagles get closer and MECA's entry plans shore up, a concerted traditional media push will be made to continue educating the public on these parameters, and hopefully that transparency will help them arrive with all the adequate documentation.

MECA has been coordinating with the DCHD to place a pop-up vaccination pod towards the northeast corner of Lot D. Communication will be a key part of their strategy, as they only intend to have clinics on non-event days. It sounds like this setup will mostly accommodate booster shots. Ms. Engdahl will help support them with outward communications on MECA social channels.

The Rally for Responders has been officially announced over at TDAPO. Communications calls are planned for the next week to remind the public that while the event is free, a ticket is required for entry. There will also be parking education to tackle, as this event overlaps with the River City Rodeo.

Having announcements, concerts and some events return to the CHI Health Center in August translated into an uptick of media attention. MECA had 227 mentions across varying news outlets and platforms, according to data from Visit Omaha, which reached 12.3 million people for a total publicity value of \$43.7 thousand last month. Most of those stories were here locally, but MECA was also mentioned as far away as Alaska and New York.

### **Committee Updates:**

#### **Internal Governance Committee**

Mr. Tom Kelley reported that the Internal Governance Committee met on Thursday, September 9, 2021, at MECA's offices. In attendance were Chairwoman Duren, Mr. Bob Freeman, Mr. Tom Kelley, Mr. Roger Dixon, and Ms. Diane Mills.

The Committee reviewed the June 30 Financial Statements, which were as expected. It was a rough financial year for MECA with operating loss in excess of \$4 million. The amount of federal aid that was administered by several local governments as well as the Small Business Association (SBA) were absolutely required in order to keep the doors open the past year and will provide

MECA with some additional resources going forward as the Delta Variant will be dealt with in this fiscal year.

**Real Estate Committee**

Mr. Jay Noddle made no report.

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**Contract Approvals:**

Chairwoman Duren indicated there are three contracts requiring Board approval.

**Gregg Young Automotive Group**

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Gregg Young Automotive Group for the purchase of a 2022 pickup with a snowplow package for use on the grounds, as more fully described 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. Kelley seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 4-0

**Bridges Investment Management, Inc.**

**RESOLVED**, that the Advertising/Sponsorship Agreement between MECA and Bridges Investment Management, Inc. for advertising, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved, and Roger Dixon as President/CEO is authorized to execute the Advertising/Sponsorship 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 Ms. Buffett seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 4-0

**Lockton Companies**

**RESOLVED**, that the Advertising/Sponsorship Agreement between MECA and Lockton Companies for advertising at CHI Health Center Omaha, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved, and Roger Dixon as President/CEO is authorized to execute the Advertising/Sponsorship 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. Kelley.

Motion carried: 4-0

**Next Board Meeting**

The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 9:15 a.m. in the MECA Board Room.

**Executive Session**

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 9:46 a.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: 4-0.

**Adjournment**

At 10:49 a.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Ms. Buffett, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 4-0

Adjournment 10:50 a.m.