

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION  
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – MARCH 21, 2022**

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 9:14 a.m. on March 21, 2022.

**Roll Call:**

Present or participating via teleconference were: Chairwoman Diane Duren, Mr. Ben Gray, 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 March 14, 2022, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on March 14, 2022.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Noddle moved for approval of the minutes of the February 8, 2022, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Gray.

Motion carried: 4-0.

**President/CEO Report:**

Mr. Roger Dixon stated that since the last Board meeting on February 8, the convention center and arena have hosted the Home and Garden Expo, NSAA Wrestling Championship, President’s Day Classic Volleyball Tournament, Omaha Boat Sports and Travel Show, National Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic, Omaha Home Show, The Gauntlet Great Plains Regional Volleyball Championship, five Creighton Men’s basketball games and five concerts (Eric Church, Morgan Wallen, Tool, Billie Eilish and Slipknot). It’s been a busy month. Events are returning with capacity crowds amid staffing shortages. Mr. Dixon noted that MECA’s employees have stepped up to the challenge to ensuring events have been seamless.

Chairwoman Duren added that staffing shortages are being experienced across the country. The Board appreciates the efforts of employees and will support increasing staff as needed.

**Other Business:**

**Convention Center Sales & Marketing Update**

Ms. Denise Niebrugge stated that there are currently 111 events on the books, utilizing 191 event days for the current fiscal year. Since the February 8, 2022, Board meeting, 14 events and over 13,000 hotel room nights have been added and 16 license contracts have been signed.

Mr. Noddle inquired as to how does activity at the CHI Health Center Omaha (CHIHCO) convention center compare to competitors in the region. Ms. Niebrugge stated that many of the competitors still have COVID-19 restrictions in place and this seems to be driving business to Omaha; and that MECA's collaboration with our CVB is an added benefit.

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

Mr. Tom O’Gorman stated that he attended Pollstar Live! 2022 Convention in Los Angeles, California in February. Pollstar Live! is the world’s largest gathering of live entertainment professionals and the flagship event for Pollstar magazine, the leading trade publication for the global live entertainment industry. The industry is coming back strong and new events will continue to be announced into June.

The sales focus has moved from CHIHCO to Charles Schwab Field Omaha (CSFO). There are approximately 800 club seats to renew before the Men’s College World Series (CWS). Most of these are located in the sun beyond third base.

The sales team continues to look for sponsors, as there are some minor inventory items not filled yet.

### **Operations & IT Update**

Mr. Kevin Raymond recognized the hard work and dedication of staff as events pick up in the arena and convention center. There is a huge team effort from every level, including employees from The RiverFront and stadium, who have stepped up and volunteered to work outside their normal scope of job duties to make events successful.

The biggest challenge continues to be event staffing. There was a job fair at the end of February, which had a better turnout than the previous year. Another one is planned for the end of April, and MECA hopes the adjustment of salary rates will attract new employees and keep bringing back seasonal help year-after-year.

The replacement of arena seats at CHIHCO for the most part has been completed. The security bollards project has started on 13<sup>th</sup> & Cuming Streets, and is on schedule to be completed by March 29. Once done they will move to Gate 2 on 13<sup>th</sup> & Fahey Streets. Completion is anticipated in May ahead of the Big Ten Tournament. The CSFO exterior signage approved last month is on target to be installed by the end of April.

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

Ms. Chris VanDorn stated that since the last Board meeting on February 8, Levy has hosted 38 food and beverage events with several of those being multi-day shows overlapping between arena, convention center and now with the stadium. The Levy team has been staggering schedules around the clock to ensure that all the event needs are met. Success has not happened without its share of challenges. Ms. VanDorn noted that Levy team members and volunteer groups deserve so much praise for their commitment and dedication, countless hours and some very long days.

Ms. VanDorn reviewed the notable highlights of the last several weeks. NSAA Wrestling had a 44% increase in sales over the pre-pandemic average concession sales. Eric Church once again

set the record for the highest concessions food and beverage per cap in building history, with total concessions food and beverage revenues this year being the second highest in the building. Morgan Wallen now holds the fourth highest per cap and fourth highest total concession revenues with first, second, third and fifth still belonging to Eric Church. Merchandise sales records were set for Tool and Billie Eilish. Tool set the record for the highest per cap and Billie Eilish set the record for the highest single day sales of merchandise since the building opened. Seven merchandise events at CHIHCO since January make up 80% of the top line merchandise revenues that were generated over the entire calendar year in 2019. Total building food and beverage revenues for the month of February actualized 28% over budget with flowthrough for the month of February at 69.7% and year-to-date flowthrough at 91.5%.

Mr. Dixon added that prior to the pandemic MECA normally did well on merchandise stands. However, the past concerts have had guests coming into the building and immediately getting in line for merchandise. Lines have been wrapped all the way around the concourse.

Chairwoman Duren inquired if Eric Church's increase in sales was due to volume or price increases. Ms. VanDorn responded that it was due to the volume.

### **Public Relations Update**

Ms. Kristyna Engdahl stated that there were numerous pre-show communications this month. The band Tool had a strict no cameras policy during their show in early March; Billie Eilish's impassioned fanbase were tireless with questions about general admission (GA), but most had an understanding of the health check procedure; Greta Van Fleet will also have a strong contingency with another entirely GA floor. Social media and direct email communication was utilized in order to educate Billie Eilish fans about the GA wristband procedure, which seemed to work without issue. GA ticketholders were offered the opportunity to arrive early at the venue, receive a numbered wristband (in the order which they were given out) and return later in the day, lining up in that same numerical order. By the time venue doors opened, hundreds of people had assumed their places in line. It is anticipated that this process will be repeated for Greta Van Fleet on Friday.

There were a number of compliments received after the Billie Eilish show. It's not often that fans reach-out after the fact to extend their appreciation for staffing efforts. But last week, multiple guests called or emailed with high-praise for MECA crowd managers and ushers, mentioning that many of them went above and beyond last Wednesday night.

Bon Jovi will offer philanthropic outreach to local organizations that have provided important services during the COVID-19 pandemic at his April 1 show to include: Gotta Be Me, Inc., The Hope Center for Kids and the Foodbank for the Heartland.

Between event announcements and pre-show outreach, media monitoring efforts for CHI Health Center Omaha caught about 2,500 mentions in February for a reach of 1.6 billion people. That's about \$15 million in earned publicity.

### **Committee Updates:**

#### **Internal Governance Committee**

Mr. Tom Kelley reported that the Internal Governance Committee met on Monday, March 14, 2022, 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 December and January Financial Statements. After overviews from and discussions with Ms. Mills, the Committee found the report to be reasonable compared to plan and prior periods, and consistent with standard MECA accounting practices.

### **Real Estate Committee**

Mr. Jay Noddle stated that the Urban Core Committee has nearly completed their strategic planning work and the Omaha Chamber Board will be asked to vote on Friday, which will initiate an implementation stage. A new committee will be developed to focus on the approved plans, including the streetcar project. There will be a preliminary engineering and due diligence process which will require MECA participation.

A high level of coordination will be required to determine how MECA exits the west end of Gene Leahy Mall when the 14<sup>th</sup> Street block is reoccupied first for library demolition and then a lay down area for the Mutual of Omaha Tower construction.

The truck route relocation is nearly complete. MECA will be asked to attend a few informational meetings. There is a system for consideration of major events; it would be helpful for the City to have an updated event schedule.

It appears the tower, redevelopment plan and interlocal agreements (creating the streetcar authority) will receive final approvals from the City Council in May.

The area between Cuming Street and 480, east of the stadium will experience construction later in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter which will affect parking into spring 2023. Mr. Noddle will look to Ms. Kristyna Engdahl to provide a high level coordination of communication.

Mr. Dixon noted that while working with Franklin Thompson and Ben Gray to find a location for a historic marker to commemorate the 1891 lynching of Mr. George Smith, they had learned that 10th Street is eventually slated to continue North. Mr. Noddle responded that is the intent of the City but trucks would continue to be restricted.

Mr. Dixon added that the plaque will be placed at the S.E. corner of 10<sup>th</sup> & Abbott Streets. There will be a dedication on June 16, ahead of Juneteenth.

### **Contract Approvals:**

Chairwoman Duren indicated there are four contracts requiring Board approval.

### **Prodigy Search**

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Prodigy Sports, LLC d/b/a Prodigy Search to provide executive search services, 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. Gray seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 4-0

CHI Health

**RESOLVED**, that the Advertising/Sponsorship Agreement between MECA and CHI Health for advertising at Charles Schwab Field Omaha, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved, and Roger Dixon as President/CEO is authorized to execute this 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 Mr. Gray.

Motion carried: 4-0

TriMark Hockenbergs

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and TriMark Hockenbergs for the purchase and installation of a Tilt Skillet at Charles Schwab Field Omaha, 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. Noddle seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 4-0

American Fence Company of Omaha

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and American Fence Company of Omaha to replace the Loading Dock Gate at Charles Schwab Field Omaha, 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. Gray seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 4-0

**Next Board Meeting**

The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 9:15 a.m. in the MECA Board Room.

**Executive Session**

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 9:52 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. Gray, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 4-0.

**Adjournment**

At 10:27 a.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Mr. Gray, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 4-0

Adjournment 10:27 a.m.