

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION  
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – FEBRUARY 15, 2023**

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 1:11 p.m. on Thursday, February 15, 2023.

**Roll Call:**

Present were: Chairwoman Diane Duren, Ms. Susie Buffett, 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 February 8, 2023, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on February 8, 2023.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Gray moved for approval of the minutes of the January 13, 2023, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 5-0.

**President/CEO Report:**

Mr. Roger Dixon stated that he attended the Levy Innovation Conference in Los Angeles last month. About 250 attendees networked and learned about the next gen tech, while being surrounded with Levy signature food, beverage and hospitality.

MECA has incurred some issues this past month due to freezing temperatures. Mr. Kevin Raymond will go into detail.

**Other Business:**

**Convention Center Sales & Marketing Update**

Ms. Denise Niebrugge reported that there are currently 125 events on the books, utilizing 253 event days for the current fiscal year. Since the January 13 Board meeting, 10 events with 19 event days and over 1,500 hotel room nights have been added. In addition, 24 license contracts have been signed.

Board members were asked to ‘save the date’ on September 9 for MECA’s 20<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Celebration.

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

Mr. Tom O’Gorman stated renewals are nearly complete at Charles Schwab Field Omaha (CSFO). There are eight sponsorship agreements and 21 suites up for renewal at CHI Health Center Omaha (CHIHCO).

Since the last Board meeting on January 13, MECA has announced The Chicks and Jelly Roll. There are still about six shows to be announced.

### **Operations & IT Update**

Mr. Kevin Raymond stated there have been issues with the extreme cold. It started with the pipe breaking at the elbow in the fire system, and four days later in the same area a sprinkler head broke. The entire north end of the ballroom and pre-function area were covered in water. Mr. Raymond expressed gratitude for the staff’s quick reaction and readiness to help. An event was supposed to move in at 7:00 a.m. and it pushed back to noon. The event went well despite last-minute relocation.

Some area near the roof has been identified as open air. It will be insulated and drywalled. The Grand Hall will be patched and painted so it is ready for events. This summer, during the Men’s College World Series, all the drywall will be removed and a ‘mold bomb’ will be used to mitigate future issues. The drywall will then be replaced and repainted.

Issues also arose in the ice rink as a few cracks were discovered in the chiller, with water then coming up through the concrete floor. The manufacturer was contacted, and they worked with vendors to cut through 38” of concrete to get to the pipe. The problem was identified and corrected. It is holding pressure now and will be turned on after the March 1 Creighton Men’s basketball game to prepare ice for the Disney on Ice event.

The technology chips arrived for the walk-through detectors and were tested during the Judds concert. Overall, it went well but there are some areas that need to be tweaked before using on larger crowds.

There is construction on MECA Drive as OPPD and MUD received word from the City of Omaha to move all utilities before May 1. MECA still needs to maintain two lanes for events. The city will take over on May 10 to begin the extension of the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge Baby Bob to improve visitor access to the convention center, ballpark, North Downtown, Creighton and both the Omaha and Council Bluffs Riverfronts.

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

Ms. Chris VanDorn reported that January’s results continued the trend of strong financial results with it being in the top three of the highest revenue generating Januarys on record. The budget was exceeded by 10.5%. The fiscal 2023 sales year-to-date through January remain higher than any other year, surpassing the nearest seven-month period in 2018 by 37.1%, and exceeding year-to-date budgeted sales by nearly 30%.

In the convention center last month, the Governor's Inaugural Ball was the largest three course plated meal ever served in this building and due to its size, sales from the event represented a 65% increase over the last largest plated meal event.

The arena events have been all Creighton Men's Basketball games for January, including the fan appreciation night and the pink-out game. Attendance grew throughout the month, which translated into a growth in revenue. January's average sales per game were up 36% from the October to December games and the per caps increased to just over .50 cents for the same time frame.

Looking ahead, Levy is prepping for large numbers of hungry fans for the NSAA State Wrestling Tournament and the President's Day Volleyball Tournament. Staffing has been increased to accommodate sold-out wrestling sessions and an increased number of volleyball teams participating this year.

Levy continues to work on a number of projects including staying on track with the Point-of-Sale (POS) upgrade and working through preseason planning to open the ballpark in a few short weeks.

### **Public Relations Update**

Ms. Kristyna Engdahl stated that the return of exposition season to the convention center has drawn news outlets to the CHI Health Center Omaha for several weekend mornings, including most recently for coverage of the Home and Garden Expo. Along with early morning live shots, several outlets also provided coverage of the event during their evening newscasts.

Questions are being fielded from the media regarding NSAA State Wrestling, which draws in an audience from across the state. Similarly, outreach efforts are being facilitated for visitors with important information regarding clear bags, cash-free concessions and parking.

In the weeks ahead, conversations about media accommodations for the FEI World Cup are assured to pick up as international requests for sponsorships and credentials are already advancing.

Media is anticipated to be in the building for Disney on Ice, as they offer pre-show, interactive opportunities for coverage and have placed an emphasis on partnerships with influencers, which is helpful for encouraging promotion of the event before it begins early next month.

Looking back at the fourth and final quarter of 2022, media monitoring efforts caught 3,725 mentions of CHI Health Center Omaha reaching 6.3 billion people; that's a total publicity value of \$58.6 million. There were several placements on MSN.com, Yahoo! News, ESPN.com, CBSSports.com, among others. The bulk of the notable pick-up from the fourth quarter included the Terence Crawford fight (which dominated much of our media monitoring data), along with coverage of numerous concerts, new announcements and Creighton Men's Basketball, just to name some highlights.

## **Committee Updates:**

### **Internal Governance Committee**

Mr. Tom Kelley reported that the Internal Governance Committee met on Monday, February 13, 2023. In attendance were Ms. Diane Duren, Mr. Bob Freeman, Mr. Tom Kelley, Mr. Roger Dixon, and Ms. Diane Mills.

The Committee reviewed the December Statements, which were in order. 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.

Mr. Kelley testified in favor of Legislative Bill 797 which seeks to amend provisions in the Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act. MECA has conceptually discussed the need for potential convention center expansion, and the City of Omaha is leading the effort to expand the funding mechanism as many companies are looking for funding for potential expansion projects.

### **Real Estate Committee**

Mr. Jay Noddle provided an update on projects in the downtown area.

The truck route continues to advance slowly. There has been a change as two major truckers are relocating out of the area. This change could make it easier to place a prohibitive covenant restricting truckers from coming in, and potentially be easier than building a truck route. A new truck route would create development opportunities; there still are a number of initiatives being discussed.

The Builders District's next projects are out of the ground and have sparked interest from hotel operators. There are a couple of studies getting ready to commence and MECA may be asked to participate.

Mayor Stothert and MUD have made an agreement which ensures that as far as the streetcar is concerned, whether original build or ongoing operations and maintenance, there will be no base rate increase from MUD. Selection committees have awarded HDR as the design team, and Kiewit as the general construction manager/general contractor for the project. Contract negotiations are underway. There are a handful of design schemes and site planning for the vehicle maintenance facility located onsite, which will require MECA board approval.

This week, the Omaha Public Works Department and design team are having 'car days'. Streetcar manufacturers from around the world are here in Omaha. It will be informative relative to where cars can be off-wire and where they can be battery operated. It is critical for MECA, as this is an area that should be off-wire. The team will develop a performance specification that incorporates what percentage of the route needs to be off-wire, etc., which will dictate how many cars and batteries are required.

Chairwomen Duren inquired if Mr. Noddle was doing community outreach meetings. Mr. Noddle responded yes, there will be meetings with property owners along the route to discuss the logistics of the stops. A big social media campaign kicks off next week and that, combined with increased activity on Omahastreetcar.org should make the project accessible for people to ask questions or give opinions.

**Contract Approvals:**

Chairwoman Duren indicated there are nine contracts requiring Board approval.

First National Bank of Omaha

**RESOLVED**, that the Advertising/Sponsorship Agreement between MECA and First National Bank of Omaha for advertising at CHI Health Center Omaha and 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. Noddle.

Motion carried: 5-0

DeepSeas

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and DeepSeas to provide cyber network security services for MECA at CHI Health Center Omaha, Charles Schwab Field Omaha and The RiverFront, 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. Gray.

Motion carried: 5-0

Specseats Int'l Corp / Clarin Seating

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Specseats Int'l Corp / Clarin Seating for the purchase of 100 folding chairs for use 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 Ms. Buffett seconded by Mr. Gray.

Motion carried: 5-0

First National Bank of Omaha

**RESOLVED**, that the Advertising/Sponsorship Agreement between MECA and First National Bank of Omaha 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. Gray seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 5-0

First Wireless, Inc. /D&D Communications

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and First Wireless, Inc./D&D Communications for the purchase of two-way radios, accessories, charging stations and programming for 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 Ms. Buffett seconded by Mr. Gray.

Motion carried: 5-0

Lexus of Omaha

**RESOLVED**, that the Advertising/Sponsorship Agreement between MECA and Lexus of Omaha 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 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 Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 5-0

Herban Coffee and Blooms

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Herban Coffee and Blooms for the purchase, design, assembly and installation of table décor for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at CHI Health Center 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: 5-0

Johnstone Supply

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Johnstone Supply for the purchase of R22 freon to be used at CHI Health Center Omaha to make the ice floor for the March 9-12 Disney on Ice event, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved.

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the President/CEO's execution of the agreement is hereby ratified and approved.

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

Moved by Mr. Gray seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 5-0

Freeman Expositions, LLC

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Freeman Expositions, LLC for the rental of aisle carpet to be used at CHI Health Center Omaha for the setup of the 2022 NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved.

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the President/CEO's execution of the agreement is hereby ratified and approved.

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

Moved by Mr. Gray seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 5-0

**Next Board Meeting**

The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 16, 2023, at 9:15 a.m. in the MECA Board Room.

**Executive Session**

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 1:52 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. Gray, seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 5-0.

## **Adjournment**

At 2:17 p.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Mr. Gray, seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 5-0

Adjournment 2:17 p.m.