

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – APRIL 13, 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 9:12 a.m. on April 13, 2021.

Roll Call:

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

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 April 6, 2021, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on April 6, 2021.

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Buffett moved for approval of the minutes of the March 16, 2021, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 5-0.

President/CEO Report:

Mr. Roger Dixon stated that MECA held a meeting this past month with neighborhood partners: Hilton Omaha, Omaha Marriott Downtown at the Capitol District, Shamrock Development, and the Omaha Police Department (OPD). The meeting was to discuss some events that occurred in a few of the Capitol District night venues, and how to improve security. MECA’s intent is to provide a safe environment for all athletes, their families and fans attending the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Women’s Volleyball Championship, the U.S. Olympic Swim Team Trials, and the NCAA Men’s College World Series (CWS). Security and additional patrols will be increased in this area.

Mr. Warren inquired if hiring off-duty officers, or increasing security not just during events, but for all the evening activities in Capitol District area had been discussed. Mr. Dixon responded that yes, Shamrock Development, who owns the property, will be hiring off-duty gang unit officers, as well as others to patrol in and around the Capitol District area. To date, there have been no issues outside of normal nighttime activities. Mr. Warren asked if OPD indicated when they would begin staffing traffic control for upcoming events. Mr. Dixon responded there has not been a need with reduced capacity for events; however, MECA has a solid working relationship with OPD and are communicating on a regular basis how many guests are expected for events. Typically, 5,000 guests or more will warrant OPD traffic staffing. OPD remains instrumental in getting fans in and out of the facilities.

Mr. Noddle asked about the current position on capacity for both indoor and outdoor events at MECA. Mr. Dixon responded that nearly a month ago, Nebraska's Governor Pete Ricketts returned capacity back to 100 % for both indoor and outdoor events. MECA then had a discussion with the Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) regarding their requirements for social distancing. The question went back to the Governor's office asking how social distance may be achieved with capacity being 100%. Since then, MECA has submitted for a number of events at 100% capacity (events over 1,000 attendees require an application for an opening permit) and they have been approved with the understanding it could change depending on evolving regulations. Mr. Dixon is hopeful that with vaccinations readily available things will move in the right direction.

Mr. Noddle inquired if the NCAA has been more restrictive with their championship events. Mr. Dixon stated that the NCAA has currently dictated 25% capacity, which was the same for men's and women's basketball. It is also the level for the Women's Volleyball Championship matches. It is unknown what capacity level will be set for the CWS. USA Swimming is setting their capacity at approximately 50% for the Swim Trials. MECA accepts the capacity decision of the entity using the venue.

Chairwoman Duren inquired as to what resolution was determined for the locker rooms for the volleyball teams. Mr. Dixon responded that tents were assembled in the exhibit hall, which seem to be working for the teams.

Finally, Mr Dixon noted that Capitol Avenue construction and closure will now not likely occur until after the CWS in June.

Other Business:

Convention Center Sales & Marketing Update

Ms. Denise Niebrugge stated that there are currently 35 events on the books, utilizing 96 event days for 2021. Since the March 16, 2021 Board meeting, 9 events and over 3,000 hotel room nights have been added. In addition, 11 license agreements have been signed.

MECA's first sit-down dinner for Assure Women was a success with over 1,000 attendees. The clients were pleased with all the precautions taken by Levy and MECA.

The first multi-day conference will occur in May with 700-800 people. The meeting planners are excited to move forward and return to some normalcy.

Corporate Sales & Marketing Update

Mr. Tom O'Gorman stated that this past month, efforts have been concentrated on the NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship. Practice began today, all teams were COVID-19 tested yesterday. Each team has to be tested every day they are on site, which played a big part in MECA's staffing. Mr. O'Gorman noted that over 10,000 linear feet of pipe and drape has been set up for this event.

A meeting has been set with the NCAA and CWS, Inc. this week to discuss ticketing for the CWS. Hopefully, more information will be available following the meeting.

Mr. Kelley asked if MECA has been able to address the concerns about the locker rooms, weight rooms, conditioning facilities, and meals for the women's volleyball teams. Mr. O'Gorman responded, that yes, extra steps were taken to accommodate all their needs. A weight room was installed yesterday at the end of the practice courts, and yoga areas were added for stretching. Levy offered meals here, and some teams took advantage while others did not.

Operations & IT Update

Mr. Kevin Raymond reported that the last few weeks event staff has been focused on volleyball. Everyone has been up to the challenge and have done a great job accommodating daily, sometimes hourly requests for changes.

Concrete barriers were brought in last week for crowd protection outside CHI Health Center Omaha (CHIHCO) and TD Ameritrade Park Omaha (TDAPO). MECA is working very closely with law enforcement, including the Omaha Police Department (OPD), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Homeland Security. Bomb sweeps are being conducted even though attendance is limited. MECA strives to provide a safe environment for all.

Bi-weekly calls continue with USA Swimming and the Omaha Sports Commission (OSC) regarding construction, schedule, and move in for the US Swim Trials. May will come quickly and MECA needs to be prepared.

Baseball season has officially arrived at TDAPO. There have been a few cancellations due to COVID-19, as well as wet field conditions. The team is getting the stadium ready for the CWS.

Mr. Warren asked if the increased media coverage of early volleyball rounds presented any challenges. Mr. Raymond responded that from the onset it was known that ESPN was planning on streaming these games so MECA was prepared with the needed infrastructure. Commentary for the matches is not onsite while they play in the convention center, and that was coordinated with ESPN without technical issues.

Levy Food & Beverage Update

Ms. Chris VanDorn stated it has been exciting to consistently return team members to work with various events happening around the building. February revenues this year were higher than any month since the COVID-19 pandemic depleted business since March 2020. Events included Disney on Ice, several dance competitions, and more club volleyball in the convention center. All of them had strong per caps to drive revenues in March as well.

In addition to the ticketed events, Ms. VanDorn was proud of the entire Levy team performance for the preparation and execution of the Assure banquet. Many operational changes were made based on the DCHD requirements for service. In addition to the management team, 60 people were brought in for the event, which served approximately 1,250 guests in the exhibit hall and everyone on the team played an essential role in making the event a success.

Focus quickly shifted to women's volleyball and baseball at TDAPO. Levy's team is working diligently to accommodate the needs and requests of teams and others.

Public Relations Update

Ms. Kristyna Engdahl presented a visual ticketing update for the NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship, as well as provided insight on the ticketing process for the U. S. Olympic Swim Trials. Both of these are clearly large, multi-day events with numerous nuances, but have been navigated with the use of traditional and social media, and direct communication with ticketholders.

Beginning with the NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship – the entire event, on both sides of the CHI Health Center, remains capped at 25% capacity. For that reason, there was no public on-sale for the exhibition hall games to include the First and Second Rounds and Regional Semi-Finals. Instead, each team was allotted a set number of tickets that may be distributed among family members wishing to attend the event.

Subsequently, media availability has also been restricted in the exhibition halls, as only Tier 1 individuals may have access to the floor during tournament play. The NCAA's contracted photographer, who will be tested daily for COVID-19, may have courtside access and will provide dozens of images, free of charge, for media availability and use.

Both the National Semi-Finals and Finals games have already sold-out in the arena. About 1,300 tickets remain for Sessions 1 and 2 of the Regionals Finals and about 200 for Sessions 3 and 4. Those tickets may also sell-out quickly, depending how the local teams advance.

Media access will also become available in the arena; even in compliance with the NCAA's social distancing requirements, a couple-dozen seats will still be available in the press box. Along with space for national and traveling media, MECA will assure local reporters and photographers also get the access they require. All post-game interviews and press conferences will take place virtually.

Measures such as venue capacity and access restrictions have all been mandated by the NCAA, and MECA continues to accommodate these parameters.

Advanced coverage of the tournament has been mixed. Clearly there were some concerns before the event that the NCAA and MECA jointly had the opportunity to address. Other stories have outlined the economic impact of an event of this size and magnitude (such as the *Omaha World-Herald's* positive story that published on Sunday), the numerous health, safety and testing requirements in place, and even the NCAA officials helping to make the whole thing happen – such as the Director of Championships and Alliances, who happens to be a former Cornhusker.

There was also plenty of media interest in the relaunch of ticketing for the US Olympic Swim Trials in June. The determined capacity by USA Swimming for this event is about 50% of the arena.

With this plan, original 2020 ticket purchasers will have two, exclusive pre-sale opportunities for both Wave II all session and daily tickets, with daily tickets providing access to the morning preliminaries and evening finals on a single day. Tickets may be purchased in physically distanced pods of two, four or six and fans could purchase up to six tickets for each session on a first come, first served basis.

Similar to the NCAA Volleyball Tournament, this was a scenario that required refunds to all current ticketholders and a resale of the entire event (Swim Trials were previously filled to 90% capacity).

The first all session pre-sale for individuals who had previously bought tickets begins on April 16; they will be issued an exclusive and single use code to complete their new transactions. After that, all session tickets go on sale to the general public on April 23. Daily pre-sale for Wave II begins on April 23, and general on-sale for daily Wave II tickets and all Wave I tickets begins on April 26 (all at 10:00 a.m.)

Current ticketholders were directly informed of these changes via email; the information was also picked up by all local news media, with bigger stories in the *Omaha World-Herald* and on *KMTV* detailing this information. As a reminder, Wave I is June 4 through 7 and Wave II is June 13 through 20.

An event that ticketing decisions have not been confirmed to date is the 2021 College World Series. As a reminder, Creighton University Baseball was approved for 100% capacity at TD Ameritrade Park Omaha, but their attendance usually hovers around a few-thousand people per game. MECA is hopeful that sometime this month the NCAA may determine a capacity, as staffing and catering decisions will need to be made. MECA continues to receive this question nearly weekly from local media.

CWS of Omaha, Inc. recently facilitated an updated economic impact study in conjunction with Dr. Ernie Goss of Goss & Associates. Their findings showed that the event's financial benefits have substantially increased over just the past few years.

The annual economic impact of the College World Series has jumped to \$88.3 million, an increase from \$63.7 million in 2014. That creates an equivalent of about 1,100 year-round jobs, up from 777 in 2015.

The study also examined how many people are coming from outside the City to attend the event, determining that about 71.2% are visitors bringing their tourism dollars to Omaha. In 2010, that number was closer to 59%. Total CWS attendance in 2019 was 332,054 fans.

A number of other Omaha attractions continue to benefit from the annual College World Series as well, with 23.5% of attendees visiting the Old Market, about 20% going to the Zoo and around 13% visiting the Joslyn Art Museum (just to name a few).

The results of this study provided some more good news in a time when Omaha's tourism industry has been suffering.

Mr. Warren asked if there has been any mention of the location sites for the Big East or Big Ten Tournaments. Mr. Dixon responded that the Big Ten is not playing any games outside the conference and it is unclear how it will be determined. The Big East holds their championship on the East coast, and there has been little interaction with them. The Big Ten has been very conservative in their approach to baseball in light of the pandemic.

Mr. Noddle inquired if there is anyone coordinating a community wide marketing effort to get the word out that Omaha is open and ready for business. The amount of exposure Omaha will receive hosting the NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship, the U.S. Olympic Swim Team Trials, and the Men's College World Series is almost unprecedented. There are not many other communities that will experience this kind of activity and incredible amount of local, national or even international media coverage due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is an opportunity to get out in front of the coverage and heavily market this community, and it needs to be proactive rather than reactive.

Ms. Engdahl responded that it will be discussed this week on a call with the OSC, the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, the Omaha Convention and Visitor's Bureau (OCVB) and CWS, Inc. of Omaha. The more voices promoting Omaha and echoing that message the more likely it will resonate.

Committee Updates:

Internal Governance Committee

Mr. Tom Kelley reported that the Internal Governance Committee met via teleconference on Tuesday, April 6, 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 February 2021 Financial Statements, noting that historical financial statements continue to look bleak. After overviews from and discussions with Ms. Mills, the Committee found the report to be consistent with standard MECA accounting practices.

The Committee also reviewed the draft of MECA's tax return.

Finally, the Committee addressed the Shuttered Venue Operators grant program and will apply once the Small Business Associations portal is accepting applications. MECA has also applied for the second draw of the Federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Mr. Kelley noted it has been an extremely tough year financially, but the situation seems to be improving for the future.

Real Estate Committee

Mr. Jay Noddle announced that there are two significant initiatives underway, one with trucks and the other with parking in the immediate area. Both of those initiatives are advancing fairly quickly and more information should be available by the next Board meeting in June.

Election of Officers

Mr. Freeman next presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the following slate of officers is proposed to serve for the designated terms.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the following are elected as officers of MECA for the indicated terms and until their successors are duly-elected and qualified:

President/CEO:	Roger Dixon – 1 year	(May 1, 2021-April 30, 2022)
Vice Chair:	Jay Noddle – 1 year	(May 1, 2021-April 30, 2022)
Treasurer:	Tom Kelley – 1 year	(May 1, 2021-April 30, 2022)
Secretary:	Thomas Warren – 1 year	(May 1, 2021-April 30, 2022)
Assistant-Secretary:	Bob Freeman – 1 year	(May 1, 2021-April 30, 2022)

[Note: Diane Duren remains Chairwoman for second year of her two-year term.]

Moved by Ms. Buffett, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 5-0

Contract Approvals:

Chairwoman Duren indicated there are four contracts requiring Board approval.

Bland & Associates, PC

RESOLVED, that the Agreement between MECA and Bland & Associates, PC for audit and tax preparation services for three years, 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 Mr. Warren.

Motion carried: 5-0

Dale's Trash Service dba Port-A-Johns

RESOLVED, that the Agreement between MECA and Port-A-Johns for the rental of 73 standard and 14 ADA portable restrooms for the 2021 NCAA® Men's College World Series, 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. Warren seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 5-0

Control Services, Inc.

RESOLVED, that the Agreement between MECA and Control Services, Inc. to furnish, install, and program an Electric EcoStruxure control system at TD Ameritrade Park 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. Kelley seconded by Mr. Warren.

Motion carried: 5-0

B & D Turf Cars, LLC.

RESOLVED, that the Agreement between MECA and B & D Turf Cars, LLC for the rental of 25 golf carts for the 2021 NCAA® Men's College World Series, 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. Warren seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 5-0

Next Board Meeting

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

Executive Session

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 9:56 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. Warren.

Motion carried: 5-0.

Adjournment

At 10:09 a.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Mr. Kelley, seconded by Mr. Warren.

Motion carried: 5-0

Adjournment 10:09 a.m.