

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION  
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – MARCH 20, 2024**

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 9:17 a.m. on Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

**Roll Call:**

Present were: Chairwoman Diane Duren, Mr. Ben Gray, Mr. Tom Kelley, and Mr. Jay Noddle.

**Proof of Publication:**

Notice of the meeting was published in *The Daily Record* on March 13, 2024, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on March 13, 2024.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Gray moved for approval of the minutes of the February 14, 2024, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 4-0.

**President/CEO Report:**

Mr. Roger Dixon reported that the finishing touches on the Courtside Lounge are complete with the addition of high-top and ADA tables/chairs and drink rails installed around the columns. The lounge has proved very popular for the Creighton University Men’s basketball games and even more so for concerts. There are eight point-of-sales (POS) areas available, which are fully staffed for concerts. In the past, two to four POS were available at portable locations.

**Other Business:**

**Convention Center Sales & Marketing Update**

Ms. Denise Niebrugge reported that there are currently 130 events on the books, utilizing 286 event days for the current fiscal year. Since the February 14 Board meeting, 14 events with 28 event days and over 14,000 hotel room nights have been added. In addition, 12 license contracts have been signed.

**Corporate Sales & Marketing Update**

Mr. Tom O’Gorman stated that negotiations are complete for Big Ten’s three-year contract at Charles Schwab Field Omaha (CSFO) and the finalized agreement is waiting for signatures by the Big Ten.

The team is currently working on concerts for the September-October timeframe. It will be a strong first quarter with a busy summer.

Renewal work continues on a few club seats located in the sunny sections of 204 and 220 at Charles Schwab Field Omaha.

Sponsorship discussions continue regarding naming rights for the new Courtside Lounge.

### **Operations & IT Update**

Mr. Kevin Raymond stated that the team is now busy changing Creighton's sports focus from basketball to baseball for the season. The staff did a great job preparing and executing for the court storm that occurred after Creighton's win over the UConn basketball team. The players and coaches were all well protected.

Open practices are scheduled for later today for the 2024 March Madness Tournament. CHI Health Center Omaha will be hosting the first and second rounds on March 21 – 23. The team has been working with the Omaha Police Department (OPD), the Omaha Fire Department (OFD) and Omaha SWAT to ensure this event is safe and secure for all attending. The facility was notified that members of the Westboro Baptist Church would be onsite Saturday protesting rules and bylaws of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

Work continues on the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge expansion, commonly referred to as the "Baby Bob". The project is still on target to be opened in October 2024.

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

Ms. Chris Van Dorn reported that Levy was extremely busy in February with 26 events and 42 event days at CHI Health Center Omaha (CHIHCO), which accounted for the highest single month sales in this building's history. The previous highest record was set in February 2023, and revenues increased over that record by 17.8%.

February CHIHCO sales also came in 57% over budget. This was helped by four Creighton games that included the sold-out Creighton vs UConn game with the highest sales of the 2023/2024 season. That game's sales actualized 54% higher than the average home game this season. February numbers were assisted by sales of three Supernovas volleyball games as well as the opening of the new Courtside Lounge. The opening week was a huge success with the Nate Bargatze show followed by the Eagles. Sales in the Courtside Lounge for the Eagles increased 77% in comparison to the previous portable floor bar that was in its place the last time the Eagles were here in 2021.

The Olivia Rodrigo concert set a new record for the highest amount of merchandise sold for a single event in the building's history. The previous record-setting merch event was Billie Eilish, and Olivia Rodrigo surpassed those sales by 33%.

The corporate office at Levy ordered an inspection last month from the external company to ensure that all company safety and sanitation practices are being followed and expectations are being met. Ms. VanDorn was proud to report that Levy received a 5-Star rating for the inspection and extended her gratitude towards her team for the work done and the emphasis everyone places on safety and

sanitation daily. This is the highest rating a location can receive, and it was based on 11 locations being inspected during an event. Additionally, a routine Health Department inspection was conducted last week that also resulted in an excellent rating.

A media tasting was held last week for the following signature food items Levy will be showcasing for this week's March Madness tournament:

- The "Heat Check" burger (section 116)
- The "Flying Hawaiian" dog (section 119)
- The And One! chicken club (section 124)
- Gameday Garlic-Parmesan popcorn (section 108)
- Double-Trouble wings (section 116)
- "Ankle Breaker" loaded pretzel bites (section 124)
- Burnt-End brisket fries (section 116)
- Philly cheesesteak nachos (near section 206)
- Ancho-Chicken rice bowl (near section 105)

These items were extremely well received at the tasting and Levy is looking forward to people having an opportunity to try them on Thursday and Saturday.

### **Public Relations Update**

Ms. Kristyna Engdahl reported that in the last month MECA entertained several local news live shot opportunities on site, including in promotion of Disney on Ice, the Boat Sports and Travel Show, the Home and Garden Expo and World of Wheels. In the first weekend in March, the ops team accommodated the Imagine Dance Challenge, Home and Garden Expo and a Creighton Men's Basketball game, all in one day, so early arrival messaging was imperative.

The *Omaha World-Herald* broke the story about potential expansion onto the convention center, after discussions with Mayor Jean Stothert, Steve Curtiss from Omaha City Finance, Deb Ward with Visit Omaha and Roger Dixon. The article did a thorough job of breaking down the need and potential of this proposed renovation.

Over the past couple weeks and for the next few days, communication efforts will focus on March Madness, with several 'know before you go' pushes already directly distributed and posted on social media. Other associated story opportunities included a special menu reveal from Levy, where members of the media were invited to both see and taste some of Levy's exciting creations, as well as court setup, which just had reporters in the arena on Monday morning.

CHI Health Center Omaha also had a big year, according to media monitoring reports, with over 5 thousand mentions catching about 6.7 billion people in the fourth quarter alone with pickup in *USA Today* and Yahoo! News. Looking back through the entirety of 2023, stories about CHI Health Center Omaha reached about 30.6 billion people with an international reach. This year has also started strong, with almost 3 thousand placements in January reaching 4.2 billion people, and another over 4 thousand placements in February reaching 4.9 billion people. Promotion of events,

concert announcements and the end of Creighton Basketball's season were all primary contributors.

### **Committee Updates:**

#### **Internal Governance Committee**

Mr. Tom Kelley reported that the Internal Governance Committee met on Monday, March 18, 2024. In attendance were Ms. Diane Duren, Mr. Tom Kelley, Mr. Roger Dixon, Mr. Bob Freeman, Ms. Diane Mills and Mr. Stephen Curtis, City of Omaha Finance Director.

The Committee reviewed the December 2023 and January 2024 Financial Statements, which were strong and 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.

#### **Real Estate Committee**

Mr. Jay Noddle stated that private commercial real estate activity continues to be active in the downtown area. Everyone will be respectful of the major events with safety being considered first.

Progress on the truck route has been steady and the city is busy working on arrangements.

The Streetcar Authority and HDR are discussing refinements for the vehicle maintenance facility.

#### **Contract Approvals:**

Chairwoman Duren indicated there are five contracts requiring Board approval.

#### **Commercial Flooring Systems**

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Commercial Flooring Systems to remove and install new carpet in the clubhouses 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

#### **Pueblo Hotel Supply d/b/a/ Grady's**

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Pueblo Hotel Supply d/b/a Grady's for the purchase and delivery of concessions equipment 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. Noddle.

Motion carried: 4-0

#### TriMark Hockenbergs

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and TriMark Hockenbergs for the purchase and delivery of Double Door Reach in Freezers 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. Kelley seconded by Mr. Gray.

Motion carried: 4-0

#### Mulhall's Landscape

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Mulhall's Landscape to provide landscaping services 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 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: 4-0

#### Fisher Window Cleaning LLC

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Fisher Window Cleaning LLC to provide window cleaning services 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 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. Gray.

Motion carried: 4-0

**Contracts Recently Awarded:**

MECA has recently awarded the following contracts:

- Freeman Decorating / Carpet Rental for NCAA Basketball
- Sam Tell & Sons Inc. / Security Cages and Staging Cabinets for Concessions
- Chef's Depot / Concessions Equipment
- Lanoha / Mulch

**Next Board Meeting**

The next Board of Directors Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at 1:15 p.m. in the MECA Board Room.

**Executive Session**

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 9:41 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. Kelley.

Motion carried: 4-0.

**Adjournment**

At 10:15 a.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Mr. Gray, seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 4-0

Adjournment 10:15 a.m.