

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – JANUARY 15, 2026**

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 9:08 a.m. on Thursday, January 15, 2026.

Roll Call:

Present were: Chairwoman Diane Duren, Ms. Susie Buffett, Mr. Jay Noddle, Mr. Tom Kelley, and Mr. Ben Gray who participated by telephone.

Proof of Publication:

Notice of the meeting was published in *The Daily Record* on January 8, 2026, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on January 8, 2026.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Noddle moved for approval of the minutes of November 18, 2025, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 5-0.

President/CEO Report:

Mr. Adam Straight reported that his first week and a half have included numerous introductions, along with a mix of local and national media interviews, with additional interviews scheduled in the coming weeks. He shared his appreciation for the overwhelming graciousness of the community, noting the many messages of congratulations and support, and expressed his enthusiasm for the organization’s collective success.

Mr. Straight has also attended several events, which have provided opportunities to meet team members and become more familiar with the facility.

Regarding the expansion project, Mr. Straight reported that work is progressing well and that both the schedule and budget appear to be on track. He expressed excitement about becoming more deeply involved, gaining an understanding of the project’s history, and helping guide it into the future. Planning is underway for a topping-out event, marking the placement of the final structural steel beam. The beam will be signed by participants, and the milestone will be recognized as a media event, tentatively planned for February.

Other Business:

Convention Center Sales & Marketing

Ms. Denise Niebrugge reported that there are currently 115 events scheduled, accounting for 243 event days. Since the November 18 Board meeting, 26 additional events have been secured,

representing 65 event days and generating over 30,000 hotel room nights; and 22 license agreements have been signed.

Ms. Niebrugge reported that she recently returned from the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) conference held in Philadelphia, PA. Approximately 4,500 attendees participated in three days of education and networking with leading professionals in the events industry. Ms. Niebrugge added that MECA is fortunate to have Levy representing its facilities.

The American Association of Bovine Practitioners recently hosted its conference at CHI Health Center Omaha (CHIHCO). The organization was so pleased with both the convention center and the City of Omaha that it has contracted to return in 2030 and 2031. This marks the first time the association has ever signed a consecutive two-year booking with a single city, reinforcing Omaha's strong reputation among meeting planners.

Mr. Noddle inquired whether the reported 30,000 room nights reflected increased interest and demand due to the expanded facility, or if market constraints elsewhere were contributing to the increase. Ms. Niebrugge responded that the growth in room nights is primarily the result of nine citywide conventions contracting between 2027 and 2030, with 2030 emerging as a particularly strong year for CHIHCO. In 2027, portions of the convention center will be temporarily closed for approximately three months to allow Kiewit to complete refurbishment work, which is also contributing to increased demand during available dates.

Convention Center demand is driven by a combination of factors, most notably strong marketing of the expansion. During the PCMA conference, panel speakers emphasized that not all cities offer the same level of safety, hospitality, and overall appeal as Omaha, making it a desirable destination for conferences. The collaborative efforts of the CVB, Hilton, Marriott, and the MECA sales team at trade shows should be credited, because planners are being kept informed about Omaha's future enhancements, including the completed streetcar and airport projects by 2028.

Ms. Niebrugge concluded by expressing her support for hosting a topping-out event to commemorate the placement of the final steel beam for the convention center expansion.

Corporate Sales & Marketing Update

Mr. Tom O'Gorman reported that the team is finalizing the club seat renewal process at Charles Schwab Field Omaha (CSFO). Of the 145 total accounts up for renewal, 18 accounts have elected not to renew, and 10 agreements remain outstanding with paperwork currently in circulation. Renewal terms were offered at five, 10, and 12 years. Any available seats will be immediately offered to individuals on the stadium's waiting list. The renewal process is expected to be completed within the next two weeks.

The team is also working with Creighton University and Intersport to bring a four-team volleyball tournament to Omaha in August of this year. Creighton University Head Volleyball Coach Bryan Rosen is very enthusiastic and fully supportive of the effort.

The Sony/PlayStation project, a college baseball video game featuring Charles Schwab Field Omaha, is nearing completion. A few remaining items are being finalized with the NCAA and Charles Schwab, with a tentative release date of March 2026. The game is expected to bring significant national exposure to Charles Schwab Field Omaha and the MCWS (Men's College World Series).

Mr. O'Gorman noted some concern that arena concert bookings are starting slowly for the remainder of the year, with several larger shows being lost to the Lincoln venue for various reasons.

The team is also collaborating with the FIVB (Fédération Internationale de Volleyball) and the OSC (Omaha Sports Commission) to pursue hosting the FIVB Volleyball World Grand Prix in Omaha in 2027. While there are several hurdles to address, negotiations are ongoing.

Finally, the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) has agreed to work with MECA on rain-day scheduling for the Big Ten Baseball Tournament to ensure games remain in the current format without pool play. Additionally, discussions are underway with a federal judge regarding the potential to host a small event during the Big Ten Baseball Tournament.

Operations & IT Update

Mr. Kevin Raymond reported that Creighton University men's basketball is now in conference play and, combined with the opening week of Omaha Supernovas professional women's volleyball matches, the operations team is ramping up for a busy season. This schedule will require numerous changeovers and tight event flips, and Mr. Raymond expressed confidence that his team will rise to the challenge, as they consistently do.

Operational meetings for the Men's College World Series have begun, and the annual partners meeting is scheduled for February 26, during which details and logistics for the 2026 Series will be discussed. MECA will host partners the evening prior, inviting all attendees to the Creighton University's men's basketball game against DePaul at 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Raymond and his team remain focused on several key capital and operational projects. The HVAC project is anticipated to be completed by the end of the month. Security upgrades have also begun on the back end, providing increased storage capacity and the ability to add additional cameras as needed. Installation of the stadium field lights is ahead of schedule due to favorable weather conditions and is expected to be completed by mid-February, allowing sufficient time for testing ahead of the Creighton men's baseball season beginning the first week of March.

The expansion project is progressing well and this week marks a significant milestone for Kiewit as they begin pouring the deck. This is an important step in the construction process, and Kiewit anticipates completing their portion of the work by March. Kiewit is also tying into MECA's existing building systems, including chilled water for air conditioning, glycol for heating, and the natural gas lines. Given current weather conditions and safety considerations, this approach was the most practical solution, particularly to avoid the risks associated with storing a large number

of LP tanks on site. Kiewit has been authorized, and a dedicated meter is in place to accurately track usage attributable to the project.

Mr. Raymond reported that the team continues to work closely with Kiewit and Ms. Niebrugge to identify available windows within the event schedule to support renovation work in the existing convention center. With bookings remaining strong as planning for 2026–2027 progresses, maintaining flexibility will be critical to completing the renovation by the end of 2027, ahead of the expansion coming online. The renovation project is scheduled to begin in April, starting with restroom upgrades. Additional opportunities are being identified for “behind-the-walls” work, such as HVAC and electrical improvements, to occur while spaces are already opened. Beyond aesthetic updates, this timing also allows MECA to thoroughly inspect and evaluate existing systems.

Levy Food & Beverage Update

Ms. Chris VanDorn reported that the organization has officially wrapped up the first half of fiscal year 2026. December closed with revenues slightly exceeding budget by just over 5%, bringing Levy’s year-to-date sales nearly exactly in line with year-to-date budget. A total of 13 events were held during the period, including 17 event days across the arena, convention center, and private stadium events.

January opened with the first Supernovas volleyball game of the season, with food and beverage sales tracking closely to last season’s performance. Lexus Club dinner reservations sold out early in the week of the event and included a waiting list. The product mix remained consistent with last year, with strong food performance representing nearly 50% of concession sales and over 60% of in-seat service sales. As food continues to be the primary revenue driver for these events, Levy is evaluating signature food offerings by location to determine whether adjustments are needed. To date, more than 7,000 units of Levy’s newly introduced signature items have been sold, demonstrating strong demand alongside established fan favorites.

Levy has now entered the baseball pre-season planning phase, with the stadium team shifting into high-gear preparation. The premium team is actively participating in suites menu planning for all baseball properties and is being led by Levy’s premium team based in Chicago, Illinois. In addition, the culinary and concession teams have begun discussions on which items from last season will return as fan favorites for both the regular baseball season and the Men’s College World Series. Preliminary order quantities will be submitted to vendors in the coming weeks to ensure availability for May and June. Planning is also underway to schedule tasting date(s) for signature items being considered for this year’s MCWS.

Public Relations Update

Ms. Grace Safford reported that at the beginning of December, media were invited to Charles Schwab Field Omaha for the debut of the stadium’s new scoreboards and LED displays. The event drew a strong turnout from both television and digital media outlets. In addition, posts highlighting the upgrades across MECA’s stadium social media accounts generated positive engagement, with total views exceeding 100,000.

Throughout December, the *12 Days of Giveaways* campaign drove consistent daily attention to CHI Health Center Omaha's social media channels. At the same time, Angela Hutchings, MECA's Social Marketing Coordinator, successfully extended that momentum to Charles Schwab Field Omaha through a *12 Days of Trivia* campaign, featuring daily fun facts about the stadium and increasing cross-platform engagement.

Looking ahead to 2026, MECA's new President and CEO, Adam J. Straight, made an immediate impact with an introductory press conference that was attended by all major local media outlets. This marks the beginning of a broader media rollout, with additional interviews scheduled throughout the coming month.

Committee Updates:

Internal Governance Committee

Mr. Tom Kelley reported that the Internal Governance Committee met on Tuesday, January 13, 2026. In attendance were Ms. Diane Duren, Mr. Tom Kelley, Mr. Bob Freeman, Mr. Adam Straight and Ms. Diane Mills.

The Committee reviewed the October and November 2025 Financial Statements, which were in order. After overviews from and discussions with Ms. Mills, the Committee found the reports to be reasonable compared to plan and prior periods, and consistent with standard MECA accounting practices.

Real Estate Committee

Mr. Jay Noddle reported that activity throughout the neighborhood remains high despite the holiday months. The City's Public Works Department continues work on the designated truck route, with potential construction north of the area anticipated to begin later this year. Once that phase is completed, truck traffic will be re-routed accordingly. MECA and Public Works will remain in close communication to coordinate schedules and ensure alignment with the city and its contractors when streets surrounding the campus must be utilized.

Streetcar work continues to progress, and much of the utility work being performed by MUD is reaching a point where certain roadways may soon be restored. Kiewit has begun preparations to lay the streetcar rails. As utility work is completed and roadways are restored, the rail installation phase is expected to be significantly less disruptive to the community, as the full right-of-way will not be required. The project team is implementing an enhanced early warning and notification program for affected merchants and the public, which differs from standard utility and streetscape projects. Additional, coordinated information will be distributed through multiple channels. Overall, the rail construction phase is anticipated to be much less inconvenient than the utility work, which is extensive now in order to modernize systems while the roadway is already open.

Mr. Noddle added that several projects are currently underway in the surrounding area, with a substantial number of additional projects scheduled to begin this spring. As a result, construction activity across downtown Omaha is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The soccer

stadium project is gaining momentum, and Creighton University remains very active on its campus. Several new restaurants and one outdoor venue are working toward opening in time for this year's Men's College World Series. Parking structures currently under construction north and south of Cuming Street will not be completed in time for MCWS this year; however, by the 2027 MCWS, two additional parking structures are expected to be operational. Mr. Noddle also noted that several private developer announcements are anticipated in the near future, with the Planning Board and City Council continuing to move projects forward with support from the City's Law Department.

Contract Approvals:

Chairwoman Duren indicated there is one contract requiring Board approval.

TriMark Hockenbergs

RESOLVED, that the Agreement between MECA and TriMark Hockenbergs for the purchase of chafers for use by Levy at CHI Health Center Omaha, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved, and Adam J. Straight 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. Kelley.

Motion carried: 5-0

Next Board Meeting

The next Board of Directors Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 1:15 p.m. in the MECA Board Room.

Executive Session

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 9:35 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 Ms. Buffett, seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 5-0.

Adjournment

At 9:48 a.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Mr. Noddle, seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 5-0

Adjournment 9:48 a.m.