

MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – MAY 21, 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 1:08 p.m. on Thursday, May 21, 2026.

Roll Call:

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

Proof of Publication:

Notice of the meeting was published in *The Daily Record* on May 14, 2026, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on May 14, 2026.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Noddle moved for approval of the minutes of April 16, 2026, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 5-0.

President/CEO Report:

Mr. Adam Straight reported that he continues to gain valuable exposure to MECA’s events and operations. He recently attended his first Berkshire Hathaway Annual Shareholders Meeting and noted that planning for the Men’s College World Series (MCWS) is going well.

The team was recognized for its continued hard work and dedication in preparing for and successfully supporting these significant events year after year.

Mr. Straight stated that, based on his experience with large-scale events and his understanding of how they operate, it is clear that Omaha compares favorably with other host cities and is well-positioned to showcase MECA’s ability to host major events.

Other Business:

Convention Center Sales & Marketing

Ms. Denise Niebrugge reported that there are currently 117 events scheduled, accounting for 245 event days. Since the April 16 Board meeting, 18 additional events have been secured, representing 34 event days and generating over 10,000 hotel room nights; and 15 license agreements have been signed.

MECA is preparing for three large-scale, city-wide conventions taking place in June prior to the MCWS: Railway Interchange, the Sheriff's Association, and the International Right of Way Association.

Ms. Niebrugge and Mr. Straight will attend Meeting Professionals International (MPI) in San Antonio the week of June 2. Hilton Omaha and Visit Omaha will also be in attendance. This event features the "Omaha is the Perfect Fit" bra-fitting trade show theme. They will also attend the President's Dinner, which is a high profile event attended by meeting planners and influential decision-makers.

MECA is excited to have Mr. Straight join the team on the road as they continue promoting Omaha as a premier destination for major meetings and conventions.

Mr. Noddle inquired whether Ms. Niebrugge is tracking the number of hotel room nights booked annually and whether she is able to project what those numbers may look like over the next year or two.

Ms. Niebrugge stated that, for the current fiscal year, MECA is tracking approximately 80,000 hotel room nights. For the next fiscal year, the current number is approximately 56,000 hotel room nights. By comparison, the previous fiscal year ended at approximately 62,000 hotel room nights.

Ms. Niebrugge noted that the current fiscal year is a strong year, with 21 city-wide events, compared to 13 city-wide events in the previous fiscal year. She explained that the number of hotel room nights is closely tied to the number of city-wide events MECA is able to bring to Omaha.

Operations & IT Update

Mr. Kevin Raymond reported that MECA is halfway through hosting the Big Ten Baseball Tournament, and the first two days have gone very well. He noted that staff are monitoring the weather closely and will likely work with the Big Ten and meteorologists to determine what to expect in the coming days. The goal is to complete as many games as possible on Friday and Saturday.

Mr. Raymond reminded the Board that UNO is available as a backup baseball facility; however, the Big Ten's preference is to keep all games at Charles Schwab Field Omaha (CSFO) due to the televised exposure and the benefits associated with the facility.

The Big Ten Tournament serves as a valuable dry run for the Men's College World Series. The team is able to complete pre-setup, test technology, and evaluate the new scoreboards and ribbon panels. Because the template is similar for both events, it provides a good opportunity to work through any issues in advance and be fully prepared for the "Greatest Show on Dirt."

Mr. Raymond also reported that, with the new fiscal year quickly approaching, staff are reviewing the Board meeting schedule, lead times, and installation timelines for several large projects

expected to come forward in June. Those projects will be brought to the Board for approval, with work expected to begin in July and August.

Regarding the renovation project, the first upstairs restroom has been completed, with only a few minor items remaining. He invited Board members to inspect the new renovation.

Work continues to remain on time and within budget for the expansion project. The final top pour is taking place today, framing has begun and will continue throughout the summer, and the roof is approximately 80% complete.

Mr. Raymond also noted that the kitchen renovation will be a significant project. Staff have been working with Levy to identify locations for kitchen equipment and meal preparation areas. That work is expected to begin in mid-October. He stated that staff feels good about the plan, although there will be some challenges associated with the project.

Levy Food & Beverage Update

Ms. Chris VanDorn reported that, since the last meeting, Levy wrapped up a very busy month of April in both buildings. CHI Health Center Omaha hosted 18 events with 24 event days, and Creighton University played all eight of its scheduled baseball games at Charles Schwab Field Omaha, in addition to the stadium hosting two private events.

As a result, combined April sales for both buildings actualized higher than budget, contributing to year-to-date sales exceeding budget by just over 7.5% as of the end of April.

May continues to be a very busy month, particularly with convention center events. Staff are currently working through the Big Ten Baseball Tournament and preparing for a significant day tomorrow with Nebraska, and potentially Iowa, scheduled to play. As the weather is expected to improve on Saturday and Sunday, attendance is also expected to increase.

Looking ahead, Levy is 21 days from the start of the Men's College World Series. Between now and the start of the Series, five events will be executed, including the three previously mentioned city-wide conventions, representing 20 event days. This schedule is keeping the team very busy and Ms. VanDorn expressed appreciation for their continued efforts.

In addition to ensuring that clients and guests are well taken care of, Ms. VanDorn reported on Levy's ongoing partnership with Saving Grace. Each year, Saving Grace provides an annual impact report showing how food rescue efforts at CHI Health Center Omaha and Charles Schwab Field Omaha benefit the community.

For calendar year 2025, CHI Health Center Omaha donated 11,729 pounds of food, and Charles Schwab Field Omaha donated 9,813 pounds of food. Combined, those donations totaled more than 21,000 pounds of food and generated 17,952 meals for nonprofit organizations.

Ms. VanDorn noted that Levy is one of 163 donor locations working with Saving Grace, which collectively provides food to 59 recipient agencies to help ensure food reaches those in need. She

stated that it is difficult to remember a time before Saving Grace, as the partnership now goes back just over ten years. Prior to that partnership, usable food that could not be served had to be discarded because there was no process in place to safely redirect it.

Ms. VanDorn stated that it is tremendous to see how far the partnership has come and the meaningful impact the collective team has each day by packaging usable food items and coordinating deliveries to ensure they reach individuals and organizations that can use them.

Public Relations Update:

Ms. Grace Safford reported that voting has concluded for USA TODAY's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards for Best College Baseball Stadium, and Charles Schwab Field Omaha placed fourth overall. While Omaha certainly considers the stadium to be number one, fourth place is still something to celebrate and reflects the continued national attention the stadium receives.

The communications staff is currently focused on the external rollout of MECA's core values and strategic goals. This includes redesigning the "Who We Are" page on OmahaMECA.org. Angela Hutchings has done a fantastic job reorganizing the page, and new graphics have also been created that have been posted to MECA's LinkedIn page.

Looking ahead to the Men's College World Series, Levy's highly anticipated MCWS menu reveal is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, immediately following the pre-Series press conference. Last year's format, location, and timing worked very well, so staff plans to follow a similar approach this year.

MECA will host two morning shows during the MCWS, with *KETV* and *WOWT* broadcasting from Charles Schwab Field Omaha on Friday, June 12. This will be the first time CSFO has hosted two morning shows conducting their entire morning broadcasts from the stadium. Ms. Safford noted that the NCAA and all parties involved are pleased with the opportunity. Work is being done to ensure the stations have strong coverage and interviews are being scheduled in advance.

Committee Updates:

Internal Governance Committee

Mr. Tom Kelley reported that the Internal Governance Committee met on Tuesday, May 12, 2026. In attendance were Ms. Diane Duren, Mr. Tom Kelley, Mr. Adam Straight, Mr. Bob Freeman, and Ms. Diane Mills.

The Committee reviewed the March 2026 Financial Statements. It was noted that the financials were slightly lighter than usual due to not hosting any Creighton basketball games during the month; however, everything was 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.

Finally, the Committee reviewed the 990 Draft, which was distributed to the Board for review.

Real Estate Committee

Mr. Jay Noddle reported that the downtown neighborhood continues to experience a significant amount of construction activity. The soccer stadium project has reached another milestone and continues to move forward.

There are approximately 12 to 14 projects, unrelated to transportation systems, that have been impacting downtown roadways for quite some time. Contractors for those projects are working diligently to clear the roadways, either permanently or temporarily, in advance of fans arriving for the Men's College World Series.

As of yesterday, many parking lots that had been used as construction laydown areas will be reopened. In addition, a few areas in the Builders District that were not previously available will open up, creating additional parking spaces.

Regarding the east end of the streetcar project, Mr. Noddle reported that Kiewit is controlling the job site, and rails are beginning to be installed, particularly south of CHI Health Center Omaha. As contractors and subcontractors performing MUD-related work either complete or temporarily pause their work, more roadways in both directions, along with parking in the right-of-way, will begin to reopen. He noted that this will benefit not only the Men's College World Series but also the downtown area going forward.

The challenging part has been completing the required MUD work; however, steady progress is being made, and more of the work is being completed.

Contract Approvals:

Chairwoman Duren indicated there are three contracts requiring Board approval.

Populous

RESOLVED, that the Agreement between MECA and Populous to create a Broad Vision for cohesive District Vision to enhance CHI Health Center Omaha and Charles Schwab Field Omaha, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved, and Adam 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

Populous

RESOLVED, that the Agreement between MECA and Populous to develop a Master Plan for Charles Schwab Field Omaha, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved, and Adam 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 Mr. Kelley; seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 5-0

Populous

RESOLVED, that the Agreement between MECA and Populous to develop a Master Plan for CHI Health Center Omaha Arena, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved, and Adam 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 Mr. Noddle; seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 5-0

Next Board Meeting

The next Board of Directors Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 1:15 p.m. in the MECA Board Room.

Executive Session

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 1:28 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 Ms. Buffett, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 5-0.

Adjournment

At 2:16 p.m. a motion was made to come out of Executive Session, and to adjourn, made by Mr. Noddle, seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 5-0.

Adjournment 2:16 p.m.