

**Hamilton County  
Convention Facilities Authority (CFA)  
Meeting Minutes**

**To:** CFA Board Members  
**From:** Jeff Aluotto, CFA Secretary  
**Subject:** Meeting # 40: September 23, 2016

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**CFA Members Present:** Gwen McFarlin, Dan Meyer, Jim Downton, Lee Czerwonka, Lawrence Hawkins, Shawn Butler, Brendon Cull

**CFA Members Excused:** Danny Hill, Paul Brehm

**CFA/Project Staff Present:** Shelia-Hill Christian, Karen Alder, Roger Friedmann, Jeff Weckbach

**1. Call to Order**

Chair McFarlin called the meeting of the Hamilton County Convention Facilities Authority to order at approximately 12:15 P.M. Chair McFarlin indicated that there was a quorum.

**2. Review and Approval of March 18, 2016 meeting minutes**

Chair McFarlin requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2016 meeting. The motion was moved and seconded. There was no discussion on the minutes.

Chair McFarlin conducted voice vote. Brendon Cull abstained, all others approved. Therefore, the motion to approve March 18, 2016 meeting minutes was approved.

**3. Audit Update**

Karen Alder updated the Board on the findings from the most recent audit. There was one minor finding related to escrow accounting associated with the refinancing. This has since been corrected. There was also a request for posting of the minutes in a public manner and they have indeed been continually posted to the County website.

**4. Review of First and Second Quarter Financial Report**

Karen Alder discussed the Hotel Tax Status Report for the first two quarters of 2016. The City collected \$1.32 million. The County collected \$4.24 million. Looking at 2015 collection, we had a large increase in collections. A question was posed regarding the County variance on revenue collected to date compared to the budgeted collections. The main variance is due to the fact that the budgeted figures for county collections have been held flat over several years. In addition, there were a couple of hotels that caught up on back taxes. It should be noted that the general growth of the hotel/motel lodging taxes is the main driver of

the increase.

Next she discussed the CFA Expense Status Report in 2016; we had estimated expenditures of \$65,000 and year to date actual expenses of \$53,486.

## **5. CVB Update**

Barry Perks provided an update on the CVB via powerpoint. The CVB has done very well this year in terms of overall conventions booked, total room nights generated, and future conventions booked. The overall demand growth in the County has improved and is in line with the overall growth across the Country. In particular, Cincinnati North has seen a large improvement over the past few years and is anticipated to continue to see growth due to various recent developments in that part of the County (Sharonville Convention Center, Princeton High School Viking Village, Summit Park). Various trade publications were highlighted that are distributed at conferences in order to attract major conventions to the County and to provide context as to how the customers view the CVB.

## **6. Sharonville Convention Center 2016 Capital and Future Update**

Jim Downton reviewed the major projects in the five year plan for capital updates at the Sharonville Convention Center. The most important projects in the plan include a replacement of the dock doors in 2016, replacement of the Kitchen Dishwasher in 2017, upgrades to the WIFI system in 2017, replacement of the parking lot in 2021, and continual replacement of the air handlers over the next five years.

Sharonville contributes 3% to their capital fund, which is approximately \$50,000 per year and the county contributes \$50,000 per year. The balance of this fund is approximately \$185,000 which may limit the Sharonville Convention Center in its ability to fund all of the projects in their five year plan.

A question was posed as to the authority of the CFA in terms of overall funding and oversight of projects at the Sharonville Convention Center. The Cooperative Agreement establishes the total dollars that are allotted to the Sharonville Convention Center through the residual waterfall (\$1,350,000 annually). There is also a separate agreement between the Sharonville Convention Center and Hamilton County related to these dollars. The oversight is established in the agreement with Hamilton County in terms of reporting and auditing of expenditures. It was requested that the reporting provided to Hamilton County be also provided to the CFA.

## **7. Other Business**

Ric Booth provided an update on the murals. The glass (which is heat resistant) was, at the time, being installed on the murals and all nine murals are currently in their permanent location. The overall project is close to being finished. October 20<sup>th</sup> was projected to be the formal unveiling of the murals and the final date would be sent out to the CFA members. As an item of note, there were some small cracks in some of the murals, which were repaired.

Barrie Perks provided an update on the status of the Millennium Hotel. The company that owns the hotel has a new President which has recognized the need for updates to the hotel. The CVB is currently waiting on results from the October Board meeting to understand what direction the company is likely to take with the Millennium. From the understanding of the CVB, there are several hotels owned by the same company which require updates including their New York hotel, so there is no guarantee that the Millennium will be funded. The company has currently proposed a \$25 million renovation of the hotel, whereas the CVB believes the renovation will cost approximately \$80 million. The CVB also has a meeting scheduled with the Mayor to discuss the long term plans for the Duke Energy Center.

A question was posed regarding code violations. Code violations are investigated at the hotel when filed, however difficulties do emerge with enforcement given that the company that owns the hotel is located in Singapore and in a time zone that is one day ahead. Over the past year and a half, it does not appear that any code violations or complaints have been filed.

**8. Next Meeting**

The next scheduled CFA meeting will convene on December 02, 2016 at 12 pm.

**9. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 P.M.