

**ENTERTAINMENT AND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Original Date April 24, 2019 | Rescheduled to Tuesday, April 23, 2019

A Regular Board Meeting was held Tuesday, April 23, 2019 at 4:00 PM in the Symphony Hall Mezzanine.

Board Members Present: Chair Don Ness, Vice Chair Karen Pionk, Deb Messer, Roz Randorf, Crystal Pelkey, Yvonne Prettnner Solon, Bill Nelson, Greg Fox, Mary Finnegan-Ongaro

Board Members Absent: David Ross, Roger Reinert

DECC Staff Members Present: Chelly Townsend, Caty Kaups, Sue Ellen Moore, Renae Matt

Guests Present: Taylor Holt – WDIO, Ben Harper – WDIO, Brady Slater – Duluth News Tribune

CALL TO ORDER and QUORUM: Ness called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM. A quorum of directors was present and the Board reviewed the agenda. Ness announced that the order of business would change in favor of the guests present. Ness requested approval of the agenda and the changes. No objections were made and the agenda was approved unanimously.

MOTION: Ness requested a motion to approve the Regular Business Meeting Minutes from March 27, 2019. Messer made a motion to approve the minutes as written and the motion was seconded by both Nelson and Randorf.

Old Business

Townsend gave an update regarding the William A. Irvin. Townsend stated she spoke with a representative of Fraser Shipyards who told her that they had three vessels to work on ahead of the Irvin. Fraser expects to get the Irvin into dry dock in July. Townsend stated they discussed the high project costs and several alternatives to reduce the cost of the project. One of the options mentioned was to sweep blast the vessel, rather than performing a full white metal blast, to fix the pitting. Another alternative to stay in budget is to forego painting the bottom of the ship. Townsend stated that more discussions would be held and the bid received is still being negotiated.

The Board looked for clarification on why the project continues to be held up. Several Board Members stated their concern that other projects seem to be taking priority for Fraser over the Irvin because the Irvin is not a working vessel. They discussed their thoughts on why prevailing wage may have been an issue for Fraser, as well as the large difference in the estimated quote at the beginning of the project versus the actual bid amount put forth.

Townsend stated that if Fraser can't get the Irvin into dry dock until July, the ship will not be back in time for its regular season of tours. Townsend remarked that they still hope to have the Irvin return in time for the 2019 Haunted Ship season.

Pionk arrived at 4:12 PM.

Several members of the Board voiced concern that the plans and pricing of the project have been varying extensively and they would like to focus on the reasons for those changes. The Board discussed the possibility of meeting with a representative from Fraser Shipyards and the DECC's Irvin Project Consultant, Chase Dewhirst from AMI Engineering, to get clarification on the scheduling, the scope of the project, and the final project costs.

Holt and Harper departed at 4:18 PM, followed by Slater.

Ness announced that they would return to the regular order of business.

Communications

Event Feedback: Townsend commented on feedback received from recent events, including the Marshall Gala, Northland Foundation, Harlem Globetrotters, and the MN State National Archery School Program.

Media Mentions: Townsend stated that some of the top posts on social media focused on an open MOD (Manager on Duty) job position and the Luke Combs concert.

Old Business, continued

The Board's attention returned to the Irvin project and they continued discussion on the information that has been received and their thoughts on the overall project of painting the vessel and the process of returning the ship to the MN Slip.

The Board decided to form a small committee to meet with Fraser and Dewhirst to discuss the project in more depth. Ness, Townsend, Pionk, and Randorf will make up the Irvin Project Committee [Kaups may also be present]. The committee will update the full Board at the next meeting.

Townsend stated that she and Ness met with several individuals from the City of Duluth and the Duluth Superior Port Authority to discuss Cruising and get clarification on how the project would be funded. Townsend and Ness mentioned the plans for a bonding bill and how the local match would apply. They stated it was not made clear at the meeting on how the project would be funded if a contract was signed with the Cruise Lines and then a bond was not granted. Ness and Townsend, along with the Board, seemed to agree that the DECC would be willing to make space available for a Customs Border Protection terminal location within the DECC facility, but the DECC should not be responsible for funding the project.

The Board discussed the fact that they are not able to get clarification on the required needs for the space and equipment until the DECC provides a letter of intent to provide a permanent terminal space. It was mentioned that if the DECC does choose to provide such a letter, to be sure to include contingencies so that the financial commitment of the project would not fall to the DECC, should the current financing plan fall through.

New Business

Townsend and Ness stated that due to time constraints, they would hold the conversation concerning parking rates until a later meeting. The Board asked a few questions about the current rate and suggested some possibilities to consider for the DECC and surrounding parking lots such as Bentleyville and the Great Lakes Aquarium.

Ness suggested they move on to the Finance Report.

Committee Reports

Personnel: No report.

Governance: No report.

Finance: Kaups gave an overview of the February Finance Report, as well as the March Finance report, and the variance analysis for each of those months.

Kaups also mentioned that the Audit should be wrapping up within the next week.

MOTION: Pionk made a motion to approve the Finance Reports and the Operating Fund Check Registers for both February and March and both Pelkey and Messer seconded the motion.

Staff Reports

Event Recap: No report.

Attractions: No report.

Sales & Marketing Report: No report.

Operations & Upcoming Events: No report.

Pelkey requested clarification on new appointees to replace the Board Members whose terms are expiring. Ness mentioned that they have not heard anything about new appointments being made from either the Governor or the Mayor at this point.

Townsend reminded the Board that they are welcome to attend events, as they are able, to see how the DECC operations run and be able to get a feel for the facility from the public's perspective.

Ness adjourned the meeting at 5:28 PM.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 29, 2019 from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM in the Senator Sam Solon Board Room.

Minutes reported by Renae Matt, Executive Assistant.

Submitted by:


Don Ness, Chair


Crystal Pelkey, Secretary