

Minutes: Meeting of the Metropolitan Government Board of Fair Commissioners

Date: June 13, 2023 4:00 p.m.

On the above referenced date, the June meeting for the Board of Fair Commissioners was held in Expo 3. Those in attendance were Chair Sheri Weiner, Vice-Chair Jasper Hendricks (arrived later), Commissioner Todd Hartley, Commissioner Anthony Owens, and Commissioner Diego Eguiarte. Also, in attendance from the Fairgrounds were Executive Director Laura Womack and Finance and Administrative Manager Satrice Allen. Metro Attorney's Terri Costonis and Erica Haber were present. Ron Gobbell with GHP and Ed Henley with Pillars Development were both in attendance. Dirk Melton with Market Street Enterprises and Mary Cavarra with Nashville Soccer Club (and the Ownership Group) were also present. Jerry Caldwell with Bristol Motor Speedway was in attendance.

Chair Weiner read the legal notice and called the meeting to order. She then moved to the May meeting minutes. Commissioner Hartley made a motion to approve, and Commissioner Eguiarte seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were passed.

She then moved to Public Comment Time. There was one public comment. Chair Weiner then moved to the Financial Report.

Ms. Allen gave a brief financial report. Chair Weiner then moved to the Events Update item on the agenda.

Director Womack stated that they had a full calendar. She reported that staff had sent out post event client satisfaction surveys about how they were doing and so far, they all had 10 out of 10 stars. She reported that they were above projected revenue on events. Commissioner Hartley asked Director Womack if the revenues over budget were due to booking more events than estimated. Director Womack answered, "Yes", and explained how they came up with a budget each year. He also asked if the Fairgrounds was winning on expenses to profit or were the expenses increasing also? Director Womack stated that they were winning and the increase in revenue was more than the expenses. She added that at some point, there might be an issue with not enough staff to service the event load and they would just have to look at that when the time came. There were some questions from Commissioner Eguiarte about the baseline being low, the net increase in revenue and the projections. Director Womack stated that they had been working on those numbers but that they just weren't ready to give those out yet. She added that they had not projected a full event calendar, coming off of COVID, but that this was what they were experiencing. Commissioner Eguiarte asked, because there was also a full calendar of expenses as well that might not have been budgeted for-if the margins were growing or decreasing. Director Womack stated that they would work on getting that info to the Board. Commissioner Owens asked if the Board could also get a copy of the surveys that went out and Director Womack stated that she would get that to them. Vice-Chair Hendricks asked what was being done to publicize the upcoming fair and if had they received any money or sponsorships. Director Womack stated that they would give the Board a Fair update before the next meeting. Chair Weiner then gave the floor to Ms. Cavarra.

Ms. Cavarra gave a brief update about the soccer team and stated that they were setting up an email account for neighbors to report parking (or other) match day matters. She also reported that they had moved the rideshare location to Craighead. She stated that they had their first non-soccer event with about 26,000 fans and added that the sound was monitored and that they would continue to do this. She explained that under the agreement with the Fairgrounds 50% of the net parking revenue when using the Fairgrounds site for non-soccer events would go to the Fairgrounds. She stated that they should have those numbers finalized by the end of the month and the Fairgrounds should receive between \$15,000 to \$20,000. Commissioner Eguiarte suggested that they look into using HUB Nashville to report issues and Ms. Cavarra stated she was happy to explore that. Commissioner Hartley stated that he would love to see an informal report at the meetings with stats for the parking receipts and Ms. Cavarra stated that they had a similar protocol with the Sports Authority that they could send, and Commissioner Hartley said that would be fine. There were a couple of other questions and comments. Vice-Chair Hendricks stated that he was

surprised to hear that soccer, one of the partners, did not want to expand the track and asked if they could sit down together and talk about what the needs were and how they could be better partners so they could make better decisions. Ms. Cavarra stated that she would get with her team and respond. Chair Weiner then moved to the Executive Director's Report.

Director Womack introduced Ronnie Haywood, the new Operations Manager. She added that they were on the last round of interviews for the Event Services Manager and that they had some very good candidates. Commissioner Hartley asked if the Board could have an organizational chart and Director Womack stated that she would send that. Chair Weiner then moved to Old Business and the Fairgrounds Improvement Project, Mixed Use, Fair Park Phase II, and Infrastructure Update item on the agenda.

Mr. Henley gave a financial update of the projects at the Fairgrounds. Director Womack reported that they would be getting a new outdoor LED sign soon. Vice-Chair Hendricks suggested that they might see about getting a federal grant for the sidewalks to save some money and Director Womack stated she would pass that info along to NDOT, although there could be a timing issue. Mr. Gobbell gave a quick project(s) update and added that they were working with NDOT and WeGo on the Wingrove exchange. Mr. Melton gave a quick Mixed-Use Project update and stated that they were working mostly on the inside now. Chair Weiner then gave the floor to Metro Attorney Terri Costonis.

Ms. Costonis stated that, at the request of Commissioner Owens, she looked into the issue that Mr. Smiley had brought up at the last meeting concerning the pit and tunnel at the track and also parking. She stated that it was her conclusion that neither of those statements that Mr. Smiley referred to at the last meeting would be binding on Metro Government in such a way to give rise to any kind of actional entitlement to any other party against Metro and were therefore, immaterial. Concerning the Fair Board's failure to approve Fair Park Phase 2, Ms. Costonis stated that, after consulting with others and legal, she did not find a violation of anything contractual and that all was preceding in compliance with the law. Chair Weiner then gave the floor to Mr. Caldwell to give a brief Bristol update.

Mr. Caldwell gave a brief update on the speedway and went over the power points presentation. Commissioner Owens asked Mr. Caldwell about NSC not being a proponent to the speedway expansion and if he felt they could work together. Mr. Caldwell answered that they had had good meetings in the past and that he felt that they could work together and be a good neighbor/partner and added that he believed that it could work. Chair Weiner then moved to New Business.

At this point Ms. Costonis stated that effective July 1, 2023, the Tennessee Open Meetings Act would have some changes and she then went over the changes. Chair Weiner stated that the Fair Board was already doing most of these things and Ms. Costonis agreed. Chair Weiner then moved to the Nominations and Election of Officers item on the agenda.

Chair Weiner opened the floor for nominations. Ms. Costonis read the rules for election of officers from the **Rules and Procedures** and added that they generally follow **Roberts Rules**. Commissioner Owens asked if they could delay the vote until after Chair Weiner and Vice-Chair Hendricks (possibly) left. Ms. Costonis stated that the rules required the vote to be in June so they needed to vote that day but that they could re-elect new officers later if there was a vacancy. Commissioner Eguiarte made a motion stating, "*I nominate the current Chair to be Chair*". Commissioner Owens seconded the motion. There was a discussion and several questions. It was decided that since Chair Weiner was running unopposed, she could continue now as Chair, and she would resign later on and that Vice-Chair Hendricks would resign later if he won to help keep some continuity on The Board. Vice-Chair Hendricks then called for a vote, all were in favor and the motion was passed. Commissioner Eguiarte then nominated current Vice-Chair Hendricks for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion. Chair Weiner asked Vice-Chair Hendricks if he would accept the nomination, and he said he would. All were in favor and the motion was passed. Chair Weiner then moved to the Open Range Increase for Executive Director item on the agenda.

Chair Weiner asked that the Board consider an Open Range increase for Director Womack. Vice-Chair Hendricks then made a motion stating, *"I move to approve the Open Range pay increase for Director Womack."* Commissioner Owens seconded the motion. Chair Weiner then stated that she would amend the motion to stipulate what percentage the increase would be. There were many questions and a lengthy discussion. Chair Weiner explained that this needed to be done today since the budget would be passing at the end of June. Several of the board members expressed their concerns on deciding that day without HR being there and without more information. Chair Weiner stated that HR recommended not going over 15% and she then gave the salary ranges for director's pay in Metro. There was some discussion about salaries being competitive with the private sector and also comparing salaries to other departments that were not revenue generating. Chair Weiner stated that she could get with Director Hall in HR on other comparison positions and also get back with them on the final number approved by Council and that they could always have a special meeting to vote before the end of June. There was more discussion and questions on how the Board wanted to proceed. Vice-Chair Hendricks stated that he would like to amend his motion to approve a 10% increase and to also come back again and discuss at the end of the month in a specially called meeting based on information received. Commissioner Eguiarte suggested that they approve the 7% increase already recommended now and then add a placeholder of 3% contingent on information received and which could always be changed. Vice-Chair Hendricks accepted the amendment and Commissioner Eguiarte seconded the motion to the amendment. Chair Weiner then repeated the motion stating, *"To affirm an Open Range increase for Director Womack for 7% with an additional conditional increase of 3% with the opportunity to have a specially called meeting once Chair Weiner has been in touch with Director Hall in HR for a study of the comparatives to public sector and to other department heads as well as a local and national review."* Chair Weiner added that she would then give that information to Director Womack who would then pass that along to the Board. The Board would then contact Director Womack on whether or not to call a special meeting. If no one indicated they wanted a special meeting then the 3% would become firm.

Chair Weiner then called for a vote. Commissioner Owens voted "Yes" and asked that an evaluation be included. Commissioner Hartley abstained. Vice-Chair Hendricks voted, "Yes." Commissioner Eguiarte voted, "Yes." And Chair Weiner voted, "Yes". The motion passed.

Chair Weiner then asked for a motion to adjourn, and Vice-Chair Hendricks made a motion. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion, and the meeting was dismissed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chair, Sheri Weiner

Executive Director, Laura Womack