

Metro Tourism Commission Meeting
May 11, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Sherry Franklin called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. and conducted roll call:

Commissioners:

Britney Chandler – present
Sherry Franklin– present
Neely Glenn – present
Howard Kittell - present
Leesa LeClaire – present
Q Taylor – arrived at 8:40 a.m.

Shannon Sanders – not present
Hank Adam Locklin – not present

Other staff in attendance:

Metro Staff:

Ben Eagles – Mayor’s office
Courtney Mohan- Metro Legal
Metro IT representatives

NCVC Staff:

Deana Ivey, President
Andrea Arnold, Chief Public Affairs Officer
Bruce McGregor, VP, Research
Jeff Mefford, Chief Financial Officer
Adrienne Siemers, Chief Sales Officer
Heather Middleton, Sr. VP, Marketing
Brad Lineberry, IT

Howard Kittell made a motion to accept the minutes of the February meeting; Neely Glen seconded; no discussion; motion passed unanimously.

Franklin asked Jeff Mefford to present a financial report. Highlights included:

- Hotel occupancy tax collections received by Metro from July 2022 through February 2023 totaled \$82,643,003 - one-third of this amount is dedicated by law to tourism promotion. This is an increase of 28% from the same timeframe in the previous year. The city has experienced record-setting months for tax collections on a month-by-month basis for 13 straight months.

- The NCVC has billed Metro a total of \$22,000,838 from July 2022 through December 2022 for tourism promotion initiatives. The NCVC's contract with Metro is a reimbursement-only contract; this total represents only the amount required to reimburse actual expenses. All funds collected above the ultimate contract reimbursement total remain with Metro for future tourism promotion use.
- Expenses to date are in line with budget expectations; most are under budget. Expenses from July 2022 through March 2023 total \$30,569,783; approximately 72% of this amount was funded through city contract.
- Direct sales expenses (Line 24) are under budget for the year mainly due to lower-than-expected costs to host the ASAE Annual Meeting in August.
- Expenses for visitor information center operations is over budget on a percentage basis due to the advanced opening of the music City Shop at the airport; it was planned and budgeted for FY 24, and the timeline was advanced to FY 23 at request of airport. FY 23 budget included expenses for renovations only to the Visitor Information Center at Bridgestone Arena. While there is funding for both projects, completing each in FY 23 resulted in expenses for this one line item to exceed original budget. Photos of both shops were distributed for review.

Kittell made a motion to accept the finance report; LeClaire seconded; no discussion; motion passed unanimously.

Franklin asked Deana Ivey for a report of NCVC activities. Highlights included:

- Ivey introduced Heather Middleton, Sr. VP of Marketing for the NCVC.
- Weekend of May 5, 6 and 7 was record-breaking due to several visitor-generating events: sold out Janet Jackson concert at Bridgestone Arena; three, sold-out Taylor Swift concerts at Nissan Stadium; three, sold-out Trevor Noah shows at Ryman Auditorium; major convention hosted at Music City Center and Belmont University, Lipscomb University, and Tennessee State University held commencement events.
- The city's upcoming July 4th event will feature award-winning country artist Brad Paisley, War and Treaty, Langhorn Slim and Tiera Kennedy, with more artists to be announced. The line-up intentionally showcases the diversity of Nashville's music. CNN and Fox are considering covering the event nationally.
- The NHL Awards event is in Nashville on June 26, and the NHL Draft follows on June 28-29, and the city is anticipated to receive significant national and international coverage from the events.
- SEC Media Day is scheduled in Nashville July 17–20. The event will be attended by more than 1,000 national sports media and feature a live broadcast on SEC

network from Broadway. It will result in significant national media exposure and future sports event bookings for the city.

- The James Beard Foundation held the media announcement of their namesake award finalists in Nashville in March. The evening prior to the, the NCVC hosted an event called 'Soundbites', which featured 13 local restaurants and showcased the city's unique dining scene.
- Three of Nashville's restaurants have received national accolades – Yolan was named Best Restaurant in the Country by Food & Wine Reader's Choice poll; Locus and Audrey were named as two of the best restaurants in the country by the New York Times.

Heather Middleton, Chief Marketing Officer, provided the following updates:

- Conducted media and client visits in Glasgow, Manchester, Dublin, and London in advance of the Country 2 Country Music Festival, which features Nashville artists; collectively, the team held six trade meetings, trained 45 agents, and hosted 165 journalists and clients at events throughout the trip to sell the city.
- Creating a four-week, digital, advertising campaign in partnership with Saks 5th Ave. that features assets throughout the city to launch in June. A similar campaign last year resulted in 15.7 million impressions.
- Launching a summer advertising campaign focusing on core visitors and higher household income audiences.
- Hosting group of international journalists and tourism sales clients last week of July; will promote citywide assets and direct, non-stop, flight between Nashville and London.
- Conducting a Nashville visitor profile study through YouGov in May, focused on guests from the US, Canada, and the UK; results are expected June 1.

Adrienne Siemers, Chief Sales Officer, provided the following updates:

- The team is on pace to meet all sales goals by the end of the fiscal year (June 30)
- The team conducted consecutive sales trips to Denver and Scottsdale. Nashville singer-songwriter Emily Wise performed for clients and sold the city. Next sales trip will be DC in August.
- To date, the team has generated 212,000 lead room nights from the American Society of Association Executives convention held in Nashville in August 2022. This number will continue to increase.

- The tourism sales team is partnering with Tennessee Tourism for an upcoming sales mission to Germany, a key international market for Nashville.
- The team attended IPW, a major convention trade show, and hosted a record number of appointments from clients for future business for Nashville.

Marie Sueing, Chief Diversity Officer, provided the following updates:

- Assisting with the National Newspaper Publishers Association, which is meeting in Nashville in six week. The Association represents Black news publications in the US. The Tennessee Tribune is the host organization.
- Assisting with the Association of African American Museums, which is meeting in Nashville in late July. The Association represents national museums' leadership and staff. National Museum of African American Music hosting; expecting a record-breaking attendance with approximately 800 people.

Franklin asked Bruce McGregor, VP of Research, for a market research report.

McGregor provided the following updates:

- Nashville – January – April, 2023:
 - o Occupancy – 68%
 - o ADR - \$205.09
 - o Sold 1.8 million room nights
 - o \$369 million in hotel room revenue

All metrics are higher than the same time period last year.
- April 2023
 - o Occupancy – 76.2% - down .3%
 - o Rooms sold – 893,219 – up 3.9%
 - o Hotel revenue - \$199 million – up 11.7%
 - o ADR – up 7.5% for month; Sat., April 15, hit a record high of \$301.70 due to Luke Combs' performances at Nissan Stadium and show at Bridgestone Arena.
- May 5-6
 - o Taylor Swift played three consecutive nights at Nissan Stadium – record-breaking attendance with more than 70,000 attendance each night.
 - o May 5 and 6, city also had Graduation ceremonies at Belmont University, Lipscomb University, and Tennessee State University; a major with 14,000 attendees; Janet Jackson sold-out concert at Bridgestone Arena and Comedian Trevor Noah sold out three-evening shows at the Ryman Auditorium.

- Saturday – 31% increase in demand; 74% increase in rate and 12% increase in revenue over last year. Occupancy - 95.8% in the county; 98% in downtown. Saturday hotel rates averaged \$385 countywide and \$578 downtown, which is the highest ADR in the city's history. City sold 37,547 hotel rooms, yielding more than \$14.4 million in room revenue, with half of this amount coming from downtown hotels. Over 98% of short-term rentals in the city were occupied with an average rate of \$602.
- Saturday and Sunday combined - occupancy tax estimated at \$1.67 million.

Discussion included:

- Confirmation that approximately 5,000 hotel rooms are under construction in Nashville; the city's demand is absorbing the hotel supply well.
- Visitor spending is reflective of all business segments; Commissioners' examples:
 - Commissioner Neely Glenn – hosted 11 events in venue over weekend
 - Commissioner Q Taylor – highest revenue at shops in seven years
- Highlights the importance of incorporating/supporting local brands into major developments; keeps city authentic and visitor spending keeps businesses economically healthy.
- Appreciated the NCVC's intentionality of marketing the diversity in events to visitors throughout the historic weekend.
- NCVC worked with the Mayor's office to create an authentic, unique draw for fans in town for the Taylor Swift concerts and dedicated a bench in Centennial Park to match the lyrics of the singer's famous song. The recognition received significant national attention, and the singer promoted the bench from the stage during the concert, drawing thousands of fans to Centennial Park.

Franklin reported that a new chairman and co-chairman will be elected in the September 14 Commission meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m.