



Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority

Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting

February 18, 2021

This meeting is held via Zoom due to Governor Wolf's orders to stay at home during the time of this COVID-19 crisis.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Directors' Meeting of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority was held on February 18, 2021 via Zoom with a link that was provided to all Board members by the Executive Director. An agenda containing the Zoom link to this meeting was posted on the ECGRA website and at 5240 Knowledge Parkway, Erie, PA 16510. Legal Notice of the meeting was given through an advertisement appearing in the Erie Times-News. The meeting was called to order by the Chair.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Barney, Mr. Cleaver, Mr. DiPaolo, Ms. Hess, Ms. Loll, Mr. Paris, and Mr. Sample. Mr. Lee, Mr. Wachter, and Dr. Wood are also present. It is mentioned that Ms. Loll's computer does not have audio or video options and will be participating in the meeting via the chat function in zoom to discuss or ask anything as well as to cast her votes for motions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Cleaver makes a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. DiPaolo seconds the motion. There is no discussion of the agenda. Motion carries 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 2021

Mr. Barney makes a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Sample seconds the motion. There is no further discussion on the minutes. Motion carries 7-0.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Loll: I just wanted to thank Tammi for answering all my questions.

Ms. Michali: You're very welcome.

Mr. Cleaver: When is the end of your term, March 31?

Mr. Paris: It will be at the reorganization meeting in April.

Mr. Cleaver: So, year-end is March, and we start again come April 1st?

Mr. Paris: Technically, yes. But this is something that needs to be voted on so I will be in place until that meeting in April.

Mr. Cleaver: I see that the annual meeting is on April 15th.

Mr. Paris: Yes, that would be it.

COMMENTS BY THE CHAIR

Mr. Paris: Not many of you were here, but I wanted to let everyone know that Dr. Lynn Corder, who served on the Board for quite awhile before David Bagnoni took his place and now Carol Loll is there, but Lynn passed away about a week and a half ago and I just wanted to let those of us who knew him that we are thinking of him.

Mr. Cleaver: Who passed away?

Mr. Paris: Dr. Lynn Corder. I believe he was the Superintendent of the Northwestern School District.

Mr. Wachter: That sounds right.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There is no public on the call for comments.

PRESENTATIONS

There are no presentations at this time.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Treasurer's Report: Mr. Cleaver: As we discussed at the last meeting when I accepted the Treasurer's role, I have always felt – and still do – and I've talked to Perry about it, since he does all the bill-paying and invoices, that I would just turn over the Treasurer's Report to him. I reviewed it with him yesterday; I have no comment but the rest of the Board may.

Mr. DiPaolo makes a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as reviewed by Mr. Cleaver.
Mr. Sample seconds the motion.

Mr. Cleaver: I should ask, do you have any comment at this time, Perry, on the Treasurer's Report?

Dr. Wood: No.

There are no questions or further discussion of the Treasurer's Report. Motion carries 7-0.

- b. Strategic Planning Committee: There was no meeting held so there is nothing to report.
- c. Update from County Council: Mr. Anderson is not present to give an update.
- d. Update from County Executive's Office: Mr. Lee: Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to go over the highlights for the Summer Jobs Program. As many of you are aware, the County did make the award to GECAC last Thursday, February 11, 2021. It was a very good process. We really worked as far as the cost; that has been very important to me. Since the inception of the program, the County has not had to go back to County Council nor have we had to come back to ECGRA to ask for any type of increase in dollars and we are very pleased with that. That is with kudos to our finance team for staying on top of that and making sure that everything should be in line from a cost perspective.

The proposal that was accepted, it did go up 9% and it varied the number of students. It is based on two years with an additional two-year renewal if it is chosen to go down that avenue. It is predicated upon 100 students, 150, 175, and 200 students. The majority of the time we average between 150 – 170; last year it was 90 students which we were very pleased with that number because we were, and we are still, working through the pandemic. This year we are expecting maybe about the same or just a little bit more.

The 9% increase was due solely to GECAC looking to bring someone on full-time to oversee this program. We are going to make sure that they are going to follow the objectives that were put in their proposal as far as what this individual is going to do. It is going to give them more lead time for recruiting and working with the schools. I just cannot say enough of the leadership of Sylvia last year; she led the program very well. Unfortunately, she is no longer with GECAC, but we are confident that whoever they select, this individual will be just as passionate and just as competent to lead the program.

That was the big news as far as it pertains to the partnership that the County has with the Gaming Authority; we are excited. Are there any questions that I can address at this time? Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report. Thank you.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Wood: Good morning, everyone. If you take a look at the Executive Director's Report in your packet, you will see that the first thing is from the Finance Department of the County that the fourth quarter gaming revenue came in, and it came in on time. We were just reviewing that recently, so we will be updating the revenue dashboard. Next you will see a thank-you letter from Mercyhurst University followed by the agendas for the COVID Task Force. The Economic Impact & COVID Revitalization Task Force has been meeting – this is just a reminder that these meetings are weekly and are held on Wednesdays. ECGRA sets up the Zoom on behalf of the County Council Task Force and then Chairs Anderson and Clear run the meeting. ECGRA provides the support for it; it has been going quite well. We have had provided them with guest speakers in the area of economic development.

We are working internally on a survey of our Main Street partners to see how they have been affected by COVID and we are also working with external partners on data sources they have collected from the Economic Research Institute of Erie to The Nonprofit Partnership here in town which is an association of nonprofits. There is also a couple of articles in there that have gone forth with some publication of our efforts.

I also wanted to tell you that the staff is working on a special report on the results of the COVID Response Fund. March will be exactly one year since we launched that Fund in the midst of COVID and participated in helping to fund immediate human relief and the loan funds that were created to help small business and nonprofits. We are going to do a special report for the Board and bring it forth showing how the timeline unfolded and where we're at with that.

I will wrap up my comments by saying that I have been working with the Treasurer on the finances, and that includes at this time of year the proposal of a new budget. A new budget will be on the docket to be voted on in April, so we have begun that process as a staff to analyze costs. The next step is to go to the Treasurer and have a discussion with him about a draft budget, and then to provide that draft budget to the Board of Directors at the March Board meeting for your comments and reviews. We can have discussions on line items and their purpose in the budget. That budget will also include recommendations for increases or decreases of certain line items and it will include recommendations for any kind of cost-of-living increase for employees. That is part of the discussion we were having with the Treasurer right now. We will bring forth options there, and then we will have a full discussion as a Board. The budget will also include moving to a health insurance plan which is something Tammi is currently researching with both Highmark and UPMC.

Are there any questions for me?

Mr. Cleaver: Just to clear this in my mind, you are requesting two bids or proposals for health insurance coverage for the staff and yourself, right?

Dr. Wood: That is correct. We are requesting quotes from those two entities.

Mr. Cleaver: And we're going to put that into effect for when, the new year which would happen on April 15th at the Annual meeting?

Dr. Wood: Yes, because that is the start of the new fiscal year.

Mr. Cleaver: Thank you. I just wanted to make sure I had it clear in my mind.

Mr. Lee: Dr. Wood, I have a couple of questions. The COVID-19 initiative that you are working on with Council Council, I know you had the opportunity to have Bruce Katz speak, which I thought was great; do you have any idea of some of the other guest speakers that you may be bringing in for the Council to hear?

Dr. Wood: Next Wednesday we are having Adam Bratton from the Nonprofit Partnership come in and talk about the surveying that was done of nonprofits in the midst of COVID last year. Part of the discussion will be that they would like to do some follow-up surveying and they would like to know what kinds of questions they should be asking based upon what the task force is interested in. Other guest speakers have been there is a newly funded women's business center, which is an SBA concept, and we've also had Dr. Ken Louie from the Economic Research Institute of Erie come in and talk to us about the indicators project that Behrend's economics' department works on quarterly.

Mr. Lee: If we wanted to attend the meetings, how would we go about it, Dr. Wood?

Dr. Wood: Tammi can send you a link to the Zoom meeting. They are publicly advertised according to Sunshine Law and anyone is welcome to participate. From the Administration, Honey Stempka has been attending the meetings.

Mr. Lee: Wonderful. I am aware that she has attended the meetings. Thank you. I think that is a great project. The last question I have is in reference to I know that ECGRA had stepped up to work with the various Community Centers. I know you were working with Mr. Horton, Mr. Sherrod, and Mr. Hilliard at the Booker T. Washington Center on the food insecurities. I just wanted to know if there has been any continuing talk about that and is there any role that the Authority may be playing in that going forward?

Dr. Wood: That is a great question. There hasn't been any further dialog moving forward on that probably since, what would be a good term, suspending the COVID Response Fund. So, no, we have not had any further discussions. It doesn't mean that we can't though. I think we should be open to those.

Mr. Lee: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Wood.

Dr. Wood: Are there any other questions for me? If not, thank you for your time.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Wachter has nothing to report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

There is no Old Business to cover at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

There is no New Business to cover at this time.

Mr. Sample moves to adjourn.