



## **Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority**

### **Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting**

**March 17, 2022**

Meetings for the Board of Directors of ECGRA can begin meeting in a physical location per Governor Wolf's proclamation of June 11, 2021. However, each member and ex-officio has the option to attend in person or virtually. Members of the public can now speak at the physical location of 5240 Knowledge Parkway.

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Board of Directors' Meeting of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority was held on March 17, 2022 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, and Mr. Sample are present via Zoom. Mr. Wachter is present via Zoom, and Dr. Wood is present in person. Mr. Smith joins late.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mr. Sample makes a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. DiPaolo seconds the motion. There is no discussion of the agenda. Motion carries 6-0.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – February 2022

Mr. Cleaver makes a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. DiPaolo seconds the motion. There is no discussion on the minutes. Motion carries 6-0.

#### **DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

**Ms. Loll:** I have something; I don't know whether this is the appropriate time to bring it up. We did that study session on the money that we're going to distribute – that \$4 million – the ARPA money we got. Anyway, I was wondering, the city got \$76 million and the School District in the city got \$30 million and the County got \$54 million. I was wondering when it comes time to decide who receives

money and that, how is that going to be decided and is that still going to be shared largely with the city?

Mr. Barney: Once we get the requirements and everything in place, everyone has the opportunity to submit and apply and then we review the applications and make a determination at that time. That's my understanding. Dr. Wood, would you like to elaborate?

Dr. Wood: I guess the first thing that I would say is that the City of Erie, as a municipal government, will not be a recipient of any of our funds. So, when you say city, is that what you are referring to?

Ms. Loll: Well, I wasn't quite sure. I just know that the city itself received the \$76 million and I didn't know if whether part of the \$4 million that we got, that we're going to be in control of, would then be geared toward the city. Or are they going to do their own program?

Dr. Wood: Okay, so "geared toward the city," could you explain what you mean by that?

Ms. Loll: Well, if you look at the map that you gave us on this study session, there's a large portion of the need – at least calculated as it was – was the city. I see that Corry was a large area too and I see there were some in the rural area, but not a lot. But I didn't know whether because the city was the largest place that was located as to need would then be the largest receiver of this \$4 million or part of it.

Dr. Wood: We have a contract with the county to disburse these funds, and one of the requirements has to do with populations that are disproportionately affected by the pandemic. There are three measurements, one of which is median household income. That map, if you recall, did have a large amount of neighborhoods in the City of Erie but it also had neighborhoods in North East, Corry, Union City, Edinboro, and Albion in which there is definitely qualifications. Now, tying a specific grant program to these neighborhoods is going to be an interesting exercise in grantmaking. What I have found over the years is that ECGRA is really good at geographically disbursing funds all across Erie County and we do that by working with the nonprofits that are working in those regions. However, sometimes they are county-wide nonprofits and they just happen to be headquartered in the city, for example. So, if a nonprofit is serving county-wide but is located in the city and we award that nonprofit funds, do you consider that a city grant or do you consider it a county-wide grant?

Ms. Loll: Well, in that case, I would say county-wide.

Dr. Wood: And I would agree, because there are placemaking groups, like Downtown North East for example, whose sole mission is to work in the Borough of North East on the main street, and that particular borough has several neighborhoods represented in those maps.

Ms. Loll: Right. Okay, thank you.

Mr. Sample: Perry, I know we talked about this at one point but, it's always been ECGRA's mission not to replicate a program that is offered in other parts of the county. I realize it's early, but is that the intention at this point? If the city is going to target a certain area or whatever, would we avoid that?

Dr. Wood: I can tell you that we are doing our best to keep up with the new programs that are being created so that we don't duplicate. One example is that the city began to work in certain neighborhoods, basically replicating the Renaissance Block Program in those neighborhoods, so we

don't feel the need to continue offering Renaissance Block at that level. That being said, there are new programs being created, every week in some cases, because they have such a large amount of money in the city, as Carol pointed out, that they come up with a program, they send it down to council, if council passes it, it gets implemented. So, we are doing our best to keep up with those programs.

Ms. Loll: Thank you.

Mr. Barney: Thank you, Dr. Wood. Are there any other questions from any directors?

### COMMENTS BY THE CHAIR

Mr. Barney has no comments at this time.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

There is no public present.

### PRESENTATIONS

There are no presentations scheduled.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Treasurer's Report: Mr. Cleaver: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's not much on the financial side. I think you all got copies so if you have any questions, we can get those answered. I know one thing that we're going to address is next year's budget at this meeting. I presented it at the last meeting in reference to just a few minor changes. Basically, that's about it.

Mr. DiPaolo makes a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Mr. Sample seconds the motion. There are no questions or discussion of the Treasurer's Report. Motion carries 6-0.

- b. Strategic Planning Committee: Mr. Barney: We did have the study session about the guidelines. Did anyone have any questions pertaining to that?
- c. Update from County Council

Mr. Barney: Perry, do we have a representative from County Council present?

Dr. Wood: We do not.

- d. Update from County Executive's Office

Mr. Barney: Do we have anyone from the Administration present?

Dr. Wood: No.

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Wood: Good morning, everyone. You'll see in the Director's Report the first thing we have in there is the appointment of a new Board member. The gentleman's name is Gary Winschel. We always put the appointment letter in the report here. Gary couldn't be with us this morning, but he will have his orientation next week and we will fully get him engaged in the program and up to speed and running. I know very little about Gary so far; he is a member of the Millcreek Township School Board, and he is Councilman Scutella's appointment.

Moving on, you will see the activity report from Parker Philips, you'll see a meeting we participated in for the strategic future of the community college, there's a note in here from Edinboro – I always like to put when people send letters or notes of thanks I like to put them in here so the Board can see that folks are appreciative of what we are doing for the community. And the final one is an email from Veterans Miracle Center, something that we funded awhile ago, just giving us an update on how they are using our funds.

The bulk of the time for the staff in the last month was in getting prepared for the Special Events grant which came through and we had to make several changes to budgets there, but you can see that it's a pretty big list with 37 special events and we'll get to that under the resolutions. That will be Resolution Number 1, 2022.

Resolution Number 2, 2022 is the budget for the next fiscal year. Of course, we addressed the first draft of that budget at the last Board meeting as is our tradition. The staff did not receive any phone calls on the budget asking for any kind of clarification. Mr. Cleaver, did you receive any phone calls about the budget?

Mr. Cleaver: No, none whatsoever. If I did, I would be sure to let you know. We only had three major changes and I think the Board agreed upon those.

Dr. Wood: Okay. I think the budget is pretty benign for the most part; that's Resolution Number 2, 2022. If there is further discussion, we can discuss it at that time. Resolution Number 3, 2022 is addressing Summer Jobs. The Summer Jobs Program is going on the seventh or eighth year that we've been funding this. I did have a talk with Doug Smith, the new Director of Administration; they are in support of continuing the Summer Jobs Program. I had called to make sure the County was still going to be a participant, so I asked him if we should move forward since this is the time of year when we usually approve this and he said, "Absolutely. We've also budgeted for it as well." So, if you pass it here today, that program will continue.

Finally, Resolution Number 4, 2022 is the Building a Better Future: Transformative Grant Guidelines, which ECGRA is contracted with the County to disburse, so Resolution Number 4 has an attachment where you will find the full grant guidelines per the briefing that was given the other week.

That being said I will just wrap up my comments by saying that I am very hopeful for the future. Our relationship with the County has never been better. We are having great interactions with members of County Council; Mr. Cleaver and I just met with Mr. Winarski the other day just to give him a briefing as a new County Councilman and Mr. Sample and I met with Councilman Bayle. We're doing our job on the government relations side and I just wanted everyone else on the Board to know that we are keeping these folks up to date on how things are going, keeping open lines of communication, answering all their questions, and we're getting a good reception.

We're also interacting with the County Executive on a weekly basis, at this point, on various projects and making sure we stay up on his agenda for the County as well. Are there any questions for me? Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

## SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Wachter: I met with the staff and Dr. Wood to go over the guidelines and suggested presentations and the like related to the federal funding. Other than that, it's been smooth sailing.

Dr. Wood: If I can just make one comment, Tim has been an indispensable resource on the ARPA funds and getting ready for it. Tammi and I and Tom have had several meetings with him to go over the legal requirements to make sure we're in compliance and even from the accounting standpoint – because at the end of the day, folks, we are going to be audited by the federal government. We are a subrecipient of the county, so we're responsible to them to a certain extent to fulfill the contract that we have, but at the end of the day, we're ultimately responsible to the federal government. Tim, you've done a great job and I just want to say thank you.

Mr. Wachter: I appreciate that. Just a note to clarify one thing for Carol. Carol, when you had mentioned the school district receiving money, I just want to make sure that you're aware that was a different funding allocation. Those were ESSR funds and not ARP funds and they are directly related to learning loss and physical construction like HVAC issues at the school. So, those are a different bucket of funds and completely different spending requirements.

Ms. Loll: Thank you for clarifying that. I appreciate it.

Mr. Wachter: You're welcome.

## OLD BUSINESS

There is no old business to discuss at this time.

## NEW BUSINESS

- a. Resolution Number 1, 2022 – Resolution to enter into agreement with thirty-seven (37) Erie County organizations for Special Events grants

Dr. Wood: This is the eleventh year we have done this at ECGRA; this is the oldest program we do here. The staff is recommending funding to the tune of \$166,524.80 to the extent outline in the attached Exhibit A.

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Mr. DiPaolo: I have a question and I don't want to beat a dead horse. How can we justify giving Downtown North East \$2,900, the Port Authority \$6,000, and the Jefferson Society \$20,000 every time this comes up? What justifies this amount of money that we give these people every time? That's the question I have.

Mr. Barney: My answer would be, because I looked at that too as far as the amounts and I even talked to some people last night, but it is the 5%. It's the size of the event. The Jefferson Society is bringing in speakers and it costs a lot more for them to run. It's still the same percent for everybody; it just happens that their 5% is \$20,000. For someone else, their

5% may only be \$500. If we did it, then we would step outside the parameters. Perry, you may be able to give him a more technical answer if I didn't do sufficient.

Dr. Wood: The way the Special Events program has been structured, really since the beginning and these last eleven years, we wanted to take out the arbitrariness of sponsoring special events. In order to do that and find an appropriate level, we based it upon operations of the various organizations.

For example, the larger ones like the Jefferson and Celebrate Erie, they tend to get more money because they are larger events, they have a bigger impact, and therefore they have larger budgets. So, the percentage is an objective way to do that.

I'm not sure about the Downtown North East question, about Wine Fest being \$2,900 but I can say that the Port Authority hasn't applied for Special Events funds from us in six years. This is the first time in six years that they have come to us. The Jefferson has the largest budget, but it used to be Roar on the Shore had the largest budget, until that organization collapsed. So, it's very objective and it's based upon the size of the budget.

If you look at how we do it, we do it percentagewise, so that's why these numbers aren't flat. If you look at the first one on the list, Albion Area Fair at \$9,560 – why isn't it just a \$5,000 or \$10,000 sponsorship? Because it's based on the budget, which is submitted and reviewed by the staff and then taken by a percentage. The basis for doing these special events is tourism. These special events bring folks into the region, and they also create a sense of pride for the communities that they're in. Like the gathering at French Creek in Union City for example, that's the big event going on in Union City. Goodell Gardens down in Edinboro hosts the Edinboro Art and Music Festival – it is THE community-based event.

These are important from an economic development standpoint, but also a civic pride standpoint.

Mr. DiPaolo: Can we scroll down a little bit so we can check the rest of them out, please? Thank you. That was the only question that I had.

Dr. Wood: Are there any other questions on Special Events? By the way, Doug Smith has joined us. Doug, thanks for joining. If you're looking at the agenda, we're in the New Business section.

Mr. Smith: Thanks very much.

Mr. Cleaver moves to accept the resolution. Ms. Hess seconds the motion. There is no further discussion of the resolution. Motion carries 6-0.

b. Resolution Number 2, 2022 – Resolution to Adopt the 2022-23 Budget

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Mr. Sample moves to accept the resolution. Mr. Cleaver seconds the motion.

Mr. Cleaver: Just a quick comment. We had reviewed this and there were only three minor changes and we agreed upon a minimal increase for the employees and Dr. Wood has a contract, so I think everything fell in place.

There is no further discussion of the resolution. Motion carries 6-0.

c. Resolution Number 3, 2022 – Resolution to Adopt the Summer Jobs and More Program

Dr. Wood: As I mentioned earlier, I did have a conversation with Mr. Smith about the Summer Jobs Program and the County and their interest in continuing the program. Mr. Smith, if you wanted to say anything about Summer Jobs, now would be a great time to do it. The attached Exhibit has ECGRA participating at the level of \$150,000, the County participating at \$150,000, and the Community Foundation at \$60,000.

Mr. Smith: The County is still very invested in the Summer JAMS Program, so we welcome the Authority's continued presence there. We believe it's been quite valuable, especially to those clients who've been involved. In fact, we're even hopeful that some of our kids can get involved in some element of the plastics industry. As some of you may have heard, we're putting a lot of focus on that; the fact that it's one of Erie's largest industries – or THE largest industry – right now, it makes sense, I think, to get some workers in that pipeline. I think Mr. Whaley is doing some outreach to see what we can do to get some opportunities together for young people to get exposed to that sort of work as well.

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Mr. Sample moves to accept the resolution. Mr. DiPaolo seconds the motion. There is no further discussion on the resolution. Motion carries 6-0.

d. Resolution Number 4, 2022 – Resolution to Adopt the 2022 ECGRA Grant Guidelines for Building a Better Future: Transformative Grants.

Dr. Wood reads the resolution.

Ms. Hess moves to accept this resolution. Mr. DiPaolo seconds the motion.

Mr. Cleaver: Is this a boiler-plate resolution that we pass year to year or is it something new on the agenda here?

Dr. Wood: Do you mean the language in the resolution?

Mr. Cleaver: I know we only meet once a month, but I don't recall this. Is this something that is required of us; is it mandated by law to approve this?

Dr. Wood: If you're asking if it's mandatory for the Board to pass the guidelines, I don't actually know the answer to that. Tim? But I do know that from a political standpoint, the staff wants your support of the program. This is the most important way to show that you support it.

Mr. Wachter: Mr. Cleaver, technically by law, no, the Board does not need to approve the guidelines. However, because you are ultimately going to be asked to approve the grant applications that come in, it behooves the staff to get an approval of the guidelines first to make sure you approve of the program itself and the specifics by which those applications are going to come in under. So, that's the reason we've always done it.

Mr. Smith: Pardon the interruption. I'm just curious if this particular vote places the money to certain programs or whether this is more general than that. I'm just hopeful for 2022 that the

Board might take just a tiny bit more time to make some decisions about where this money might go.

Mr. Barney: At this time, this doesn't necessarily dictate who receives the money, it just dictates what the requirements will be needed for them to apply for the money.

Mr. Smith: Is this committing the Gaming Authority then to this particular paradigm for these funds?

Mr. Barney: Under the requirements that we have been tasked with by the County, yes.

Dr. Wood: Doug, I would say that by passing this set of guidelines, these guidelines are consistent with the subrecipient contract that we have with Erie County government. I just had this conversation with the County Executive yesterday and said, "We want to hear feedback from the Administration on how funds are spent and where future programs are, but this particular program we already have a contract with the County to spend \$4 million with the nonprofit sector, which is one of the categories within the ARPA funds, that the County designated us to spend it only on 501c3s. As we move forward, for example in 2022, we would like to have more conversations with the County about the new County Council's and new County Executive's visions for ARPA funds and that we'll be there to provide research, to be part of study sessions, or whatever you need from us."

Mr. Smith: So, these are 2021 ARP funds?

Dr. Wood: Yes sir, they are.

Mr. Smith: Thank you for that clarification. Thank you, Board.

There is no further discussion of the resolution. Motion to approve the Building a Better Future: Transformative Grant Guidelines carries 6-0.

## ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Sample moves to adjourn. Mr. Cleaver seconds the motion.