



**Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
October 30, 2023**

Board Members Present: Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman; Don Villar, Vice Chairman; Jorge Ramirez*, Secretary/Treasurer; Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart; Samir Mayekar; Terrance McGann; Michelle Mills Clement; Juan Morado; Sherman Wright

*Arrived at 9:14 a.m.

Others Present: Larita Clark, Chief Executive Officer; Matthew Simmons, General Counsel; Jason Bormann, Chief Financial Officer; Pat Allen, Senior Director of Labor Relations and Campus Operations; Stephanie Lovelace Nieves, Controller; Hilary Barker, Director of Procurement; Gloria Juarbe, Director of Human Resources; Jill Kolinski, Assistant General Counsel; Molly Kievit, Senior Director of Campus Sales; Nicol Chervenak, Director of Planning and Program Management; Kelsey Rubin, Director of Collection Sales; Emilie Yount, Associate Director of Communications; Samuel Thomas, OVG/McCormick Place; Adrian Coye, OVG/McCormick Place; Moira O'Brien, OVG/McCormick Place; Alonzo Torres, OVG/McCormick Place; Jason Grohoske, OVG/McCormick Place; Julia Yob, OVG/McCormick Place; Lisa Nucci, Choose Chicago; Dustin Arnheim, Choose Chicago; Catherine Mrowiec, Marriott Marquis; Steve Conklin, Marriott Marquis; Jim Meyer, Choose Chicago; Rufus Purnell, Contractor; Richard Ray, Hawthorne Strategy Group; Cynthia McCafferty, Hawthorne Strategy Group; Pat Doerr, HBAC; Annette Prince, Chicago Bird Collision Monitors; Edward Warden, Chicago Ornithological Society; Erick Masias, Chicago BIPOC Birders; Audrey Haynes, WGN-TV; Patty Wetli, WTTW News; Judy Pollock, Chicago Bird Alliance; Lynn Osmond, Choose Chicago; Dan Kowalski, Hawthorne Strategy Group; Patrick Sullivan, Center for Biological Diversity; Maria Calderon, Compliance Officer and Board Administrator

General Matters:

- A1. Roll Call: MPEA Chairman Bethke, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and Ms. Calderon called roll.
- A2. Approval of Minutes: Chairman Bethke called for the approval of the minutes of the September 25, 2023 Special Board meeting.

Moved by Member Morado, seconded by Member Wright, and the remaining members present voted approving item A2.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Juan Morado – Yes
Samir Mayekar – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes

The motion passed.

- A3. Public Comments.

Ms. Prince, Director of the Chicago Bird Collision Monitors, stated she wanted to address the Board regarding the bird collisions at McCormick Place Lakeside. Ms. Prince asked the leadership of MPEA to take immediate action to assure a permanent and reliable means of light reduction and glass protection



for birds at the McCormick Place Lakeside facility. Ms. Prince stated “in its critical location, directly in the path of millions of migratory birds along Chicago’s lakefront, this building has harmed tens of thousands of birds over decades. Whether it is the tragic occurrence of 1000 birds killed in one day or the gradual accumulation of a thousand each year. McCormick Place has been aware that this extensive needless harm could have been prevented with light reduction and glass protection. Lights must be extinguished in this building every night of spring and fall migration or shades must block light from fatally attracting birds. Dangerous glass facades must be retrofitted for bird protection by installing window films, markers, bird-friendly glass or external barriers in front of windows. Just as the MPEA seeks to welcome visitors to Chicago from around the world, please implement the long overdue measures that will assure that the millions of invaluable avian visitors that we host each year will have safer passages through our city.”

Ms. Pollock, President of the Chicago Bird Alliance, stated she wanted to address the Board regarding bird safety. Ms. Pollock stated “please appropriate sufficient funds to make the McCormick Lakeside Center safe for migrating birds. Please select a method that is effective and consult with both experts and the local birding community when selecting it. The debacle on October 5 and also on the nights after was totally preventable. You have been frequently counseled to pull curtains, install shades or otherwise address the problems of both lights and glass at your building. The population of migratory birds that passes through Chicago is declining at about 5% per year. We need to do everything we can to help them, not to cause further harm. The outrage in the birding community over this is enormous. Over 10,000 people signed a petition which we present to you today: We demand that the Governor of Illinois, the Mayor of Chicago and those managing the McCormick Place Lakeside facility take immediate and urgent action to require that interior lights at McCormick Place East be extinguished or shades drawn every night of migration. This means requiring exhibitors to agree to these conditions. These protections have been shown to result in an 80% reduction in bird strikes at this location. Thank you. Presented on behalf of Bird Friendly Chicago.”

Report from CEO: Ms. Clark stated she wanted to begin with a moment of remembrance for David Jacobs. Ms. Clark stated the entire campus was devastated to learn about his sudden and unexpected passing in late September. Ms. Clark stated Dave Jacobs served as General Manager of the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place since 2019 and had been a general manager for the Hyatt Corporation for almost 30 years. Ms. Clark stated she worked closely with Mr. Jacobs throughout her time as CEO of MPEA. Mr. Jacobs brought incredible vision and steady leadership to the Hyatt and was a valued member of the campus team. Ms. Clark stated her heart goes out to Mr. Jacobs’s wife, daughters, grandchildren, and his staff in this time of inconceivable loss. Ms. Clark asked for everyone to please take a moment of silence to honor Mr. Jacob’s memory.

Ms. Clark stated we were also devastated this month by reports of a large, unprecedented bird collision at Lakeside Center. Ms. Clark reported that unfortunately, MPEA learned about this incident from social media posts and media reports. Ms. Clark stated MPEA/McCormick Place staff were not directly contacted when the birds were discovered nor were they provided the opportunity to verify these reports. Ms. Clark stated as soon as MPEA heard about this reported event, she immediately directed the leadership team to investigate this event and explore additional measures that MPEA can take to avoid or minimize future occurrences.

Ms. Clark stated as many of you know, since 1978, MPEA has partnered with the Field Museum in their research. Ms. Clark stated in fact, McCormick Place was described as the most studied building in the world for bird collisions. Dr. Willard, who has been coming to the campus for more than 40 years, told the Associated Press, that on a normal night there would be 0 to 15 and that they have never seen anything remotely on the scale of the recent report.

Ms. Clark stated MPEA takes every bird loss seriously and that is why they have taken many steps to minimize collisions based on best practices. Ms. Clark stated for example, the number of bird collision dropped by 80% after MPEA began participating in Lights Out Chicago.



Ms. Clark stated since the reported mass collision, the leadership team has consulted with 7 bird conservation organizations and the City of Chicago to understand other measures that can be put in place. Ms. Clark reported the leadership team has met with representatives of: The American Bird Conservancy; Chicago Bird Collision Monitors; Chicago Bird Alliance, they recently changed their name from the Chicago Audubon Society; Chicago Ornithological Society; Fatal Light Awareness Program, known as FLAP, out of Canada; Never Collide; and PETA. Ms. Clark stated they provided the campus team with a number of recommendations and insights.

Ms. Clark stated MPEA continues to participate in Lights Out Chicago and the policy is that, if a space is not occupied, the lights are turned off. This policy was in effect on and prior to October 4 and 5. Ms. Clark stated the building was in use for most of October, so while the lights were off when the building was not occupied, the lights were on when it was occupied. Ms. Clark stated the campus drops the lights to 25% once the event finishes for safety reasons and for housekeeping, food service, event and security patrol staff. Any remaining lights are required by building and fire code. Ms. Clark stated the campus electricians help enforce the policy by making sure lights are off. Ms. Clark stated the campus has bird-safe decals on some of the windows, and in 2003, we opened a six-acre bird sanctuary just south of Lakeside Center. This was developed as part of a series of sanctuaries in coordination with the Chicago Parks Department.

Ms. Clark stated since the reported collision, MPEA adopted a new procedure that the drapes will be closed at night during migration season unless the client specifically requests that drapes remain open. If they request that, the blinds will be closed when the event concludes at night. As mentioned earlier, closing the drapes takes significant time and manpower.

Ms. Clark stated MPEA is researching the viability and pricing of the following options. MPEA will attempt to identify resources to fund prior to recommending any additional measures. Once the board approves the recommended option(s), MPEA will follow their procurement process for these items.

Ms. Clark stated while MPEA's mission is economic development, MPEA works hard to be good neighbors and good stewards of the environment. For decades MPEA has worked to minimize its impact on the environment and will continue to do so in the future.

Ms. Clark stated on October 1st MPEA officially welcomed OVG 360 and OVG Hospitality as their new private management and food service providers. Ms. Clark stated she like to commend the OVG team for their professionalism and effort in ensuring a smooth transition for the campus staff, visitors, and clients. When MPEA awarded the contracts to OVG, they committed to retaining a vast majority of campus employees, and she is happy to report they followed through in a big way: 91% of the employees remain on campus. Already, operations have been continuing almost seamlessly. Immediately after the transition, the campus hosted WEFTEC, and the clients were very pleased with the outcome of the show. The campus also hosted the packet pickups for the Bank of America Chicago Marathon and the coinciding Abbott Health and Fitness Expo without a hitch. Ms. Clark stated she is grateful to everyone from OVG, MPEA, and ASM who worked hard to make the transition a success, and looks forward to the campus continuing to develop under OVG's leadership.

Ms. Clark reported in September, The Wall Street Journal ranked McCormick Place the Number 2 overall convention center in the United States and Number 1 in space, amenities, and convenience. Ms. Clark stated she had to give credit to the dedicated staff and partners in the city and state. Without the support of all of the stakeholders, the campus could not have achieved this great honor.

Ms. Clark reported on the sustainability front, the campus received the 2023 Leadership Award in Energy Management from Dynegy and Homefield Energy. Ms. Clark reported the campus was recognized for being powered by 100% renewable wind energy through MPEA's purchase of renewable energy certificates. Ms. Clark stated the campus will continue to invest in sustainability in the future, and honors like this show why it is so important to do so.



Ms. Clark reported she attended IMEX in Las Vegas, it is the largest trade show in the U.S. for meetings, events, and incentive travel. Ms. Clark reported IMEX gave her an opportunity to hear from and meet with some of the foremost leaders in the industry and assess how MPEA can continue to make sure the campus is a dominant force in meetings and events. Ms. Clark reported the staff also had countless meetings with potential clients and other leaders throughout the show.

Ms. Clark reported in continuing the campus' long tradition of hosting national and world leaders, McCormick Place was honored to welcome some important guests within the last couple of months. First Lady Dr. Jill Biden visited the campus to deliver remarks at the Chicago Federation of Labor's annual Labor Day reception. McCormick Place hosted a preview day for state Democratic Party chairs and executive directors as part of the campus ongoing preparation for the 2024 DNC. The DNC is a major opportunity for McCormick Place and the City of Chicago. The campus will host thousands of individuals from around the country and world and wanted to make this site visit was special to get everyone and to get them excited to come here next year. Ms. Clark reported staff provided tours of McCormick Place, and she gave a presentation to the attendees. Ms. Clark thanked staff who gave a warm reception to the First Lady and DNC officials.

Ms. Clark reported on the campus' performance calendar year to date. Through the end of October, there were 115 events, with more than 1.5 million attendees and 1.1 million room nights. The estimated economic impact to the city and state is \$1.8 billion, generating approximately, \$191 million dollars and taxes. Ms. Clark stated for comparison, the projection for this year was 1.9 million attendees, 1.1million room nights, and \$1.8 billion in economic impact and with two months left, the campus has already met two of the projections. This is only for the convention center, so it does not include Wintrust Arena, or either of the hotels.

Ms. Clark stated however, for her, the most important number is the number of jobs created and supported. In an average month, there are 3,000 people employed on this campus, and thousands more whose jobs are impacted by the visitors to McCormick Place. This is what drives the campus every day.

Executive Session: Chairman Bethke asked for a motion to convene in Executive Session to discuss items C1 and C2. Upon motion duly made by Member Villar, seconded by Member Birnecker Hart, and the remaining members present unanimously voted to convene in Executive Session.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Juan Morado – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Samir Mayekar – Yes	

The motion passed

Review of Covered Actions and Eligible Agreements:

- D1. Consideration of Approval of Second Amendment to Management Agreement for the Marriott Marquis Chicago at McCormick Place Hotel Management Services.

Moved by Member Villar, seconded by Member McGann, and the remaining members present voted approving item D1.

Roll call vote. Record as:



Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Juan Morado – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Samir Mayekar – Yes	

The motion passed.

- D2. Consideration of Approval of New Reference Contract for Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Meeting Room Renovation Public Space Furniture.

Moved by Member Ramirez, seconded by Member Wright, and the remaining members present voted approving item D2.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Juan Morado – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Samir Mayekar – Yes	

- D3. Consideration of Approval of New Contracts for Artists (Various) for Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Hotel Renovation of Meeting Rooms and Ballroom.

Moved by Member Morado, seconded by Member Wright, and the remaining members present voted approving item D3.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Juan Morado – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Samir Mayekar – Yes	

The motion passed.

- D4. Consideration of Approval of New Contract for Fire Extinguisher Inspection and Maintenance Services.

Moved by Member Morado, seconded by Member Birnecker Hart, and the remaining members present voted approving item D4.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Juan Morado – Yes



Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Samir Mayekar – Yes	

The motion passed.

- D5. Consideration of Approval of New Contract for MPEA Lot A and Hyatt Parking Structure Maintenance Repairs.

Moved by Member McGann, seconded by Member Villar, and the remaining members present voted approving item D5.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Juan Morado – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Samir Mayekar – Yes	

The motion passed.

- D6. Consideration of Approval of Increase Not-to-Exceed Amount for Plumbing Equipment Materials and Fire Protection Equipment and Materials.

Moved by Member Villar, seconded by Member Morado, and the remaining members present voted approving item D6.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Juan Morado – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Samir Mayekar – Yes	

The motion passed.

- D7. Consideration of Approval of New Contract for Annual Lift Inspection Services.

Moved by Member Villar, seconded by Member Wright, and the remaining members present voted approving item D7.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Juan Morado – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Samir Mayekar – Yes	

The motion passed.



Update from Choose Chicago: Ms. Osmond reported Choose Chicago's progress toward their 2023 goals. Ms. Osmond reported on organizational updates that have helped increase their efficiency and impact for convention sales. First, they have continued to build and strengthen their leadership team. Ms. Osmond reported Lisa Nucci joined their team as a CMO in July after a national search. This role is critical in delivering a strong, integrated, proactive marketing push for citywide conventions.

Second, they continue to work to address some of the reputational challenges for the city. Ms. Osmond stated they know that issues like crime are top of mind for customers, so they are actively working to change the narrative. They are also working to establish a Tourism Improvement District, TID for short, to provide Choose Chicago with a more robust funding base, allowing them to compete on the same level as other markets.

Third, they are focused on continuing to cultivate community support. Ms. Osmond reported on Wednesday and Thursday, the Customer Advisory Board will be together for their annual meeting. Among other topics, they are using the meeting as an opportunity to provide input on the brand repositioning, one of their goals.

Ms. Osmond reported they have had extraordinary support from the Governor and Mayor in pursuing citywide conventions. They have been active advocates in making calls to prospective and current clients, attending meetings, and in the case of the Mayor, even joining them in person in Boston for a meeting with the NAACP for a possible 2026 convention.

Mr. Arnheim reported they hired Digital Edge to develop new sales and bid presentations and bid decks. Mr. Arnheim reported they also supported with Where Meetings are Built and Meet in America campaigns. Mr. Arnheim reported during IMEX there were 250 face-to-face opportunities which MPEA and OVG360 were part of. Mr. Arnheim reported they are working on brand repositioning and have created a timeline, process and listening tools.

Mr. Arnheim reported they are growing the team thanks to MPEA's financial support. Mr. Arnheim reported increase in the citywide sales team by 75% from 4 to 7 team members. Mr. Arnheim reported in 2024 they will be adding a citywide sales team member and site visit manager.

Mr. Arnheim reported on the progress towards 3 of their MPEA goals which are number of citywide bookings; need periods for 2026-2028; and new business. Mr. Arnheim reported on the first goal of 37 citywide bookings which they have achieved 80% of year-to-date and expect to pass the 37 citywide bookings. Mr. Arnheim reported on the second goal of confirmed 20 citywide bookings for years 2026-2028 which they have achieved 84% year-to-date and have the funnel to reach the goal. Mr. Arnheim reported on the third goal of 18 new citywide bookings which they have achieved 40% year-to-date and have the funnel to reach the goal.

Report from Controller: Ms. Lovelace-Nieves presented the financial results for August and September 2023.

Report from Chief Financial Officer: Mr. Bormann presented the tax collections for August and September 2023.

Report from McCormick Place General Manager: Mr. Thomas reported his first thirty days was very eventful. Mr. Thomas reported their first show as the new management company was WEFTEC. Mr. Thomas reported Ms. Jones, managing director of WEFTEC, stated her experience with OVG360 was fantastic from day one because there was full transparency and communication. Mr. Thomas reported on the events that took place on campus: WEFTEC had 22,000 attendees; Bank of America Chicago Marathon; EDUCAUSE; Chicago Build Expo had 25,000 attendees; American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) had 12,000 attendees; World Dairy Summit; National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC); Process Expo; American Academy of Family Physicians had 8,000 attendees; and International Air Transport Association. Mr. Thomas reported the Chicagoland Sports Hall of Fame at Wintrust Arena had 400 attendees and Sweetest Day Comedy Jam at Arie Crown Theatre. Mr. Thomas reported on hosting the introduction of Chicago Sky Head Coach, Teresa Weatherspoon. Mr. Thomas reported on upcoming events: 265 EduCon with an estimated 650 attendees; Leading Age with an estimated 10,000



attendees; KubeCon + CloudNative Con with an estimated 10,000 attendees; AAU Boys' Volleyball with an estimated 10,000 attendees; and Radiological Society of North America with an estimated 38,500 attendees. Mr. Thomas reported Stephanie Mills will be at the Arie Crown Theater. Mr. Thomas reported on the upcoming events at the Wintrust Arena 312 Comedy Festival; DePaul Basketball Season Openers; Basketball (FAU vs. Loyola Chicago and Arizona State vs. Mississippi State); Mixed Martial Arts; and AEW Professional Wrestling.

Mr. Thomas reported on the public relations regarding OVG's transition. Mr. Thomas reported on leadership team promotions: Eugene Hardison, Assistant General Manager, Operations; Moira O'Brien, Senior Vice President of Sales; David Sheehan, Director of Technology Services; Colleen Skala, Director of Event Management; and Chef Michael Kingsley, Director of Culinary Innovation. Mr. Thomas reported on transition celebration with staff and campus partners.

F1. New Business.

There was no new business.

F2. Consideration of Approval of Executive Session minutes of the July 25, 2023 Regular Board Meeting.

Moved by Member Ramirez, seconded by Member Villar, and the remaining members present voted approving item F2.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Samir Mayekar – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes

The motion passed.

F3. Adjournment.

Chairman Bethke moved to adjourn the meeting moved by Member McGann, seconded by Member Wright, and the meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote of the Board.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Samir Mayekar – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Michelle Mills Clement – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes

The motion passed.

Time meeting adjourned: 11:32 a.m.

Approved: December 12, 2023

Secretary/Treasurer or Assistant Secretary