



MPEA Corporate Center
Corporate Boardroom, 5th Floor
301 East Cermak Road
Chicago, IL 60616

Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2024 9:00 A.M.

Board Members Present: Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman; Don Villar, Vice Chairman; Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer; Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart*; Sam Kukadia; Terrance McGann; Sherman Wright

*Teleconference

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; Jill Kolinski, Deputy General Counsel; Stephanie Lovelace Nieves, Controller; Gloria Juarbe, Director of Human Resources; Pi Tao Hsu, Director of Treasury and Capital Management; Kelsey Rubin, Director of Collection Sales; Tiffany Wright, Business Diversity Program Manager; Emilie Yount, Associate Director of Communications; Nicol Chervenak, Director of Planning and Program Management; Cynthia McCafferty, Hawthorne Strategy Group; Samuel Thomas, McCormick Place/OVG360; Mark Bickler, McCormick Place/OVG360; Julia Yob, McCormick Place/OVG360; Michael Czopek, McCormick Place/OVG360; Jack Lyon, McCormick Place/OVG Hospitality; Rufus Purnell, Contractor; Rich Gamble, Choose Chicago; Jim Meyer, Choose Chicago; Kasie Morrison, MGH; Maria Calderon, Compliance Officer and Board Administrator

General Matters: Chairman Bethke asked for a motion to permit Member Birnecker Hart to participate via teleconference. Upon motion duly made by Member Ramirez and seconded by Member McGann, the remaining members present unanimously voted passing the motion.

- A1. Roll Call: MPEA Chairman Bethke, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and Ms. Calderon called roll.
- A2. Approval of Minutes: Chairman Bethke called for the approval of the minutes of the February 27, 2024 Regular Board Meeting.

Moved by Member Villar, seconded by Member Ramirez, and the remaining members present voted approving item A2.

Roll call vote. Record as:

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Sam Kukadia – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes

The motion passed.

- A3. Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

Report from MPEA Chief Executive Officer. Ms. Clark reported that the first quarter of this year has been very busy from a sales perspective, MPEA and Choose Chicago sales teams have secured six future citywide events so far this year – four in the past month. The American College of Cardiology has confirmed its annual meeting for 2030; the Chicago Dental Society has extended its contract with McCormick Place through 2029 and 2030; and the Inspired Home Show is returning in 2030. Each of these events will create tens of millions of dollars in economic impact and bring tens of thousands of attendees. This is in addition to two other citywides confirmed earlier in the year. Ms. Clark



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reported that in total, citywide events secured this year have an estimated attendance of 131,000, almost 190,000 total room nights, and about \$280 million in economic impact.

Ms. Clark reported the positive coverage regarding Microsoft Ignite's return to McCormick Place in November. It is particularly exciting because the event launched at McCormick Place in 2015 before leaving due to scheduling issues. This is a citywide event this year. As one of the world's largest companies, Microsoft's name carries a lot of weight, and local media was certainly eager to cover the announcement. Ms. Clark reported an anticipation of more than 44,000 room nights, and a \$44 million impact.

Ms. Clark reported on the Crain's Special Forum that ran this week about the long-term impact of the Democratic National Convention (DNC), which looked at the potential post-convention upside from this great event. Rich Gamble and Ms. Clark submitted an op-ed sharing their perspectives. Ms. Clark reported the teams on campus are also thinking ahead as well, under Ms. Kievit's leadership, are working with Choose Chicago to use the DNC to engage prospective clients; identifying media opportunities; and speaking engagements with the public relations and marketing teams.

Ms. Clark reported on some updates related to the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place. The hotel is receiving extensive renovations to its common areas and meeting spaces. The new look is inspired by the spirit of the Chicago World's Fair and includes pieces from a number of local artists. The renovations are expected to be completed this week. Ms. Clark reported Hyatt recently announced they have appointed Matt Schalk as the next General Manager of the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place. Ms. Clark reported Mr. Schalk began his career at the Hyatt Regency Chicago in 1996 as a corporate management trainee, and he has held numerous roles at Hyatt locations throughout Chicago, in Milwaukee, and at the Hyatt Corporate Office. He is currently Hyatt's Vice President of Revenue Management for the Americas Region. Ms. Clark reported she would also be remiss if she did not extend her warmest and most heartfelt gratitude to Jarrod McLauchlin, who stepped into the Interim General Manager position six months ago after Dave Jacobs' untimely passing. Mr. McLauchlin not only helped the Hyatt navigate this immense period of mourning and change, but he also successfully oversaw the renovations and has set the hotel up for success as Mr. Schalk joins the team.

Ms. Clark reported on the efforts to constantly expose the industry leaders to MPEA and the McCormick Place brand. Earlier this month, the Professional Convention Management Association – or PCMA's -- Greater Midwest Chapter held the chapter Awards and Education Event at McCormick Place. About 150 event planners and other industry leaders convened for the event. Ms. Clark reported she was pleased that this event afforded a chance to showcase the campus to new and returning faces and that the positive impression will lead to an uptick in local bookings.

Ms. Clark reported in April, she will once again attend the Society of Independent Show Organizers CEO summit. This is an important event that brings together top leaders to strategize and map out the future of the global events industry. MPEA is a proud sponsor of this year's event, which runs April 8-11 in Amelia Island, Florida. Ms. Clark reported she attended last year's event and found it very productive to discuss trends, issues, and possibilities with other industry leaders.

Ms. Clark reported MPEA is applying for three federal grants that will improve safety and security around campus. Safety is always top of mind, and with the DNC just a few months away, it is critical for the campus to perform these upgrades to make a lasting and positive impression on the politicians, delegates, and media in attendance from across the country and around the world. The most visible upgrades will be to the main entrance area on McCormick Square. MPEA is applying for \$2.5 million to help replace signage, repair damage to curbs, and update crosswalks, among other upgrades. Not only will these make the campus appear more modern, they will also enhance safety for pedestrians around the entrance. MPEA wants to make sure that when people come to the campus, they feel safe and secure and are constantly reminded they are visiting a world-class facility. MPEA is also applying for \$3.5 million to upgrade its security camera and lighting systems. Many of the 1,000 cameras are at or nearing the end of their useful life cycle, as are the camera software and server. Replacing this older technology and adding new cameras will allow



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the security team to identify and respond to potential threats more effectively. The funding will help finish upgrading lighting in Lakeside Center, as it is currently underlit; this will also allow MPEA to finish its LED light replacements.

Lastly, Ms. Clark reported MPEA is requesting \$1 million to upgrade the campus fire alarm and alert systems. Currently, each building has its own fire panels, so there is no way to send campus-wide notifications. With these upgrades, MPEA will be able to manage situations more effectively in the event of a crisis and ensure everyone is receiving the same information at the same time.

Report from Controller. Mr. Bormann presented the financial results for February 2024.

Report from Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Bormann presented the tax collections for February 2024.

Report from McCormick Place General Manager. Mr. Thomas reported on the events that took place on campus in February: the Annual Greater Chicago K-12 Chess Championship; Chicago Auto Show; Chicago Dental Society Midwinter Meeting; RX 2024 MagicCon; Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership Skilled Trades Fair; and AKA Central Region Conference.

Mr. Thomas reported on the events that took place on campus in March: Varsity Brands Cheer Event; PCMA Greater Midwest Chapter Awards; Gathering of Christ Church Passover; The Inspired Home Show; Tonight's Conversation Live & Uncut; MPI Regional Business Exchange; and Adidas Windy City National Qualifier. Mr. Thomas reported the Inspired Home Show was in the North and South Buildings with over 30,000 guests; 1,647 exhibiting companies, a 13% increase over 2023 and hundreds of international companies, with over 768 exhibitors from Asia; and 14 housewares companies honored as Global Honorees of the IHA Global Innovation Awards (GIA) for Excellence in Product Design.

Mr. Thomas reported on an event hosted at Wintrust Arena introducing the new DePaul men's basketball head coach, Chris Holtmann. Mr. Thomas reported Mr. Holtmann was the former Ohio State Head Coach with 25 plus years of coaching experience and eight postseason appearances.

Mr. Thomas reported on OVG Hospitality's February event highlights: new catering menu; the Chicago Auto Show First Look for Charity Gala where 200 hospitality staff members worked and served 7,300 attendees at the FLFC Gala including 19 charity rooms; and in partnership with Fight2Feed over 3,200 pounds of food were diverted from landfills and distributed to feed the local community.

Mr. Thomas reported on upcoming events: Adidas Windy City National Qualifier (March 29-31) with an estimated 28,000 attendees; Digital Summit (April 3-4) with an estimated 4,300 attendees; MRO Aviation Week (April 9-11) with an estimated 12,000 attendees; Specialty Coffee Expo (April 12-14); The Future of Protein Production (April 24-25) with an estimated 500 attendees; and Chicago Comic & Entertainment Expo (April 26-28) with an estimated 70,000 attendees.

Mr. Thomas reported on upcoming events at Arie Crown Theater: When a Woman's Fed Up and the Annual Chi-Town Blues Festival. Mr. Thomas reported on upcoming events at Wintrust Arena: Windy City Riot New Japan Pro-Wrestling; We Them One's Comedy Tour; and PFL Chicago.

Mr. Thomas reported on developing relationships: participated in and hosted two industry events, PCMA Greater Midwest Chapter Awards and MPI Regional Business Exchange; Choose Chicago *Connecting* to Chicago with local trade commissioners; and the Inspired Home Show's Housewares Cares Gala.



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Mr. Thomas reported new business opportunities: American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), October 2025, with an estimated attendance of 12,000 and rooms on peak of 8,500; Confidential Tech Event, 2025, 2026 and 2027 with an estimated attendance of 5,000 and rooms on peak of 5,000; and IEEE Computer Vision & Pattern Recognition Conference, 2028 and 2029, with an estimated attendance of 10,000 and rooms on peak of 2,500.

Mr. Thomas reported the new customer satisfaction survey was live and shared initial responses from customers which were very positive. Mr. Thomas mentioned some noteworthy client comments: "I have worked with Donna for over thirty years, please do not let her retire;" "Amanda was great." (in response to "What positive feedback did you receive from your exhibitors regarding their McCormick Place experience?"); "Always of great help making things work well." (referencing Sr. Event Manager Jackie Carter); and "Always responsive." (referencing Sr. Sales Manager Maggie McEldowney).

Mr. Thomas reported the new testimonials page was up on the McCormick Place website where users can read recent testimonials and reviews and submit their own. Reviews are also captured and shared from social media platforms.

Mr. Thomas reported new hires and promotions: McCormick Place welcomed 7 new hires in March and the leadership promotion of Mark Bickler to Director of Sales. Mr. Thomas reported McCormick Place celebrated their team during March Madness with an event at Wintrust Arena.

Review of Covered Actions and Eligible Agreements:

- C1. Consideration of Approval of New Contract for Economic Impact Study for McCormick Place as a Whole.

Moved by Member Villar, seconded by Member McGann, and the remaining members present voted approving item C1.

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Sam Kukadia – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	

The motion passed.

- C2. Consideration of Approval of OVG Global Partnership Sponsorship Agreement.

Moved by Member Villar, seconded by Member Kukadia, and the remaining members present voted approving item C2.

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Sam Kukadia – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	

The motion passed.

- C3. Consideration of Approval of New Contract for Lakeside Center Window Film Purchase and Installation.



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Moved by Member Ramirez, seconded by Member Villar, and the remaining members present voted approving item C3.

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Sam Kukadia – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	

The motion passed.

- C4. Consideration of Approval of Contract Extension for Motor Supply and Repair Variable Frequency Drives Diagnostics and Repair.

Moved by Member Ramirez, seconded by Member Villar, and the remaining members present voted approving item C4.

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Sam Kukadia – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	

The motion passed.

- C5. Consideration of Approval of Sole Source Contract for Fountain Repair Parts and Maintenance Services.

Moved by Member Villar, seconded by Member Wright, and the remaining members present voted approving item C5.

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Sam Kukadia – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	

The motion passed.

- C6. Consideration of Approval of Sole Source Contract for EBI Hardware Server, OS License and License Upgrade.

Moved by Member McGann, seconded by Member Villar, and the remaining members present voted approving item C6.

Jeffrey Bethke, Chairman – Yes	Sam Kukadia – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	

The motion passed.



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D1. New Business.

There was no new business.

D2. 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	Sam Kukadia – Yes
Don Villar, Vice Chairman – Yes	Terrance McGann – Yes
Jorge Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer – Yes	Sherman Wright – Yes
Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart – Yes	

The motion passed.

Time meeting adjourned: 10:13 a.m.

DocuSigned by:

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 Secretary/Treasurer or Assistant Secretary

Approved: April 23, 2024