

ERIE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
MINUTES
Thursday, February 19, 2026

Board Members Present: Dahlkemper, Glass, Hilbert, Johnson, Nuber, Richards (Teams) Riley & Zaphiris

Board Members Excused: Deitrick; Schmitt, White

Others Present: Gus Pine, Ed Snyder, Jim Walczak; Solicitor; TJ Hesch, Dave Gerber, Barry Cople, Ryan Patsy, Steve Morvay, Neal Wurst

Mr. Riley called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Mr. Pine said every month we choose a staff member who has gone above and beyond and recognize them with our Behind the Scenes award for their service. He said we don't typically do this, but we had a unique and special scenario that happened in January that we wanted to share with the board.

Mr. Ray Williams said I would like to introduce a couple of our security team staff members, Mr. Paul Robinson and Mr. Todd Carr who certainly went above and beyond after working an event at the Warner Theatre. He said after the event, they both walked to their vehicles parked behind the Erie Insurance Arena and saw one of our part-time employees in her car with a gentleman standing at the car who opened the door, claiming he needed directions, but had a knife and was trying to rob her. Mr. Robinson intervened, got the suspect to start fleeing. Mr. Williams said Erie City Police Department was called who then arrived at the scene and arrested the suspect. Mr. Williams said both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Carr saw something, jumped in and really helped one of our part-time employees stay safe. He said we really wanted to say kudos to them both for a job well done. He said their actions deserve special recognition and applause.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MONTH:

Mr. Riley asked for approval of the minutes of the January 15, 2026, meeting.

Ms. Dahlkemper motioned to approve the January 15, 2026, minutes. Mr. Glass seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. Hesch said I am sure that you have noticed that the financials that you're used to seeing look largely different. He said we are excited that after 30 years of operating on Microsoft Great Plains, we have officially transitioned effectively as of the beginning of this year to NetSuite. Mr. Hesch said I am proud of the work that the accounting team has had to put in to make this happen. Mr. Hesch said our longest tenured accounting staff has been here for over 30 years, and she remembers Great Plains when she started so it's been a long time coming. He said we are live and we are transactional in the system. Mr. Hesch said we still have a lot of work ahead of us to fully utilize it. He said that it will probably take us a year to get there, but we are transactional. Mr. Hesch said and again, we are proud of Mr. Dave Gerber who did a huge lift on this and the accounting staff to get to this point. Mr. Hesch said I do want to make note the numbers that we are presenting today are more of a projection. He said I do feel that they are accurate for a January close, but as we're still finalizing the review to make sure that the data is flowing in the new system properly, that we have everything accounted for as well, we are going to present this as a projection. Mr. Hesch said we will bring back another January report at the March board meeting which will be the final. He said I don't anticipate any large swings. Mr. Hesch said I do think this is a pretty good set of financials we have here we just want to finalize our review before we officially call it a final set.

Mr. Hesch said overall beginning the new year, January was a pretty good start. He said we did have a miss across the authorities as a whole of about \$23,000 at the bottom line. Mr. Hesch said there are just a couple of main drivers, which we will discuss shortly.

Mr. Hesch said starting with the arena, the activity was pretty much perfectly in line with what we had budgeted for the month, as was the attendance at those events. He said the largest miss on the revenue side was really concession sales, which we just thought would be a little bit stronger than they were. Mr. Hesch said there was a \$32,000 miss on the concessions. He said we also had some misses related to facility rentals and box office fees, which drove a revenue miss totaling \$83,000 on the revenue side. He said on the expense side overall expenses were well controlled and were under budget by \$50,000 so the arena missed their bottom line by \$31,000 in the month of January.

Mr. Hesch said the theatre did also have a miss in January, but this was largely driven by a hold we had for a concert that was slated to occur which did not actualize. He said all event related revenues as part of that were under budget largely driven by concessions, service charge revenues, box office fees for a total revenue miss of \$44,000. Mr. Hesch said on the expense side, the event related expenses were also under budget and well controlled, so they limited that bottom line miss to about \$17,000.

Mr. Hesch said nothing notable to comment on at UPMC Park since there's no activity happening right now.

Mr. Hesch said the convention center had the Erie Kennel Club event that was slated to occur in January but was canceled due to weather which resulted in loss revenues of about \$45,000. He said the good news is that the convention center still exceeded their revenue budget by \$13,000. He said it was the concession sales that really drove the performance on the revenue side as those were ahead of budget by \$26,000. Mr. Hesch said on the expense side there was pretty good control. He said we did see an overage on repair and maintenance. Mr. Hesch said there was a trash compactor which we had to pay \$2,100 to repair and \$1,400 for a kitchen oven repair and then we had to purchase rock salt, which is about \$2,500. He said these were all necessary expenses which drove that variance. He said total expenses at the convention center were under budget by \$8,000 and so they exceeded their bottom-line budget by \$21,000.

Mr. Hesch said at Liberty Park there was no activity so the activities you see in the financials are just related to some allocations there.

Mr. Hesch said I think that's a good start for 2026. He said we will finalize our review of the new system set up, and we will bring a final January report to the March board meeting and discuss any of the changes that may have occurred.

Mr. Hilbert motioned to accept the January 31, 2026, Financial Report as a tentative report for January. Mr. Nuber seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

MANAGEMENT REPORT:

Mr. Pine said a reminder that our board retreat will be Tuesday, March 24th at 7:30 a.m. at the Warner Theater Rehearsal Hall. He said we will send out some details as the date gets a little bit closer. Mr. Pine said the topic of the meeting is Erie Events, Past, Present and Future. He said I think one of the things Ms. White is trying to accomplish, among other things, is to ensure that some of our newer board members, and even some who have been on a while, have a strong understanding of the long history of the organization. Mr. Pine said and I think then the other piece of that is we've got a lot of moving parts in terms of what we're working on for the future. He said we will have some good, robust conversations about that as well.

Mr. Pine said regarding the bond refunding that I believe we discussed last month, Ms. Dahlkemper and I are going to meet with the new county executive, Christina Vogel, tomorrow. He said the county has previously guaranteed our hotel bonds, so we need to have a conversation with them. Mr. Pine said we are going to start with our county executive. He said as a new executive, she likely doesn't know the detailed history behind the initial guarantee that went into place which Ms. Dahlkemper was very involved in. Mr. Pine said we don't have a set timeline for when we'll bring this to county council, but we want to do it as soon as possible. He said the sooner we get this done; the sooner we're saving money on the financial terms that are more favorable right now.

Mr. Pine said an update on the zoo. He said we have initiated our first \$150,000 payment to the zoo. He said we didn't want the delay in finalizing the details between Erie Events and the Zoological Society in terms of the management agreement to delay some much-needed financing they might need now as they open in March. He said they've gone through a couple of months when the zoo hasn't been open, so we wanted to begin the financial support for this year, at a time when they most need it. Mr. Pine said I do have a call with Ms. Roo Kojancie tomorrow to talk about some changes that we've added related to their updated bylaws. Mr. Pine said the bylaws for the zoo needed to be revised from their end. He said we need to approve the bylaws. He said that is in our management agreement. Mr. Pine said there's a couple of items that we need to discuss, but I don't have any major concerns in relation to this turning around quickly.

Mr. Pine said Ms. White has made new committee assignments and has assigned some board members who were not on committees. He said the list of committee assignments is in the board packet. Mr. Pine said if you want to reach out to me with any specific questions related to some of those assignments, please do so. He said there are some committees

that are just standing committees which don't meet on a regular basis. Mr. Pine said there are others that do meet regularly. He said if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Mr. Pine said, lastly, I will reserve comments related to our current projects because we'll discuss those at length during the construction committee update.

Mr. Walczak said I will elaborate a little bit on the zoo. He said we did receive consent from DCNR to do the transaction. He said as soon we get the bylaw issues straightened out, which I think will happen in the next day or so, we will probably finalize the documents and execute them sometime next week. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Snyder said we have a lot going on with the campus construction, which is going to greatly impact parking on the campus for the foreseeable future. He said we will be managing our parking lots with our security staff based on event activity. Mr. Snyder said we have a weekly call with our tenants and the hotel, and we'll staff the first lot to protect parking for those folks, which will greatly impact attendees to the convention center so we will be running more shuttles through EMTA and First Students. He said if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out. Mr. Snyder said we had two large events in the building yesterday, and we managed relatively well, but it's going to be uncomfortable for us until the garage reopens. He said we're going to do the best we can to get through that.

Mr. Snyder said if you recall, back in October, we met with all the businesses on the Bayfront to talk about how we can market the Bayfront as still being open, specifically the restaurants and some of the small businesses. He said because of the Bayfront Parkway construction and the mentality in the community that the parkway construction is affecting the businesses and that we're all closed. He said we had a couple follow up meetings with Visit Erie and some of our local media partners. Mr. Snyder said we are going to have a follow-up meeting with the entire group and businesses, the media and Visit Erie on March 18th. He said some of our partners at Lily Broadcasting, Nexstar, iHeart, Cumulus and Lamar have all committed to doing some things for our local businesses for free and for discounted pricing. Mr. Snyder said it'll be a good opportunity for them to network, and then from an Erie Events standpoint, we'll step back and move forward. He said it's important to us that our partners and neighbors down here stay successful through construction.

Mr. Snyder said we wrapped up the RV Outdoor Expo last week and it was an overall success. He said attendance was up over the last two years. He said the Auto Show was at the end of January, and it did relatively well considering the amount of marketing effort that was put into it. Mr. Snyder said in 2025 the consumer shows were, overall, a success for the authority. He said the shows generated over \$700,000 in revenue for the convention center. Mr. Snyder said the Boat Show is February 27th.

Mr. Snyder said, lastly, our convention center kitchen renovations are complete. He said I just want to thank Mr. Wurst, Chef, Ms. DiLuzio and all the team here for what they did to get through that project. He said we managed to get through our events and now we're up and running back to normal.

Ms. Dahlkemper said can you tell me the time frame on the construction of the parking ramp. Mr. Morvay said we are hoping the project will be completed by late summer. A brief discussion followed.

Ms. Dahlkemper motioned to accept the Management Reports as presented. Mr. Nuber seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Glass, Construction Committee Chairperson, said starting with the Courtyard Refresh Project, the second floor is virtually done. Mr. Glass said they're hanging drapes today. He said they have the 5th floor currently going on. He said both the north and west side of floor 5 should be open by the 13th of March for the State Pool Tournament. He said and then they will move to the fourth floor. Mr. Glass said the completion date is still May 1st.

Mr. Glass said we talked about the Courtyard Ramp Project briefly. He said the contractor is mobilized. Mr. Glass said he has got his scaffold erected up in the third level to take down an upturned beam that would prevent you from driving off the edge of the ramp. He said that is where the new ramp begins and goes up another two levels. Mr. Glass said we will probably have some compressors and pavement breakers and a lot of noise going on soon. He said I'm sure they're probably going to start reshoring in two weeks. Mr. Morvay said the materials are coming at the end of next week, and they'll start putting it up.

Mr. Glass said the ballpark lights are in process. He said they have already set up two banks, and there's a total of seven of them. Mr. Glass said they expect to do one bank per day, so they'll be done at the end of next week.

Mr. Glass said we have had two meetings in the past two weeks for the Bayfront Market House. He said the first one was with the Waterfront Design Review Committee. He said the project was presented to them and they withheld approval at the time until the planning commission met, which met on Tuesday of this week, and we had a favorable review. Mr. Glass said our next hurdle will be City Council on March 3rd or 4th. He said, in the meantime, the drawings

are going to be sent out to BIU to get our building permit. He said in another week we should have our contract advertisement for the steel piles.

Mr. Richards, Strategic Planning Committee Chairperson, said the committee met on the interim financing for the parking ramp. He said if you recall, we're going to pre-fund that project and not wait for CRIZ to get their approval. He said out of all the local banks, three agreed to make proposals. Mr. Richards said we discussed them at length, and the committee unanimously recommended approving the First National Bank proposal. Mr. Richards said since I'm not there and Mr. Hesch was intimately involved in the term sheet, I recommend that Mr. Hesch give an update on that, but the committee basically recommended that the full Board approve the First National Bank proposal.

Mr. Hesch said just to recap, we did send that out and it went out to seven total financial institutions. He said we received three responses, one from Northwest Bank, one from Erie Bank, and one from First National Bank. Mr. Hesch said First National Bank, as Mr. Richards stated, was the most advantageous, both from a rate standpoint, as well as the other terms such as no prepay penalty and no origination fee. He said the other two had an origination fee which can be steep by itself. Mr. Hesch said they are allowing us to do a variable rate during the draw down period, which was at the time of the quote was 3.54% so as a tax-exempt rate so very favorable and almost about three quarters of a percent lower than the other two. Mr. Hesch said and then going into the term portion, their rate was about a quarter of a percent lower on a five-year reprice. Mr. Hesch said they have been good to us in the past and that shows here again. Mr. Richards, Strategic Planning Committee Chairperson, said I make a motion that the Board approve the proposal from First National Bank and authorize our officers to document the engagement as outlined in Resolution 2026-002.

Strategic Planning Committee motioned to adopt Resolution 2026-002 as presented to the Board. Mr. Hilbert seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Pine said we met with HVS and White Lodging on February 4th. He said this meeting was to review full year results for the hotels. Mr. Pine said we had a lengthy discussion. He said I have just a couple of what I think are some important points from the meeting. Mr. Pine said the fourth quarter was a tough quarter for the hotels. He said I think that it was a tough quarter in general for the hotel industry, certainly locally. Mr. Pine said they did go backwards a little bit in the fourth quarter but all that to say, for the fiscal year their gross operating profit was up almost \$800,000 over prior year. He said it was \$40,000 off from budget. Mr. Pine said the takeaway from that for me is that we are working with HVS and producing budget expectations that are aggressive. He said they did a good job, obviously, \$800,000 over prior years is a good place to be. Mr. Pine said in terms of customer service, the Sheraton finished last year in the top 18% of brand out of 165 Sheratons. He said their goal for 2026 is 10% so an aggressive goal but certainly achievable. Mr. Pine said the Courtyard finished in the top 31%. He said if you recall last year, when we gave quarterly updates, they struggled a bit. He said they did fantastic from a financial standpoint, but they probably traded some of that for some service levels. He said they had some staffing issues during the year. Mr. Pine said they were able to save a lot of money but after several conversations, I think that it is likely impacting customer service. He said the Courtyard finished top 31% out of 1079 hotels and their goal as well is 10% of brand next year. Mr. Pine said those were the highlights from the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

OTHER BUSINESS: None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Hilbert motioned to adjourn. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 PM.