ERIE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
MINUTES
Thursday, June 25, 2026

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

Board Members Excused: Richards

Others Present: Gus Pine, Ed Snyder, Jim Walczak, Solicitor; Dave Gerber, Tony Ferraro Barry Copple, Steve Morvay, Steve Cocke, Ray Williams and Lisa DiLuzio

Ms. White called the meeting to order at 3:01PM.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Mr. Ed Snyder introduced Ms. Laurie Woolslayer, who will be working as the Senior Sales Manager for Bayfront Landing. Mr. Dave Gerber introduced Steve Cocke, who will be working with the Finance Department as the Assistant Director of Finance and Administration.

The Board of Directors welcomed Ms. Woolslayer and Mr. Cocke to the Erie County Convention Center Authority.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MONTH:

Ms. White asked for approval of the May 21, 2026 and June 9, 2026, special board meeting minutes.

Mr. Deitrick motioned to approve May 21, 2026, and June 9, 2026, special board meeting, minutes. Mr. Nuber seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. Gerber presented the May 31, 2026, Financial Report to the board. Mr. Gerber said we are starting to see a turnaround. Mr. Gerber said activity across all the venues performed better than budget. He said the only slight miss was the ballpark. He said they were off by $5,000 for the month. Mr. Gerber said we saw a positive gain to budget over the month of $139,000

Mr. Gerber said when we looked at the arena, they exceeded revenue budget by $29,000. He said that was mainly related to some facility equipment rental and wage reimbursement, as well as the food and beverage revenues which performed better than budget. Mr. Gerber said overall, their expenses were below budget by $6,000. He said in that instance we saw a $79,000 gain to the bottom line.

Mr. Gerber said the theater was above revenue budget by $49,000; however, I would point out that $29,000 was from the Promoter Incentive Fund. Mr. Gerber said that's the fund that was designated to help secure ticketed shows. He said it would have been $19,000 if it wasn't for that assistance. Mr. Gerber said the concessions were also below budget for the month due to lower anticipated attendance. He said our revenue budget was at $31,000. He said their expenses were also above budget by $7,000.

Mr. Gerber said we talked about the ballpark earlier. He said they exceeded revenue by $4,000; however, we were over in expenses by $4,000. He said that was mainly related to some repairs and maintenance, as well as utilities over budget by $5,000. He said those drove the two areas to be over by $9,000 in expenses and missed its budget by $5,000.

Mr. Gerber said the convention center had a very good month. He said they were $52,000 above budget in revenue. He said this was mainly due to equipment rental, concessions, wage, and utility reimbursements, as well as having additional revenue for Country Fair's Puppy Show. He said expenses were pretty much right on target. He said they were just below budget by $2,000. He said that showed an overall positive outcome of $54,000.

Mr. Gerber said at Rebich Investments Amphitheater, we had a slight miss. He said I think that was due to the budget projections. Mr. Gerber said last year we had a concert in May and this year we did not. He said when you look at what the projections were, we were still ahead of that by $12,000.

Mr. Gerber said at the Erie Zoo there is no real additional activity. He said the only thing we did in that internal financial was we reclassed some legal expenses from our administrative department to the Erie Zoo to show those true costs.

Mr. Gerber said overall, total year-to-date revenues for the Authority are under budget by $353,000. He said total expenses were under budget by $163,000, leading to our current bottom line miss year-to-date of $190,000.

Mr. Riley motioned to accept the May 31, 2026, Financial Reports as presented to the board. Mr. Hilbert seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

MANAGEMENT REPORT:

Mr. Pine said we received approval for the Market House Project in a 7-0 vote a couple of weeks ago. Mr. Pine said one thing I want to do is recognize some people who provided some support. He said we did have a lot of support from community members and board members who made personal phone calls to city council members and the mayor. Mr. Pine said we had some tremendous support in person too. He said Mr. Dan Dahlkemper, who sits on one of the committees that recommended this for approval, got up and spoke in favor of the project. He said we also had strong union support.

Mr. Pine said both Mr. Curtis Jones and Mr. Brandon Mendoza from the Erie Chamber attended and spoke in favor of the project. Mr. Pine said Visit Erie was there as well. He said if you see any of those folks, please pass on our thanks. Mr. Pine said we have a vote today for a resolution related to that project. He said we'll go into some details on next steps through the Construction Committee update.

Mr. Pine said we attended our first Erie Zoo board meeting on June 16th. Mr. Pine said I was there with Mr. Tim Riley, Mr. John Zach, and Mr. Jeff Kidder. Mr. Pine said they have had a good start to the year. He said we had additional conversations about the master plan study that we're looking to do. He said there was some discussion on the zoo board about funding for the study. He said that's one of our biggest concerns is that study has a big price tag on it. Mr. Pine said it sounds like there's an appetite at both the state legislative level as well as some local community organizations that would be able to assist with funding. Mr. Pine said my goal would be that we would fund this project 100% through grant or assistant funding. Mr. Pine said I am actually going to meet with Ms. Kojancie and try to get this process moving a little quicker. He said this is the first step in this relationship that we have, and I think it is really important to get something done this summer. He said the nice thing about this study is it doesn't only imagine the 15-acre expansion of the zoo, it looks at the entire 96 acres, which I think makes it more appetizing to somebody that this is transformational in terms of that entire acreage. He said I think there's going to be a lot of support for that. Mr. Pine said they also had some discussions about accreditation. He said the main accreditation agency is the AZA. He said there's an additional organization, the ZAA, the Zoo and Aquariums Association. Mr. Pine said that the board had a discussion that the ZAA accreditation is between $3,000 and $5,000. He said they would fund that through their operations budget. Mr. Pine said there has been good discussions around seeking that accreditation. He said the accreditation process related to them is a little less stringent than the AZA, so their recommendation, which they have approved, is going to try to seek ZAA accreditation. Mr. Pine said number one it's a good note out to the public that they're getting some movement on accreditation and number two it will help with their ACA accreditation when it comes time. He said the one piece that's missing from this is the requirement of the veterinary center. Mr. Pine said they can proceed with a lot of the other key elements without having to wait until we've got the veterinary center. He said we have to have a shovel in ground before AZA will give reaccredit the zoo. Mr. Pine said the other piece is it gives staff access to certifications and trainings through this program, and it also allows them to enter into breeding relationships with other zoos, which they don't currently have, because they're not accredited. Mr. Pine said there's no action that this board needs to take. He said lastly, they've recreated their Bylaws through this process, and I think we require that as part of our management agreement the Bylaws needed to be reviewed. He said through that process they created a Governance Committee, and we will have one nominee from our three board members that are going to participate in that Governance Committee, and that's Mr. Tim Riley. He said that Mr. Riley has agreed to serve in that role.

Mr. Pine said Erie Events will be hosting a tent at 8 Great on July 21st. He said all board members are invited. Mr. Pine said we are recognizing all premium partnerships in the community. He said that would be our Personal Seat License holders, suite holders and we are also inviting all of our various sponsors across our organization to join us as well. He said we'd love to have you all attend. He said you would get the chance to meet some of the people who are really engaged with our organization.

Mr. Pine said tonight there is the first open house for the One Bayfront. He said that term might be new to you. Mr. Pine said that was formerly known as the World Class Waterfront Committee. He said I'm on that committee along with the Scotts and the Erie Regional Chamber. He said we've been participating with the consultant, WSP. He said WSP is the consultant that's looking to create a one unified development plan for the Bayfront. He said Infinite Erie is leading as the collaborator. He said they're bringing all the groups together and tonight is the first open house where WSP will present in three separate sessions to the public. He said then we'll invite public feedback for potential development on the Bayfront. Mr. Pine said we had some conversations in strategic planning and that it might be a good idea if anybody wants to get up and speak about development on the Bayfront, that's certainly an opportunity. Mr. Pine said I plan to attend to try to get a sense of the tenor of the comments and the thoughts on what the community thinks are the next steps for the development on the Bayfront. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Pine said lastly, I have asked Mr. Snyder to work with our Director of Security, Mr. Tony Ferraro, to deliver a presentation from a security standpoint of the things our team has done in anticipating all of the extra things that can go wrong when you allow 5000 people into any one of these buildings. He said there's all sorts of things that can happen, which we have plans for. Mr. Pine said outdoor events adds a whole other element, specifically weather related. Mr. Pine said there's mutual aid that we need to have in relation to EMTA. He said there's some additional challenges down there because there's not enough parking at the park to support all the ticket sales. Mr. Pine said I've asked Mr. Snyder to work on that so I think Mr. Ferraro and Mr. Snyder have a presentation which will be part of Mr. Snyder's Management Report. Mr. Riley said, just to add to Mr. Pine's report, Glow Wild is going on at the Erie Zoo, and the Mane Event is this Saturday. He said that's their casino event, where they raise money.

Mr. Snyder said just an update on Rebich Investments Amphitheater, which we did kick off this past week. He said we had a private event on Friday, and Soul Fest, which is a health and wellness event, on Saturday. Mr. Snyder said Erie's Pride on the Bay is this coming Saturday, which will be the first large event. He said then we get into concerts on July 3rd with Marshall Tucker, and then 8 Great Tuesdays kicks off on July 7th. Mr. Snyder said I have parking passes for all the board members. He said that's good for the season for all events at Liberty Park. Mr. Snyder said tent sales for 8 Great Tuesdays are doing very well. He said we've about half the season sold. He said if you know anybody that wants a hospitality tent, have them reach out to our team sooner rather than later. Mr. Snyder said we're also selling tents for the ticketed concerts as well.

Mr. Snyder said the sales team at the convention center has been doing a great job. He said our revenue is looking like we're suddenly ahead of plan for the year. Mr. Snyder said along with the two hotels, we hosted a Familiarization Tour with Visit Erie and the team at both hotels and convention center. Mr. Snyder said that generated three confirmed events for future years.

Mr. Snyder said Mr. Ferraro is going to give his presentation on security at Liberty Park. Mr. Ferraro said when we started to manage Rebich Investments Amphitheatre at Liberty Park last year, it was necessary for us to put together an Emergency Response Plan. He said if anybody would like to see a copy of it, just let Mr. Snyder or myself know, and we will email you a copy. He said it's a comprehensive plan that covers basically anything. Mr. Ferraro said in security we look at what could go wrong, and we must put a plan together to mitigate that to keep everybody safe that's going to attend any of the events. He said it covers all events at the amphitheater. Mr. Ferraro said it is coordinated through the Erie Police Department, Emergent Care, Coast Guard, and our other partners as well. He said security measures in place are basically the same as they are at any other venue. Mr. Ferraro said we control the screening process upon entry, so everybody entering the park is going to be screened and anyone reentering the park, they're going to be screened again. He said if they have to go to their vehicle, they're going to be screened a second time. He said it's just to keep everybody safe. Mr. Ferraro said we have dedicated EMS on site for all the major events. He said we have plans in the Emergency Response Plan, to deal with anything from missing children to vulnerable adults. Mr. Ferraro said we have had instances where children have gone missing, we've had adults that have become disoriented, so we have plans to deal with any of those situations along with any type of disturbance, demonstration, protest or a bomb threat. He said I collaborated with some other venues that have outdoor and open-air types of events. Mr. Ferraro said that is where the difference comes in. He said we cannot control the weather, but we can control how we react to the weather. He said we start monitoring the weather days out from the event. He said we monitor it through the National Weather Service and our local weather resources. Mr. Ferraro said we also have a weather liaison through Erie News Now so we're constantly monitoring what type of weather is heading toward the event. He said then we have to make a determination of what we're going to do. He said the rain is not so much a problem, but the wind and the lightning are a problem. He said all the security supervisors have several apps on our phones and are constantly monitoring the wind speed and the lightning. Mr. Ferraro said when it reaches a certain point, we must put an evacuation plan in place which involves EMTA and the Erie Police Department. He said if we have to evacuate the park it's not very simple, because some of the vehicles are miles away, so that's when we activate EMTA, they'll bring in their route buses to assist. He said then we make a determination if the event needs to be canceled or if it just needs to be postponed. Mr. Ferraro said there's a lot of challenges in an outdoor open-air event, but I can assure you that we have everything covered. He said in addition to that, on July 15th, we have the Department of Homeland Security doing a threat assessment. He said they're going to walk through Liberty Park and will assess any vulnerabilities that we may have and then it will be our job to mitigate those. Ms. Dahlkemper said do we have a drone policy. Mr. Ferraro said there is a drone policy, but that's through the FAA. A brief discussion followed.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Glass, Construction Committee Chairperson, said the roof of the convention center has been replaced. He said they have to do determinations around the perimeter and flashing.

Mr. Glass said at the Courtyard parking ramp they will be making their 4th pour, which will complete an entire level on July 13th. He said you can see the columns that they have got poured for the next lift. He said there are 8 decks all together. Mr. Glass said the last one is scheduled for August 31st. He said then they will begin work on the stairs and the elevator tower and roof on the stairwells. Mr. Glass said there is a lot yet to be done once the concrete is in place. He said once the concrete is in place and they go through the normal curing time they will be able to remove all the shoring on the various levels.

Mr. Glass said Resolution 2026-011 is in your board packet for the Market House Project. He said the contracts were awarded as follows.

General Trades	Perry Construction		$9,491,000.00
Fire Protection	William T. Spaeder		$188,760.00
Plumbing	George Altof		$409,620.00
Mechanical	Rabe		$627,463.00
Electrical	Newco Electric		$1,287,000.00
		Total:	$12,003,843.00

Mr. Glass said the building has been approved by BIU. He said it passed Erie City Council and is now back at the Planning Commission for the land development stage which will take another month. He said we are looking at a start date of August 1st. Mr. Glass said the marquee is down.

The Construction Committee motioned to adopt Resolution 2026-011 as presented to the board. Mr. Riley seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Pine said the Strategic Planning Committee met today. He said that Mr. Gerber and I met with Peter Phillippi from Piper Sandler on June 18th with the Erie County Finance Caucus. He said there were not many questions, and it went well. Mr. Pine said there was second caucus of the full Erie County Board on June 22nd. He said Mr. Gerber attended. Mr. Pine said there was a question about the term. He said we are not extending the term; we are matching the 3-year term. He said that was the only question. Mr. Pine said the next steps are on July 16th when it goes back for a second reading to finance and then July 21st it goes to full counsel. He said right now all indications are that the county is supportive. He said Mr. Chris Groner and Mr. Patrick Ryan have been very supportive and are walking council through the process. A brief discussion followed.

NEW BUSINESS:

OTHER BUSINESS:

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

ADJOURNMENT:

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:34 PM.