

**COLUMBUS CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING & RETREAT
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2017**

Commissioners Present: Paul Pierce, Chair; Shelley Dean, Vice Chair; Cameron Bean, Secretary/Treasurer; Charlie Desai; Lacy Harden; Donna Hix; Marianne Richter; and Alison Rittenburg

Ex-officio Members Present: Brian Anderson; Lucas Brown; Cyndy Cerbin; Jon Dorman; Ross Horner; Merri Sherman; and Holly Wait

Ex-officio Members Absent: Norm Easterbrook; Hayley Henderson; Isaiah Hugley; and Mayor Teresa Tomlinson

Staff Present: Peter Bowden; Shelby Guest; Linda Olvera; and Ashley Woitena

Special Guests: David Allred and Victoria Belton with Stamp Idea Group

Call to Order.....Paul Pierce

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m.

Approval of Minutes and FinancialCameron Bean

Cameron Bean presented the minutes for June to the Board. Charlie Desai made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Alison Rittenburg seconded the motion; a vote was taken and the motion passed. Mr. Bean then presented the financials for both June and July to the Board. Donna Hix made a motion to accept the financials as presented. Marianne Richter seconded the motion; a vote was taken and the motion passed.

Chair’s ReportPaul Pierce

- Conflict of Interest Policy – there was some preliminary discussion concerning two options for adopting a Conflict of Interest Policy. Version 1 is currently used by the Columbus Consolidated Government and covers commissions such as the CCVB. Version 2 is more detailed and would require Board members to complete a form that would assist in providing disclosure for any potential conflicts; this process would be required on an annual basis. Mr. Pierce asked Peter Bowden what he would prefer from the Board and there was discussion for pros and cons of each, with more emphasis placed on version 2, because it created better accountability and protection for the Board. Mr. Pierce asked the Board to review the two and provide any feedback to the CVB staff. Action is planned for the September Board Meeting

RetreatDavid Allred, Facilitator

- Project updates
 - The CCVB’s Marketing Action Plan overview was presented with key elements highlighted to reflect emerging travel trends and the CVB’s latest market research.
 - STAMP is with working with staff to rebrand the CVB as Visit Columbus, GA. Adding the word “visit” to the destination name is a trend most destination marketing organizations are moving towards. A new logo treatment is in progress.

- A meeting planner direct mail campaign is underway that reflects the “four personas” or criteria identified by the market research – the Adventurer, the Art Critic, the Foodie, the Silver Surfer. The goal of the campaign is to increase the number of meeting planner site visits.
- DMO of the Future
 - CVBs or Destination Marketing Organizations are now expected to include “management” as part of its function for the destination -- DMMO – Destination Marketing & Management Organization
 - This is essential in increasing visitors; residents and the community leaders work closely together to create a place where people want to live; the results is a place people want to visit
 - The new Event Calendar was discussed and how a marketing campaign for the calendar is needed to make it more widely known and/or used. Despite 10-plus years of the calendar’s existence, there is still a perception that the community is lacking an Events Calendar; it was suggested that a weekly email featuring the week’s top events be created and distributed to key stakeholders
 - There was discussion on the importance of packaging experiences; a strategy is needed to facilitate this conversation with stakeholders
- Regionalism
 - The Board asked the staff to develop a plan that addresses regionalism and be prepared to bring those ideas back to the Board
- Alternative Funding Sources
 - The Board was challenged to look at alternative funding sources to support the growing demand on the CVB’s resources and initiatives. Staff is researching Tourism Investment Districts (TIDs) as one solution.
- Addition of a Convention Center Hotel
 - Discussion took place on the need to “finish the Convention Center Expansion” with the addition of 200 sleeping rooms adjacent to the Trade Center. Research supports the addition of rooms. Research also supports that hotels not in the immediate downtown area would not be negatively impacted, but could actually benefit as convention business creates demand and overflow. Finally, there is evidence that Columbus’ competition set has increased its meeting and hotel package/amenities, threatening to erode Columbus’ meeting and convention business.

Adjournment -- The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.