

Agenda

Operations Committee

Friday, January 14, 2022

8:00 a.m.

**Kent County Administration Building
300 Monroe Avenue, NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

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|----|--|-------------------|
| 1. | Call to Order | Richard Winn |
| 2. | Welcome New Board Member, M. Scott Bowen | Richard Winn |
| 3. | Minutes of October 1, 2021 | Action |
| 4. | Marketing Report from ASM Global | Hilarie Carpenter |
| 5. | Report from Experience Grand Rapids | Mary Manier |
| 6. | Report from ASM Global | Rich MacKeigan |
| 7. | Public Comment | |
| 8. | Committee Member Comments | |
| 9. | Adjournment | |

**MINUTES OF THE GRAND RAPIDS-KENT COUNTY
CONVENTION/ARENA AUTHORITY
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
303 MONROE AVENUE, NW | GRAND RAPIDS, MI
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2021**

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair, Lew Chamberlin, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Attendance:

Members Present: Lew Chamberlin, Chairperson
Rosalynn Bliss
Mandy Bolter
Peter D'Arienzo
Glenn Del Vecchio
Al Jano
Darius Quinn
Charlie Secchia
Richard Winn

Members Absent: Jim Conner
Birgit Klohs
John Van Fossen
Floyd Wilson, Jr.

Staff/Others:	Kate Carlson	<i>MIBiz</i>
	Eric DeLong	City of Grand Rapids
	Jeff Dood	Kent County
	Scott Gorsline	DP Fox
	Tim Gortsema	Grand Rapids Griffins
	Jen Henkel	ASM Global
	Jennifer Kasper	City of Grand Rapids
	Mike Lloyd	Broadway Grand Rapids
	Chris Machuta	ASM Global
	Rich MacKeigan	ASM Global
	Cheri McConomy	McConomy Properties, LLC
	Doug Small	Experience Grand Rapids
	Eddie Tadlock	ASM Global
	John Van Houten	Progressive AE
	Al Vanderberg	Kent County
	Susan Waddell	CAA
	Mark Washington	City of Grand Rapids
	Richard Wendt	Dickinson Wright
	Robert White	CAA
	Jessica Wood	Dickinson Wright
	Paul Ymker	Bluewater Technologies

2. Welcome New CAA Board Member and New County Administrator

Chair Chamberlin welcomed new CAA Board Member, Mandy Bolter, appointed by Kent County, and Al Vanderberg, the new Kent County Administrator.

3. Minutes of April 2, 2021

Motion by Bliss, support by Jano, to approve the April 2, 2021, minutes. Motion carried.

4. ASM Global Operations Report

Mr. Tadlock summarized a list of projects that were completed during the COVID-19 shutdown. New security features instituted at all three venues. The CAA was awarded a CARES grant, and enhancements to the facilities include upgraded air purification with bipolar ionization equipment, installation of touchless fixtures and equipment to facilitate contactless transactions, cleaning and sanitation equipment, social distancing barriers and personal protective equipment. The telephone systems were upgraded. Work continues on the Lyon Square beautification project. New furniture was placed in the lobby pre-function areas at DeVos Place®, in response to a suggestion by the Client Advisory Board via Experience Grand Rapids. New rigging equipment was installed at DeVos Performance Hall. ArtPrize is back, and DeVos Place® has 40 artists registered and two artists are showing their pieces outside the Van Andel Arena®. To date, over 160 artists have won cash prizes already, totaling more than \$150,000. At DeVos Place®, 14 artists have received cash prizes and one artist has landed in the top 25 and will be eligible for the \$50,000 grand prize. Mr. Jano commended the CAA for installing the bipolar ionization equipment in its HVAC system. The County installed plasma ionization bars over two years ago, and they are very, very, very effective at electronically killing viruses in the return air and supply air systems.

5. Report from Experience Grand Rapids

Mr. Small provided an overview of the CVB's sales activities and marketing efforts. September has been the busiest month for sales team since the pandemic started. Over the last three days, 19 meeting planners visited the city and all but two had not experienced our convention facilities. In August, a new national sales manager, Nick Stratton, was added to the team. Previously, Nick was a meeting planner and has experience in hotel sales. In September, staff conducted four site inspections and booked The Hemophilia Foundation of Michigan for April 2022. Through August 2021, countywide occupancy ran 48% compared to 38.9% in 2020. Pre-pandemic hotel occupancy ran at 66%. The average daily rates from March forward this year have been better than 2019. Revenue in 2021 YTD is \$115,700,000, while 2020 revenue was at \$78 million. In 2019, revenue topped \$160,300,000.

6. Calendar Update from ASM Global

Mr. MacKeigan presented a full calendar for the venues. Blake Shelton played to a sold-out audience last night. The Arena hosted the Grand Rapids Sports Hall of Fame dinner, catered by Savor. The Dan+Shay concert will be Sunday, Monster Jam in early October, followed by Mike Epps. The Grand Rapids Griffins start their season October 15. Additional events through the end of the calendar year include Mercy Me, Dave Matthews Band, the Turkey Trot 5K, Alabama, For King & Country, Lindsey Stirling, TSO, James Taylor with Jackson Browne, WWE, and Pentatonix. The Theater will host Chelsea Handler, Opera Grand Rapids, Who's Live, The Great Divorce, Master Chef Junior, Rudolph the Christmas Show,

The Drag Queen Christmas Show, Straight No Chaser, Mannheim Steamroller, David Sedaris, Christmas Pops, and The Nutcracker. The convention center just hosted the National Association of Barn and Shed Renters that dovetailed with a Mennonite conference.

Labor and cost of goods are major issues that will impact the bottom line. ASM is putting together plans to address the problems and provide good solutions. Several practices are in place to make events as safe as possible, over and above the capital improvements. Artists choose one of three levels of COVID protocols. The quicker the artists choose, the quicker we can get the messaging out so that patrons can decide whether they want to go through the process, if there is one, and, if employees, if they want to adhere to the practices, if there are any. There has been an uptick in ticket sales if an artist calls the show vaccinated (proof of vaccination or negative COVID test). Mr. Washington extended his appreciation to ASM staff for offering outdoor activities for the MML conference attendees last week. Attendees felt safe and were able to social distance. Mr. Washington suggested that outdoor activities could be held in the winter and should be part of marketing conventions and conferences. Mr. Chamberlin asked about labor issues and their impact on customer service issues. Mr. MacKeigan responded that the patience level amongst the patrons has remained high. By the time people get inside the venue, consumers have done several things already, either online or have gotten in a line to prove they are vaccinated or received a negative COVID test. The consumer has been very accommodating and tolerant of a longer wait. Mr. Quinn stated that one barrier for the labor market is childcare because several facilities and independent operators have closed. His peers across the state are looking into the possibility of providing on-site facilities.

7. Public Comment

Mike Lloyd, Broadway Grand Rapids, stated the show season will begin in January 2022. When Lion King and Hamilton were scheduled in 2019, Broadway Grand Rapids sold 11,400 season tickets. When Mr. Lloyd started at Broadway, they had 2,000. Right now, Broadway is at 11,200. That means, for example, if a show is putting on eight performances, basically every pair of seats from the stage to four rows into the mezzanine are full even before single tickets go on sale. Less than 1/20th of 1% of season ticket holders have asked for refunds when informed they would have to wear a mask and provide proof of vaccination or negative COVID test. Most everyone wants a safe environment and content is king. Mr. Lloyd accredited the ASM team for working with Broadway to enhance the customer experience.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.