



Buffalo Convention Center
Annual Members Meeting
Wednesday, February 7, 2024
The Westin Buffalo

PRESENT: C. Abbott-Letro, M. Alnutt, T. Beauford, M. Brown, D. Castle, A. Chase, M. Chiazza, P. Kaler, T. Long, K. Minkel, M. Roberts, D. Schutte, D. Spasiano, H. Taran, M. Urbanczyk, G. Wells

ABSENT: M. Brown, D. Gallagher, M. Glasgow, W. Paladino, S. Ranalli

STAFF: J. Bialek, J. Calkins, E. Healy, D. Marzo, R. Toney

CALL TO ORDER: The annual members meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Cindy Abbott-Letro at 3:04 p.m.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS: Ms. Abbott-Letro reported that Huseyin Taran will be terming off the Board. The Executive Committee is recommending Bob Karmazyn, General Manager at the Embassy Suites, to fill the open seat. Ms. Abbott-Letro presented the slate of directors proposed by the Executive Committee and asked for a motion to elect the slate for 2024:

Representatives of the Hotel Industry:

Matt Chiazza
Thomas Long
Bob Karmazyn

At-Large Directors

Kimberley A. Minkel
Steven P. Ranalli
David Schutte
Donald Spasiano
Michelle Urbanczyk
Gail V. Wells

A motion was made by Ms. Urbanczyk and seconded by Mr. Chiazza to elect the slate of directors as presented for 2024. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Mr. Chase and seconded by Ms. Roberts to adjourn the annual members meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Minutes prepared by J. Bialek

Approved: /s/ Cindy Abbott-Letro
Cindy Abbott-Letro, Chair



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STAFF: J. Bialek, J. Calkins, E. Healy, D. Marzo, R. Toney

CALL TO ORDER: Board Chair, Cindy Abbott-Letro, convened the meeting of the Buffalo Convention Center Board of Directors at 3:07 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Mr. Long and seconded by Ms. Wells to approve the November minutes as presented. Motion carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Ms. Cindy Abbott-Letro presented the slate of officers proposed by the Executive Committee and asked for a motion to elect the slate for 2024:

Chair – Cindy Abbott-Letro
Vice Chair – Kimberley A. Minkel
Treasurer – Thomas Long
Secretary – Thomas Beauford, Jr.
Immediate Past Chair – Mary F. Roberts

A motion was made by Mr. Schutte and seconded by Ms. Urbanczyk to elect the 2024 slate of officers as presented. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Mr. Calkins reported that Q4 events were strong this year and rentals are up dramatically. The World's Largest Disco, and The Festival of Trees, helped us to end in a strong position. We raised our pricing to meet minimum wage standards for our tipped workers. The cost of labor and goods was up slightly. We had solid events that exceeded budget, such as the CSEA event and The New York School Board event. The sales team is reaching out more aggressively, and we were able to complete nine site visits. We also hosted the County Executive inauguration which was successful.

We ended the year in a position where we had a shortfall, but going into the New Year, we are hoping to bounce back. To cap off Q4, we are adjusting our menu items; we are revisiting what we are presenting and how we are pricing our menu.

A motion was made by Mr. Long and seconded by Ms. Minkel to approve the Q4 financial report as presented. Motion carried.

2024 BUDGET: Mr. Calkins reviewed the 2024 operating budget for the Convention Center. The budget was reviewed with the Finance Committee and approved prior to today's meeting.

We increased our sales numbers. 65% of our sales numbers are definite events, 25% to 30% are in the pipeline and 10% are unknown. Our Erie County Grant was increased, which includes a one-time addition of \$350,000. We went from a \$1.9 million grant in 2023 to a \$2.5 million grant for 2024 from the County, which is of great benefit to the Center.

Mr. Calkins reviewed the Center's expenses. We will not have any capital improvements other than what the County has already planned for the building. For 2024, we are budgeting for an overall 4.5% increase in staffing costs. Other increases include utilities, labor, and operating expenses, which we normally have.

Our sales figures are off to a good start having hosted the Ingram Micro event in Q1. Moog is also hosting an event with us coming up this month. This will help to elevate sales for Q1 and start out 2024 very strong.

A question was posed by Ms. Minkel. She asked if the Center budgets for capital equipment purchases. Mr. Calkins explained that we replace on an as needed basis and we work the County regarding major purchases. The status of the dishwasher was also discussed. Mr. Calkins reported that it has been refurbished for the time being, and we may investigate leasing options.

A motion was made by Ms. Wells and seconded by Ms. Minkel to approve the 2024 budget as presented. Motion carried.

2024 BUSINESS PLAN: Mr. Calkins reviewed the 2024 business plan for the Convention Center.

- Continue to aggressively pursue leads and follow up.
- Maintain relationships with one-time conventions for future return business; the NYS Schools Boards and Higher Education Web are examples.
- Renew annual functions and reclaim lost business more aggressively.
- New Sales & Catering Manager, Megan Gummo has replaced Sue Kimmins who retired after 44 years.
- Non-traditional events are an area of opportunity to strengthen our Q3 and other open windows, to be headed by Christie Walker from our sales and service team.
- Expand our green initiatives.
- Continue to expand the use of Momentus to include the financial model.
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A motion was made by Mr. Alnutt and seconded by Ms. Roberts to approve the 2024 business plan as presented. Motion carried.

Q4 REPORT: Mr. Calkins reported that overall sales were up dramatically. Total revenue for the quarter was comparable to 2019, primarily due to eight top events that drove total sales. The rollout of the Evolv security entry gates in October was successful and used for all consumer/public shows and some of our conventions. The new LED-lit façade, with the ability to mirror the event's color scheme to the exterior, has been a hit with clients.

UPCOMING PROJECTS: The County-led design team continues planning to renovate the ballroom, possibly replacing the carpet, adding new lighting, and making ceiling improvements. We will be

extending the ErieNet broadband network from the Rath Building to the Center and upgrading the internal Wi-Fi. The sales and service staff are collaborating with the food and beverage team to revamp our catering menu, with new offerings and pricing to reflect rising costs of goods and labor cost increases.

OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Roberts and seconded by Mr. Castle to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Minutes prepared by J. Bialek.

Approved: /s/ Cindy Abbott-Letro
Cindy Abbott-Letro Chair