

MINUTES

Grand Forks Events Center Commission



Wednesday June 25, 2025| 12:00 pm
Happy Harry's Suite Level

Call to Order: Jarrod Spoor called the meeting to order at 12:06 pm

Roll Call

Present: Jarrod Spoor, Greg Rixen, Russell Kraft, Scott Foyt, Irene Halbritter, Chad Karthaus, Ken Vein

City: Maureen Storstad, Todd Feland

Alerus Center: Anna Rosburg, Derek Hoffert, Allen Hess, Dominick Washington, Shelby Looker, Breanne Sypherd, Andrea Wegener, Matthew Ternus, AJ Heath

Guests: Jake Dunham (PCL Contractors)

We have a quorum.

Consent Agenda

The minutes from the last Commission Meeting on May 28, 2025, were reviewed and approved.

***A motion was made by Greg Rixen to approve the minutes; seconded by Irene Halbritter
Motion passed unanimously.***

April Financials

This is the first reporting period under the new software system, NetSuite, so it was emphasized to expect continued refinement to the presentation of the information as we familiarized ourselves with it. There were 42 events of a budgeted 33 for the month of April. Total Event revenue for the month was \$287,360 of the budgeted \$362,238 resulting in an unfavorable variance of (\$74,878). Indirect expenses for the month were \$440,568 of the budgeted \$426,329 resulting in an unfavorable variance of (\$20,425). Total net operating income for the month was \$3,146 of the budgeted net income of \$6,185 which resulted in an unfavorable variance of (\$3,039) for the month. Year-to-date there were 138 of the 135 budgeted events. Total event revenue was \$940,755 of the budgeted \$1,457,398 resulting in an unfavorable variance of (\$516,643). Indirect expenses for the year to date are \$1,645,735 of the budgeted \$1,680,573 resulting in a favorable variance of \$34,838. The net operating loss for the year, so far, was (\$101,515) of the budgeted income of \$25,815 resulting in an unfavorable variance of (\$127,330). Our staff accountant, Cassie, is keeping on top of AR so it is not as weird as it looks on paper. The accounting clerk handling AP retired and so the finance team is taking over and keeping it moving. The balance sheet shows total assets of \$7,558,908 and current liabilities of \$4,991,523 and total equity of \$2,567,385. The next new sheet is the Consolidated Income Statement which gives a breakdown of where we are sitting for income and expenses and shows a net income of \$3146. The new Income Statement Rolling Forecast is a bit different and shows exactly what is on the books, and be able to account for what is on the books but can't guarantee that everything from January to March is on there at this time, but the forecast is sitting at (\$628,651) on a budget of (\$501,321) which is unfavorable at (\$127,330) but it will change as we are able to get it rolling again

***A motion was made by Russell Kraft to approve the April Financials; seconded by Scott Foyt
Motion passed unanimously.***

2026 Budget Review

Anna was not going to review everything again, being the second time this is being presented to the commission. The only real change was the net bottom line went down \$40,000, which is due to annual pay increases within the company, which sit between 3-5% and consider the rising cost of benefits. Still looking at a profit of around \$50,000, which feels attainable.

A motion was made by Russell Kraft to approve the Operating Budget; seconded by Scott Foyt Motion passed unanimously.

Derek presented the Capital plan, highlighting the 2026 budget number which is primarily driven by the scoreboard project for that year. That cost sits are \$4.5 million of the \$4.98 devoted to it. Anna reminded the commission that this was a project for 2025 but was moved to 2026 to make the conference center renovation a priority. This will consist of the boards, production room, software that affects the replay and controllers will all be included in the project.

A motion was made by Russell Kraft to approve the Capital Budget; seconded by Irene Halbritter Motion passed unanimously.

Management Reports

- a. Executive – 2026 bookings, feeling there is more activity now than last year. It's not where we like it, but it is trending better and there are some good leads for 2026. Cashless conversation is still in the works and there is a slow rollout plan coming. Minimal amount of cash going through the building and technology is better. This will be a big step for ND. The marketing plan is in the works and talking with other OVG buildings to see how they have made the transition. Working with the 1883 Collective and how we can partner to have an impact on the UND athletics landscape.
- b. Finance – Finishing up May financials.
- c. Operations – New storage coming with the central plant project. The Ops department is reorganizing the west storage to get ready for the turf cover to come up in August and move it into the new storage and some in A4. Turf inspection is coming up in August for football season.
- d. Food & Beverage – VMS went well and the last wedding tasting for the year is coming up.
- e. Partnerships – 2 contracts out for renewal and both are back with the increase – retention rate is high. Closing a few more deals before football season and field suites are taking off and gaining popularity.
- f. Marketing – events are selling well; Halestorm and Gabriel Iglesias are doing well. Meeting with promoters coming up. Matt was on North Dakota Today to promote the upcoming fall. Social media is growing, and Derek was the top responder to the posts. New promo was filmed for the CC reno. Lots going on this summer to stay engaged with the public through social media while doing our versions of popular trends.
- g. Conference Sales – May 21 of 28 event days with 158 events and 246 event days this year and 34 dark days so far. Bookings are still coming in hot for the fall – almost every weekend is booked and having to get creative. 246 events confirmed of the 294 budgeted making it 84% booked for 2025. Renovation is looking great, and we are very happy with the progress.
- h. Events – VMS trip in June and Breanne graduated this year. The ADA training was successful. The new events coordinator has started and is doing great. Training the other Event Manager's for concerts. Leaning into football and having meetings with UND. July 10th Budweiser Clydesdales will be in the building and there will be a parking lot party free to the public.

Conference Center Renovation Update

Jake Dunham reported that the project is going well, carpet, paint, wallpaper and ceilings in meeting rooms. The tile in bathrooms is ongoing. They hope to get into pre-function and get carpeting down and head toward the ballrooms and follow with getting the painting done down the pre-function hall as well. Airwalls are coming along as well. The project is still ahead of schedule.

Committee Reports

- a. Finance & Renovation – 2025 Capital review – Dominick will be working with Marco at the end of the renovation to make sure that the new AV will be working for the meeting and ballrooms. New projection screens are going into ballrooms and will need to be tested. Old chillers are starting to be demolished, and the plan is to have the new chillers up and running by the start of football. Most should be down but one will be left as a backup. Johnson controls want to have the chillers fully functioning in August to make sure that they are operational before taking the last old one down in September. The roll doors are going in for the chiller plant and should be done this week. One is in now and operational.
- b. Visit Greater Grand Forks – Julie occupancy is flat right now due to the political events, and border crossings are down right now. This is down all over ND, but this phase seems to be dying out and we are continuing to promote there but not on social media. Digital walking tour is coming online for the downtown area to start soon is free with a downloaded app. Grand Forks will be featured on a PBS show about Highway 2 and Devil's Lake that will feature Harry's Steakhouse, Rhombus Rooftop, and the Greenway.
- c. UND – Chad touched on the cashless discussion stating that UND is trying to go cashless but there are still issues coming up for this with summer camps and are planning to offer the reloadable cards which would be similar to what the Alerus is going to do. House settlement was approved finally (\$2.8mil damages for student athletes) back damages are going to be covered by both the school and the NCAA. Payment is not in installments but there will be a change in revenue projections. Football is waiting on a vote for the ability to play a 12th game for this coming year. UND is waiting on Legislation to pass on the “week zero” which would add one more game to the season, before the regular season begins.

Other

Groundbreaking for the park district for the new sports complex coming on Friday. Currently under budget but looking to approve some additional requests to move forward as well as adding back in a few things that were passed on earlier.

Adjournment

*A motion was made by Greg Rixen to adjourn; second by Ken Vein
Motion passed unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 1:22pm

Respectfully submitted,
AJ Heath, Office Manager

Jarrold Spoor,
GFECC Chair