



GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Minutes of the Board of Directors' Hybrid Meeting --- April 25, 2022

Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science  
 1101 Biscayne Boulevard, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Trish & Dan Bell Conference Room  
 Miami, FL 33132 U.S.A.

Attendance Report

Members Attending	GMCVB Staff Attending	Members Unable to Attend
<p><b><u>Board of Directors</u></b>            Steven Adkins            Rodney Barreto            George Andrews,                Senior Advisor for Policy for                Mayor Daniella Levine Cava                Miami-Dade County            Rick Beasley            Kevin Bryant            Michael Cheng            Luis Gazitua            Julio Guzman, Vice Mayor                City of Homestead            Keon Hardemon, Commissioner                Miami-Dade County            Wendy Kallergis            Mutluhan Kucuk            Ben Mollere            John Mulrey            Freddie Peterson            Grisette Roque-Marcos</p> <p><b><u>Executive Committee</u></b>            Bruce Orosz, Chairman            T. Willard Fair            Steven Haas            Elizabeth Hicks            Alina Hudak, City Manager                City of Miami Beach            Eric Jellson            Gene Prescott            Carole Ann Taylor            Christine Valls</p>	<p><b><u>Bureau Staff</u></b>            David Whitaker            Rolando Aedo, CDME            Jacques Alexander            Alex Batista            Connie Kinnard            Gisela Marti            Carol Motley            Dorcas Piegari            Dan Rios            Jose Sotolongo            Alvin West, CDME            Joe Yarzabal</p> <p><b><u>Legal Counsel</u></b>            Jaret Davis, Greenberg Traurig</p> <p><b><u>Guests</u></b>            Santiana Lewis, Executive                Assistant to Commissioner                Hardemon, Miami-Dade County            Andria Muniz-Amador, Director                of Communications, PortMiami            Frank Steslow, President &amp; CEO                Frost Museum of Science</p>	<p><b><u>Board of Directors</u></b>            Henry Crespo            Christine King, Commissioner                City of Miami            Abe Ng            Adolfo Perez            Alan G. Randolph            Alfredo Richard            Christopher Rollins</p> <p><b><u>Executive Committee</u></b>            Dan Gelber, Mayor                City of Miami Beach            Julissa Kepner            Maria Sastre</p> <p><b><u>Ex Officio Members</u></b>            Ralph Cutie            Wilfredo Gort            Alfred Sanchez            Hydi Webb</p> <p><b><u>Past Chairs</u></b>            Richard Fain            Adolfo Henriques            Thomas F. Hewitt            Donald E. Lefton            R. Donahue Peebles            Christopher Perks            Stephen Sonnabend</p>

<p><b><u>Ex Officio Members</u></b> Eric Knowles Ibis Romero</p>		
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**CALL TO ORDER**

The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors’ meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. by Mr. Bruce Orosz, Chairman of the Board.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion for approval of the meeting minutes from February 28, 2022 was moved by Mr. Steve Adkins; seconded by Ms. Elizabeth Hicks; and passed unanimously.

**REPORTS**

**2. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Mr. Frank Steslow, President & CEO of the Phillip & Patricia Frost Museum of Science, welcomed the GMCVB Board of Directors and thanked the Bureau for doing an excellent job in promoting tourism to Greater Miami and Miami Beach. Mr. Steslow said that half of the museum’s business is tourism related. He added that the Frost Museum of Science has had a phenomenal twelve months. He added that this year marks the museum’s fifth anniversary. Mr. Steslow said that programming for this year includes a Sherlock Holmes The Exhibition on crime scenes and forensic science followed by a dinosaur exhibition in the fall. Mr. Orosz thanked Mr. Steslow for hosting us at such a wonderful venue located in Downtown Miami.

Mr. Orosz said that he saw many board members and community stakeholders at today’s “Celebration of Life” ceremony for Mike Finney. He said it was a very moving tribute for our beloved GMCVB board member. Mr. Orosz said that Mr. Finney was a bridge builder who did a lot of great things for Miami as President & CEO of the Miami-Dade Beacon Council. As a former Michigander, Mr. Orosz said that Mr. Finney used all his knowledge to market Miami as a world-class business destination for jobs and investments.

Mr. Orosz said that we are requesting submissions for people to serve on our board as we begin the process of removing board members who have reached their term limit. He said that we are looking to strengthen the board with stakeholders from different industries including technology. Mr. Orosz said that the City of Miami recently appointed Chairwoman Christine King to serve on the GMCVB Board.

Mr. Orosz said that we were fortunate to have two very important technology driven events at the Miami Beach Convention Center in April --- Bitcoin 2022 Conference from April 6-9 followed by eMerge Americas from April 18-19. He said we are the future of FinTech. He said that clearly there is a tidal wave of new FinTech companies coming to this community.

Mr. Orosz thanked the Bureau for its efforts in attracting meetings, conferences and conventions to Greater Miami and Miami Beach including Formula 1 from May 6-8, 2022 at the Hard Rock Stadium. He said that the economic impact of these events, whose attendees occupy hotels, frequent restaurants and patronize local businesses, is far-reaching.

### **3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Whitaker reviewed several barometers in the hospitality industry including weekly demand, occupancy, and average daily rate for the past six months. He said that hotel demand for week ending April 16 is 3.7% ahead of where we were in 2019. He said that we continue to do a comparison between the current year and 2019 because it was our best year prior to the pandemic. He said that occupancy is 6.0% below where we were in 2019 and indicated that one of the reasons is because we have added 22 hotels to our inventory in the past 24 months which is about ten percent of our inventory. He said that the real phenomenon is that the average daily rate is 29.4% ahead of 2019 which is good news in terms of profit and tax revenue but presents a challenge in terms of negotiating a group rate for our convention delegates.

Mr. Whitaker said that for week ending April 16, Miami International Airport had 201,408 arrivals versus 93,339 in 2021. Mr. Whitaker reported that Miami International Airport is now the busiest international airport in North America having recently surpassed La Guardia Airport. In addition, he said that Miami International Airport is the sixth busiest international airport in the world.

Mr. Whitaker reported that according to Longwoods International that conducts American travel sentiment research, as of April 13 only 19% of American travelers say that fear of COVID-19 will greatly impact their decision to travel in the next six months. Mr. Whitaker said that it will still take some time for the public to feel 100% confident to travel.

Mr. Whitaker reminded everyone of two upcoming signature GMCVB events --- the H.O.T. Challenge on Friday, May 6, at the Miami Beach Golf Club and the State of the Travel and Tourism Industry Presentation on Thursday, May 12, at the Fillmore Miami Beach at Jackie Gleason Theater.

### **4. FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION**

Ms. Elizabeth Hicks, GMCVB Chair of the Finance Committee, reported on the first six months of the fiscal year which ended on March 31, 2022. She said that total revenue was \$19,534,000 and total expenses were \$13,883,000 resulting in an operating surplus of \$5,651,000 versus a budgeted deficit of \$309,000. She added that operational funds from reserves were \$556,000 resulting in an adjusted operating surplus of \$6,207,000 versus a budget of \$247,000.

Ms. Hicks said that the Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Tax (TDT) was 27.4% over budget due to an increase in the Average Daily Rate and strong home sharing results. She said that the Miami-Dade County 2% Food & Beverage Tax and the City of Miami Beach contribution were over budget by 23.1% and 40.9%, respectively. She stated that although Partnership Dues were 21.1% over budget, member programs and contributed services were under budget by \$186,000 due to reduced FAMs and member programs.

Ms. Hicks said that total Program of Work Expenses were \$11,844,000 versus a budget of \$13,312,000 which is 11.0% under budget. She said that expenses are under budget due to timing differences in marketing programs that have not yet been executed.

Mr. Whitaker said the team will have a mid-year budget review meeting in the coming weeks to address the operating surplus and to make recommendations for additional investments including a contingency plan fund. Ms. Hicks said that although we already have a long-term disaster recovery fund, she concurred that we should have a short-term contingency plan fund to use for marketing and promotion as needed.

## **5. MARKETING & TOURISM**

Mr. Eric Jellson, Chair of the Marketing & Tourism Committee, said that all general managers from Kimpton Hotels will be in Miami for networking activities during the same weekend as Formula 1. He said that they will be staying at the EPIC and InterContinental Downtown Miami and added that Miami was chosen because of its resilience and perseverance throughout the pandemic. He said that InterContinental Hotel Group is launching its Loyalty Program by featuring three cities --- Miami, Paris and London --- in its global commercial which he believes is positive exposure for our destination.

Mr. Jellson said that the charts on occupancy and demand are consistent with what is happening in our destination. He said that although international travel is not back to where it was in 2019, there are a lot of international travelers visiting Miami Beach. He said that the Bureau's marketing programs will continue to put into place the action steps necessary to grow our business for the balance of the year and first quarter.

Mr. Rolando Aedo said that today's' marketing presentation will focus on three key areas including the Bureau's LGBTQ marketing efforts. Dan Rios, Director of LGBTQ+ Marketing, said that the community has changed over the last twenty years. He said it was formerly known as the gay travel industry which focused on gay and lesbian travelers but did not pay attention to travelers that fall under the categories of bisexual, transgender and queer. Mr. Rios said that LGBTQ+ marketing enhances and facilitates the expansion of visitor attendance at hotels, local events, local businesses and attractions by LGBTQ+ travelers. He said that examples of what his department does to increase travel demand is to ensure that all ad messaging incorporates the LGBTQ+ segment; secures leads to attract LGBTQ+ sports, fitness and wellness events; manages LGBTQ+ social media channels; coordinates photo shoots to highlight all segments of the LGBTQ+ community and the destination; and coordinates the roll-out of "Miami Begins With Me" LGBTQ+ Diversity & Inclusion Training to the hospitality industry. Mr. Rios said that his department engages in many local, national and international LGBTQ+ activities including the annual Miami Beach Pride parade that took place in the City of Miami Beach on April 10; the new Travel & Adventure NYC that took place in New York City from March 19-20; and LGBT Turismo EXPO that will take place in Brazil on July 26.

Mr. Rolando Aedo said that with all the chatter about our destination not being welcoming to the LGBTQ+ travelers, he said that Greater Miami and Miami Beach welcomes all and is stated as such on the GMCVB website. He added that LGBTQ+ travelers contribute to the economy and create jobs which makes good business sense. Mr. Whitaker said that the recent Florida legislation has not negatively impacted the convention sales business.

Mr. Steve Adkins, President & CEO of the Miami Beach Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, said that the GMCVB has done a remarkable job in marketing to LGBTQ+ travelers. He said it is important that we are prepared to have similar talking points regarding recent policy changes in Tallahassee on how we embrace diversity and combat people's perceptions. Mr. Adkins said that the LGBTQ+ market contributes approximately \$9 billion per year to Miami-Dade County.

Mr. Aedo said that approximately 50% of our visitors are international travelers. He said that we will be reactivating our global network which as of April 2022 includes travel trade representation from 23 countries and public relations representatives from 16 countries. He said that as reported earlier, Miami International Airport is the busiest international airport in North America and the sixth busiest in the world.

Ms. Gisela Marti, Vice President of Marketing & Tourism, gave an update on the Bureau's international marketing efforts. Ms. Marti said that Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States, is a great partner for the GMCVB especially from an international perspective. She said that Brand USA offers many valuable programs for consumers in such markets as Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany and Brazil. She added that many of their programs have a digital, social media and Expedia component. She said that an example of collaboration between Brand USA and the GMCVB is the upcoming Formula 1 Influencer Campaign which consists of five influencers who will highlight Miami's unique culture and draw awareness to Formula 1 to generate an estimated 10,000,000 impressions.

Ms. Marti said that thanks to our Chairman of the Board, the Bureau got involved with Reddit which is a platform that engages people according to their interests. She added that Reddit has 1,200,000 Formula 1 subscribers of which 181,000 of its members are in Miami.

Ms. Marti said that the Travel Industry Sales Team has been very busy on the international front including Vitrina ANATO in Bogota, Colombia; MIPIM in Cannes, France; and WTM Latin America in Sao Paulo, Brazil. She said that future international travel trade events include VISIT FLORIDA Canada Mission in Montreal and Toronto; American Airlines Mexico FAM in Miami, Florida; and IPW 2022 in Orlando, Florida.

Mr. Aedo said that Michelin is one of the most powerful international culinary platforms which is why the Bureau made a strategic investment to bring The Michelin Guide back to Greater Miami and Miami Beach. He said that there will be a press conference during IPW in Orlando on June 7 followed by the Michelin Reveal 2022 at the Ritz Carlton Orlando Grand Lakes on June 9 and Michelin Greater Miami Event at the Miami Beach Convention Center on June 12.

Mr. Aedo said that social media lives everywhere which is why the Bureau works with several agency partners including VMLY&R for overall social media strategy; rbb Communications for the organic social strategy; and Kivvit for corporate channels. Mr. Aedo said that social media has become an essential and integral component of our communication efforts.

Ms. Marti said that social media planned tactics was the topic of discussion during a recent meeting initiated by Mr. Orosz with VMLY&R and the GMCVB Team. She said that between all our social media channels, we have close to one million followers which is a great way to reach different people in an organic and cost-effective way. She said that there has been tremendous growth in terms of number of people reached through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. She added that there

is room for growth with Reddit for targeted audiences and with TikTok for small multicultural audiences. Mr. Aedo said that during the upcoming mid-year review, additional revenues will be requested for social media so that this Destination Marketing Organization can be at the forefront of social media developments.

## **6. CONVENTION SALES**

Ms. Carol Motley gave an update on two new employees joining the Bureau for the Convention Sales & Services Team. She welcomed Mr. Alex Batista as Vice President of Convention Sales who in addition to handling the convention sales daily tasks, will also be dedicated to managing the Informa Markets account. Mr. Batista said that his goal is to continue being the bridge between the hotel and meeting planner communities. He added that he is proud to be a part of the GMCVB Team. Ms. Motley said that Ms. Donna Del Gallo will be joining the GMCVB Team on May 31 as the Sr. Regional Director of Convention Sales. She said that her office will be based in Washington, DC handling the Washington, DC area as well as Maryland, Virginia and Northeast markets.

Ms. Motley said that Bitcoin 2022 took place at the Miami Beach Convention Center from April 6-9. She said that Bitcoin has had a major impact on our destination especially from national news exposure. In addition, she said that it has influenced other cryptocurrency groups to consider Greater Miami and Miami Beach for their future conferences. Ms. Motley said that Bitcoin's growth has been remarkable with as much as 30,000 attendees in one day. Mr. Freddie Peterson said that Bitcoin was an amazing event. He said that there were eight different pieces to this conference including tradeshow, meeting, convention, festival, concert, art show and comedy show --- and that he had never seen anything like it. He said it was the first time an activation of this scale and size has taken place at the convention center. Mr. Peterson thanked the Bureau team for their tremendous support.

Ms. Motley said that for fiscal year 2021/2022, the Convention Sales Team has achieved four bookings from a goal of 17 bookings. She said that the four bookings are HLTH ViVE, International Health Racquet & Sports Club Association, IFS Global Software, and International Cargo Association totaling 17,301 room nights. She said that the Convention Sales Team has five months left to achieve their goal. She said that one of the strategies to turn a tentative group into a definite group is to offer multi-year package deals with financial incentives. Lastly, Ms. Motley reported that year to date we had 1,015 sales leads, 192 bookings and 134,250 room nights with an economic impact of \$258.0 million. She said that the reason total sales leads are a much larger number than reported in previous months is because leads are being tracked differently by the convention sales department.

Ms. Motley said that in addition to bookings, the Convention Sales & Services Team ensures that annual groups at the Miami Beach Convention Center such as the Miami International Boat Show, Seatrade Cruise Global and Art Basel are serviced so that they continue to come back.

Ms. Motley said that the Tradeshow Industry is coming back and so now its time for the Convention Sales Team to return to the marketplace. She said that future tradeshow include Connect Marketplace in Puerto Rico from May 22-25, 2022; IMEX Frankfurt in Frankfurt, Germany from May 31 – June 2, 2022; and PCMA Educon in New Orleans, LA from June 5-8, 2022. She said that the Convention Sales Team is focused on bringing more international groups to Greater Miami and

Miami Beach thus why they plan to attend IBTM World in Barcelona, Spain from November 29-December 1, 2022.

## **7. MULTICULTURAL TOURISM & DEVELOPMENT**

Ms. Connie Kinnard said that signature events such as the Calle Ocho Festival and Jazz In The Gardens are a big part of multicultural tourism and that she is glad they are back in full swing following the pandemic. She said that looking ahead we have the “Best of the Best” Music Festival coming up Memorial Day Weekend which is an event that can be highlighted during the high impact weekend and the American Black Film Festival which is a high-profile event that elevates our destination through marketing recognition.

Ms. Carole Ann Taylor, Chair of the GMCVB Multicultural Tourism and Development Committee, said that “Overture To Overtown” now in its tenth year at The Betsy Hotel is currently running through May 1. She said that the event highlights the historic connections of jazz players who made their way from club to club across the USA. She said that in Miami’s history, jazz players who played in the City of Miami Beach were not allowed to stay there. She said that this event now connects that jazz artists in Miami Beach with the artists in Overtown. She said that it brings her joy to see the revitalization of Overtown. Ms. Taylor said that she is one of the featured performers of “Overture To Overtown.”

Ms. Kinnard said that the Art of Black Miami Podcast Series is a series of interviews with black artists who talk about why Miami is important in their creation. She said that the podcast series has received a lot of traction evidenced by the fact that artists are reaching out to find out how they, too, can be included in the podcast series. Ms. Kinnard said that the podcast series was recently expanded to a broader platform through Spotify.

Ms. Kinnard gave an update on the expansion of the Black Hospitality Initiative (BHI). She said that the purpose of BHI is to guarantee the future of young black people in the hospitality industry. She said that BHI has awarded scholarships to many young people at Miami-Dade College, Florida Memorial University and Florida International University since its inception in 1992. She said that the search for the director position for BHI started this week and asked for recommendations. Ms. Taylor said that it is very exciting that BHI will have a director position with its own staff. Mr. Whitaker thanked Mr. Rick Beasley for facilitating the grant that will allow this expansion to happen.

Mr. Whitaker reminded everyone that the H.O.T. Challenge, the annual fundraising event that supports the Black Hospitality Initiative, will take place at the Miami Beach Golf Club on Friday, May 6, 2022.

## **8. OPEN DISCUSSION**

Mr. Kevin Bryant gave an update on hotel business for the Fontainebleau Miami Beach Hotel. He stated that group business is back with last month being the first month in which business was back to normal with a good mix of leisure and group guests. He reported that for the first time in two years, the sales team at the Fontainebleau Miami Beach Hotel is fully staffed with 1,800 team members. He added that international visitors are returning as well for both the leisure and group sides of the business. He said that the resort tower of the hotel will be undergoing a \$30,000,000 renovation in the summer. In addition, he said that the groundbreaking for the extended

convention center across the street from the hotel will commence in two weeks. Lastly, he said that, in his opinion, the mainland and the beach were too aggressive with room rates during Formula 1. He said that not all hotels in the City of Miami Beach were operating at full occupancy while Broward hotels were due to a lower price point.

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There being no other matters at hand the Board of Directors meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.