

Metro Tourism and Convention Commission Meeting Minutes

May 15th , 2025

Time: 8:30 am

Location: 500 11th Ave North, Suite 650, Nashville, TN

Leesa LeClaire called the meeting to order at 8:35 am

Commissioners Present

- Leesa LeClaire, Chair
- Mark Hayes, Vice Chair
- Sherry Franklin
- Robert Higgins
- Derrick Free
- Nealy Glenn
- Q-Juan Taylor
- Britney Chandler

Commissioners Not in Attendance

- Dr. Syb Brown

Metro Staff

- Courtney Mohan, Legal Counsel
- Jamari Brown
- Metro IT Representatives

Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp (NCVC) Staff:

- Deana Ivey
- Andrea Arnold
- Adrienne Siemers
- Heather Middleton
- Bruce McGregor
- Elgin Cato
- Almichael Rogers

Following roll call, Leesa LeClaire opened the public comment period. James Morrison from Morrison Development and Construction was in attendance and announced their project of the new Motto hotel on 3rd Avenue. ,

The meeting moved to the rest of the agenda. LeClaire requested approval for the minutes of the February meeting.

Q-Juan Taylor motioned to approve the February 2025 minutes; Derrick Free seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

LeClaire asked Jeff Mefford, the CFO of the NCVC, to provide the financial report. He provided the following highlights:

- 9 months into the fiscal year, NCVC is on track to meet all of our budget goals for the year.
- Hotel tax collections through February have been reported to be strong, totaling \$95,146,000. The portion dedicated to tourism promotion is within 2% of the prior year's total and exceeds the CVC's expense reimbursements through March.
- The month of October set an all-time high record for hotel tax collections.
- No surplus or profit was reported to the CVC through Metro resources. The CVC is only reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in the promotion in the city.
- Total revenue for this period from all sources was \$30,393,501, which includes the additional \$6 million in revenue that the NCVC raised from other sources to supplement the Metro contract funding.
- We report no unexpected expenses and our spending is running below budget.
- The primary discretionary program spending during the first quarter will be on advertising and website enhancements to support the new direct international flights from BNA.

Derrick Free motions to approve the financial report; Brittany Chandler seconds; the motion passed unanimously.

LeClaire asked Bruce McGregor, Senior Vice President of Research with the NCVC, to provide a research update. He provided the following report:

- Nashville experienced a 2% increase in hotel supply, while maintaining a 71.8% occupancy rate in March.
- Davidson County experienced a 6.1% increase in room revenue. Factors such as 5 conventions in the Music City Center and Gaylord Opryland contributed to a successful March.
- April experienced a slight decrease in occupancy, mainly due to the Easter holiday being moved to the end of the month.
- Short-term rental room nights sold were up 4.7% YOY, and the taxable lodging revenues increased 2.8% in March and April.
- May shows growth due to significant demand drivers such as graduations, major concerts, and conventions. These events resulted in Nashville ranking fourth in occupancy among 25 major hotel markets.

- Memorial Day is forecasted to break a 20-year travel record with 45.1 million Americans traveling from home. TravelClick shows Davidson County hotel spacing up both Friday and Saturday that weekend.
- CMA fest is another huge event in June that brings 90,000 people per day to the city.
- Tourism Economics predicts that Davidson County will welcome 17.3 million visitors in 2025. Visitors will book over 10 million room nights, generating \$2 billion in room revenue. Visitors will spend a total of \$11.49 billion this year, breaking down to \$32 million per day in direct visitor spending.

A discussion ensued on the following

- Defining supply and demand regarding hotel and short-term rentals in Davidson County.
- Breakdown in demand among the nights of CMA Fest, specifically Sunday night.
- Downtown hotels hold a multiple-night minimum for high-demand weekends.
- Spending breakdowns from visitors, how we can track where the \$11.2 billion is going.
- Number of international visitors coming to Nashville.

LeClaire asked Deana Ivey, CEO of the NCVV, to give a report from the organization. She began the report with the following updates:

- Seeing a decrease in international visitors as we approach headwinds, the new BNA direct flights to Iceland and Dublin outperform projections.
- NCVV conducted targeted digital marketing campaigns in response to a slight decrease in leisure travelers, but not across all segments. Our marketing team is specifically increasing regional marketing in areas within Nashville's driving range.
- Our sales team is set to have a record year, with over 2 million rooms sold. Music City Center is also about to have its best year ever.
- Team continues to work on multiple major bids for large events for the city.
- Nashville continues to see growth across the hospitality industry. There will be 450 new hotel rooms in 2025, and another 1,200 will open by December. In the last 5 years, 18 new bars have opened on Broadway and Second Avenue, doubling the capacity.
- We are excited to have a great lineup of major events this summer, such as CMA Fest, FIFA Club Cup, and July 4th.
- The July 4th lineup will include artists Niko Moon and Russell Dickerson, with Dierks Bentley headlining the show.
- We will partner with community organizations such as KultureCity, Cumberland Heights, Safe Bar, and Red Frogs.

- July 4th falls on a Friday this year, resulting in seeing a large increase in hotel demand. Next year will be America's 250th celebration, so we plan to make the event bigger and better.

Adrienne Siemers, Chief Sales Officer for the NCV, provided the following sales report:

- The convention market continues to be strong; our team is monitoring the sentiment of international and Canadian groups.
- The team will host 2 sales events in San Francisco and Dallas this summer.
- We are very optimistic about the strength of the market based on our end-of-the-year performance. Such as hitting the 2 million-night record.
- We are thrilled to host the Cvent Connect Event in 2026, where Nashville will welcome 3,000 meeting professionals.

A discussion ensued on the following.

- Commission members were impressed with the time of growth and surpassing the room night record.
- Current state of small group leads
- An industry breakdown of group leads and the impact of cancellations.
- Team working with hotel leaders to encourage transparency for group cancellations so we can continue to monitor.
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Heather Middleton, Chief Marketing Officer for the NCV, provided the following marketing report:

- The Read with Jenna event will occur on May 30 and 31. Our team has been working with Jenna Bush Hager for over a year to secure this event and Nashville programming. This event will have national coverage and will attract 400-500 attendees.
- Marketing team has increased ad budgets, especially within drive markets.
- European ad campaigns continue to go strong, highlighting our new international flights.
- Leveraging data from TravelClick to target lower-performing weekends to increase our focus on digital buys within those markets.
- Since January, our team has hosted 107 journalists, and one more group is coming in from Iceland Air.
- Our team continues to have a marketing strategy with large events in the city.

A discussion ensued on the following.

- Marketing teams plan to conduct a hotel co-op program. Middleton confirmed we will be relaunching it in the new fiscal year.

Marie Sueing, Chief Engagement Officer of the NCVC, provided the following report.

- The Nashville Business Journal published an article highlighting our Music City Chart Climbers Cohort. The article featured testimonies from cohort members on the program's impact on their businesses.
- We are halfway through the Chart Climbers accelerator program, continuing to provide learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom. The cohort attended our annual Industry Luncheon, where they had the opportunity to network with peers in the hospitality industry.
- The program will conclude in August, when they will graduate and become official NCVC members.

A discussion ensued on the following

- The plans for the Music City Chart Climbers program in 2026
- Commission members have the opportunity to meet members of the cohort.

LeClaire highlighted that the commission's next meeting will be on September 12th, 2025, at 8:30

Sherry Franklin noted that the 12th is a Friday, and the website needs to be corrected to show that the meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 11th.

LeClaire thanked Britney Chandler for her time on the commission, as this is her last meeting. She announced that Tom Patrillo, the General Manager at Gaylord, would fill her seat. He will begin his term in September.

LeClaire called for any additional business; there is none.

Q-Juan Taylor motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 am; Free seconded; the motion passed unanimously.