CUYAHOGA COUNTY CONVENTION FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JANUARY 23, 2026
CLEVELAND, OHIO

Attendees at the Meeting:

Directors: Debbie Berry, David Gilbert (left at 10:09 a.m.), Majeed Makhlouf, Trevor McAleer (remote), Michael Obi (remote), Roshonda Smith (remote), and Alton Tinker (arrived remotely at 8:47 a.m.). Deb Janik was not present.

Staff: Tim Meyer, Executive Director; Julie Valyn, Financial Analyst.

Guests of the Board: Mike Campo, General Manager; Steve Wells, Director of Finance; Travis Poppell, Director of Sales and Marketing; all of the Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland (the "Convention Center"); John Page of Legends Global ("ASM"); Jeff Appelbaum (remote) and Courtney Flowers of Thompson Hine LLP; Larry Trabulsi (remote) of CHM Warnick; Lauren (Gaydosh) Kwapiszewski, CMP, Director of Sales; Jen Sioutis, Director of Hotel Operations; and Nicholas H. Janysek, Director of Sales and Marketing, all of the Hilton Cleveland Downtown; Jude Feyedelem and Chris Bupp of Levy Restaurants ("Levy"); and Bob Frantz of Stifl.

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors. At 8:45 a.m. on Friday, January 23, 2026, a Regular Meeting (the "January Regular Meeting") of the Board of Directors (the "Board") of the Cuyahoga County Convention Facilities Development Corporation (the "CCCFDC") commenced. Mr. Makhlouf presided as President of the Board.

Mr. Makhlouf called the meeting to order. Next, Ms. Valyn called the roll. Mr. Makhlouf declared a quorum of the Board present.

Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

Review and Approval of Minutes.

Mr. Makhlouf presented the meeting minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of October 24, 2025, which were distributed to the Board prior to the January Regular Meeting, and asked if the Board had any questions or comments. There were no questions or comments. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

Thompson Hine Agreement.

Mr. Makhlouf explained to the Board that Thompson Hine had presented a renewal agreement to offer the same terms except for an increase of fees $400 per month. He asked for questions or comments. There being none, a motion was made and seconded to approve the contract. Ms. Valyn called the roll and the motion unanimously passed.

Executive Director Report.

Mr. Meyer stated that he would summarize the success of 2025 and talk about plans for 2026. He began by crediting Mr. Feyedelem and Mr. Campo with their embrace of change setting up the facility for long-term success. He stated that the facility broke even for the first time in operation, which he attributed to a focus on revenue increases and cost savings. He also credited sales overall for the city, which he cautioned are likely to be softer for 2026. Mr. Meyer stated that despite that challenge, the Convention Center would move forward with its strategy, including focusing on economic impact in the County.

He summarized 2025 financial data, emphasizing that there had been a budgeted net loss of $3.2 million but an actual net loss of $1,679. He shared that operating cash flow was $3.2 million at year end leading to a projected 2026 year-end balance of $2.6 million. Mr. Meyer pointed out that there is more risk projected for 2026, so this year-end balance could swing higher or lower.

Next, Mr. Meyer talked about CCCFDC's goals and objectives, local engagement, and long-term plan to remain ahead of the industry. He mentioned some plans he had discussed with Board and Convention Center team members, including partnership with the public auditorium. Mr. Meyer mentioned that the CS&L Study came out last night and it would be presented to the Board at the retreat where John Katz would also be present. Ms. Teeuwen asked about technology and whether those improvements would be capital improvements and Mr. Meyer confirmed.

Mr. Meyer laid out goals for the next five years, including exceeding the industry average of usage days, reducing the deficit annually, increasing occupancy to exceed 60% by 2030, increasing advertising and sponsorship revenue, expanding in-house services for additional revenue, and identifying other monetization opportunities with a goal to increase cash while keeping the mission in mind.

<u>Capital Projects/Osborn Building Assessment</u>.

Mr. Meyer presented the outstanding 2025 capital projects, including the St. Clair entry digital sign, building repairs based on the Osborn Building Assessment, the adult changing table, electrical equipment, interior signage, and coffee maker. He then summarized the 2026 Capital Plan, including $1,798,200 in building projects and $2,189,200 in food-related capital projects. Mr. Gilbert asked about long-term capital projects and if there was anything the Board should be thinking about for after 2026. Mr. Meyer responded that there is a 5-year plan for capital improvements in process but it is not ready to present, though he expects to have it to send to the Board. He briefly spoke about the 5-year projection before turning over the meeting to Mr. Campo, Mr. Poppell, and Mr. Feyedelem.

<u>ASM & Levy Update</u>.

Mr. Campo began by summarizing the record performance of the Convention Center, which was favorable to budget by $3,157,267 based on 149 actual events (25 greater than budgeted) and gross revenue higher than budget by $5,479,512. Mr. Meyer interjected to emphasize what a big accomplishment having a profit was. Ms. Berry also shared her congratulations as did the rest of the Board. Mr. Campo stated that he was especially proud that this was accomplished without sacrificing service.

Next, Mr. Campo summarized the event types and income by event type, emphasizing that conventions bring in the greatest revenue despite representing a minority of business. He shared a chart showing that income comes mostly from Food & Beverage at 66% and followed by rent, audio visual, IT, electrical services, and booth cleaning & equipment rental. Mr. Makhlouf asked for some more information about differences between the types of events, particularly conventions and meetings.

Mr. Feyedelem next spoke about Levy's budget, which had resulted in $17.27 million in gross revenue, which was $3.13 million favorable to budget. The only revenue center variance that was not favorable was Starbucks and Mr. Feyedelem spoke about why this might be. Ms. Berry asked who was primarily patronizing Starbucks and Bagel Boulevard and whether revenue was mostly from the Convention Center or the community. Mr. Feyedelem stated there was a strong local following and the numbers did increase proportionately during Convention Center events. Mr. Makhlouf asked about the local coffee competition and asked about visibility of the Starbucks in the building. Mr. Meyer stated that Mr. Feyedelem was already working on signage to help with visibility. Mr. Meyer and Mr. Feyedelem stated that Starbucks had a very specific model for operators and there are different demographic trends seen in the types of products sold at different times (for example, strong sales in sugary drinks during kids' dance competitions). Mr. Gilbert mentioned the amenity aspect of Starbucks and Bagel Boulevard as significant to the mission of the Convention Center, because it helps provide a necessary service for attendees who might not have time or desire to leave the building.

Mr. Campo summarized highlights of year-end performance, including cost control through efforts such as product pricing controls and flexibility based on supply costs and labor management tools. He emphasized the value of cross training employees to keep teams busy and maximize utilization and to give employees opportunities at other local venues like the Great Lakes Science Center or other Levy properties.

Mr. Feyedelem summarized the top five events of the year which had a budget of $2,545,000 and actually brought in $3,403,093. He also sang the praises of Bagel Boulevard, which exceeded all expectations for year one as a revenue driver and for bringing recognition and attention to the building.

Mr. Campo next focused on the difference that the Convention Center has made in the community. He summarized community events, including 25 community events, 25 recruiting hours, 75 volunteer hours, and 23 volunteer participants. He shared details of employee engagement events, including the highly-successful turkey giveaway, quarterly townhalls, and GEM & TEAM Awards. He shared statistics about SWMBE (Small-, Women-, Minority-Owned Business Enterprise) Participation, which is a commitment to using diverse businesses. Mr. Campo reported that the Convention Center met all of these goals for 2025.

Mr. Campo next summarized the 2025 economic impact by sharing the Convention Center events led to $101,937,601, 132,205 room nights, 389,275 total attendees, 220,400 lbs of materials recycled, and 28% landfill diversion. He also summarized the top 10 major events, including AP Reading, National Urban League, and National Association of Black Journalists, which were standouts.

Mr. Poppell next spoke about year-over-year social media growth, including follower growth and reach. He showed the three top social media posts of 2025, including the turkey giveaway, trunk or treat, and Superman statue unveiling. He stated that 90 of last year's events used the Atrium and that, in fact, three of the biggest events only came to Cleveland because of the Atrium space. Next, he summarized statistics regarding 2025 leads, including that there was a 29.6% closure ratio on 162 events booked. Mr. Poppell broke down sales production by year, including bookings all the way through 2037, which aligns with the goal of completing bookings further in advance and in strategic ways. He stated that the Convention Center team has learned from mistakes and is working through quarterly and monthly meetings to focus on strategy and booking pace.

Mr. Poppell next shared data from surveys, including the meeting planners survey, the attendee survey, and website inquiries. Most scores from meeting planners were 100% (meaning responders chose "Good", "Very Good," or "Excellent"), but for the categories of Event Contract (92%), Sustainability Practices (93%), and Safety (93%) these scores included lower rankings. The Board was concerned about not getting a 100% score on Safety and Mr. Makhlouf asked what safety concerns there were. Mr. Poppell and Mr. Meyer spoke about this speculating that it may be connected to parking but that there were new questions added to the survey to try to find out more. Mr. Obi asked about ratings, including possible ways to consider loyalty by following up with those who give higher scores and might become possible advocates for the venue. He and Mr. Poppell discussed this idea.

Finally, Mr. Poppell summarized the pace report, which showed the Hilton trending differently than the city and the Convention Center, which, he stated, Mr. Trabulsi will speak to in the Hilton Summary. Mr. Gilbert also spoke about how pace is much more volatile in later forecasts because one event can make a large difference and bookings may be done at different times for the Convention Center and the hotels.

Mr. Campo concluded the ASM and Levy presentation by sharing the progress in bookings since the last Board meeting and the $2,131,898 risk forecast related to revenue to be booked for 2026. Mr. Gilbert asked for the goals for economic impact to be treated with as deep of analysis as the financial analysis, including showing differences to budget. He also asked for more economic impact analysis about use of the new building and Atrium, especially the revenue to the County's general fund. Mr. Gilbert spoke about what the Board can and can't control, and urged the Board to focus on what it can control, such as how the Convention Center treats its customer. He stated that he thinks the Board should be proud because the staff is exceptional in the care it takes and how the Convention Center team is trusted by these event planners. Mr. Meyer agreed with Mr. Gilbert stating that CCCFDC's focus should always be economic impact. Mr. Makhlouf brought up the need to keep up with small improvements like paint touchups and other aesthetic concerns that customers notice as a way to further enhance the guest experience.

Hilton Hotel Update.

Mr. Trabulsi began by pointing out that 2025 was a sluggish year for the industry, with some skew based on market segment, and this is expected to continue in 2026. He stated that Cleveland has seen a greater decline than the US overall, which can be understood by noting that 2024 was an especially strong year. He shared that 2025 downtown Cleveland occupancy experienced a RevPAR decline of 2.6% while occupancy increased and ADR within the comparable set decreased by 4.8%.

Old Business.

No old business.

New Business.

No new business.

Executive Session.

Mr. Makhlouf asked for a motion to move to Executive Session to discuss employment and compensation of CCCFDC employees, which was made and seconded. A roll call vote was taken and unanimously approved. All non-Board members except Mr. Appelbaum and Ms. Flowers exited the meeting. At 10:16 the Board exited the Executive Session.

Return to Regular Meeting and Adjournment.

Mr. Makhlouf stated that the next regular meeting of the Board is on April 17, 2026, at 8:45 a.m. followed immediately by the Board retreat. He then stated that he is creating an ad hoc committee of Ms. Teeuwen, Ms. Berry, and Mr. Obi to review employee compensation. He also asked Mr. Appelbaum to prepare paperwork necessary to establish a permanent compensation committee. There being no other items of business, Mr. Makhlouf adjourned the January Regular Meeting at 10:18 a.m.