



MINUTES

In-person meeting at Holiday Inn Express & Suites and online via Zoom
March 5, 2024, 2:30 p.m.

Present: Jeff Suddaby, Andrew Buwalda, Chirag Patel, Steve Campbell, Steve Carr, Marisa Kapourelakos
Regrets: Scott Morrison
Staff: Kelly Haywood, Dawn Huddlestone
Guests: Lauren MacDermid, Town of Huntsville; Morgan Lonsdale, BIA; Ken Patel, HLOBARA; Halley Clover, Chamber; Barb Bloomfield and Torin Suddaby, Chamber (Zoom)

1. Welcome and agenda approval

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 p.m.

1.1. Agenda approval

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by: Marisa Kapourelakos

Seconded by: Steve Campbell

CARRIED

2. **Declaration of conflict of interest** – Chair Jeff Suddaby noted that his son, Torin Suddaby, works for the Chamber, is his son; Treasurer Andrew Buwalda noted that one of the presenters, Morgan Lonsdale, is his sister-in-law.

3. Approval of meeting minutes

Motion: To accept the minutes from the February 13, 2024 meeting as presented.

Moved by: Marisa Kapourelakos

Seconded by: Chirag Patel

CARRIED

4. Presentations

4.1. Ironman

Nick Stoehr from TriSport Events requested \$30,000 to offset costs for the 2024 Ironman 70.3 Muskoka.

Discussion: Will the funding make or break the profitability of the event? (Helps offset costs and helps longevity of the event by producing a world-class experience that showcases Huntsville.) Where are dollars allocated? (Funds requested include partial rental of Town facilities.) The Board would like to see a budget for the event. (Staff to request.)

4.2. Downtown Huntsville BIA

Morgan Lonsdale requested \$50,000 for BIA events in 2024/25.

Discussion: There is a need for shuttles between downtown and other hotels. It would also be



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helpful to provide signage with coming events to hotels (including a QR code for more info).
Closing Main Street for downtown activations helps with attracting visitors.

5. Financials

The Treasurer provided an overview of revenue and expenses to January 31, along with forecasted revenue and expenses to the end of the fiscal year (May 31).

Discussion: Some funds could be reallocated before the end of the year, for example, an update to the strategic plan or new market research. Need MOU with requirement to report back on progress for funding over a certain threshold (suggested: \$30,000) and plan for transfer of funds when specific milestones are met.

ACTION ITEMS: Staff to determine cost for engaging consultants (Floor13, Pollara) for strategic plan and market research. Staff to draft MOU re: reporting/milestones to include with partnership/sponsorship agreements in excess of \$30,000.

6. Previous business

6.1. Knights of Columbus funding

Discussion: Concerns with team/parent behaviour at hotels. Suggest sending an awareness letter re: conduct.

Motion: *To provide the Knights of Columbus \$5,000 for its annual hockey tournament.*

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Steve Campbell

DEFEATED

6.2. Huntsville Festival of the Arts funding

6.3. Huntsville Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce funding

The Chair noted that with the business plan and 2024/25 budget pending approval, HfA and Chamber funding will be discussed at the next meeting along with BIA funding.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to meet with partners regarding flexibility in their funding asks as the total amount for all three exceeds what is currently in the draft budget and return with solutions.

7. TPA update

The ED provided an overview of the solicitor's comments regarding the TPA.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to forward the TPA to Town staff for final comment.

Discussion: Town has spent a significant amount of taxpayer money on tourism in the past (pre-MAT) including funding for the Chamber and BIA, which are funds no longer being allocated outside



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of the MAT. The MAT is also administered using MAT funds, with no additional contribution from the Town, after with the Town can utilize the funds as it sees fit — this could be seen as the Town shirking their responsibility to improving Huntsville. See the budget principles document passed by Town council.

8. Bylaw compliance with ONCA

Staff provided an overview of bylaw changes required for ONCA compliance. Changes will need to be adopted at a future meeting and then filed by October 2024.

9. Draft budget

The Treasurer provided highlights of the draft budget. Need to itemize the marketing budget.

Discussion: Need to better promote individual local attractions for destination awareness. If HMATA doesn't invest in its own product development/tourism assets, local businesses will continue to develop them, but no one is better positioned to market Huntsville (other than MTMA with its focus on the region). Need to develop a specific marketing plan once business plan is developed, as well as focus more on marketing to conference and association business. Will also need to educate local groups about what HMATA can/will support and work with them to attract/develop shoulder-season events. Should include in agreements with partners a stipulation that HMATA can use assets from events it funds for future marketing.

ACTION ITEMS: Staff to forward MTMA and Pollara market research to Board members. A finance committee will be struck to further refine the budget before the next meeting (Andrew Buwalda, Steve Campbell, Jeff Suddaby); need a future motion to approve a standing finance committee.

10. Sponsorship formula, intake periods, and application form

The ED provided an overview of the refined formula and application form.

Motion deferred to the next meeting.

Discussion: Specify shoulder-season dates. Set annual intake period – May/June for 2024/25 and Jan 15-Mar 15 for future years.

ACTION ITEMS: Staff to develop a standard comparison set for an annual average daily rate (ADR) for use in the formula.



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11. ED report

- 11.1. Business plan
The ED presented highlights of draft business plan updates. The final plan will be motioned at the next meeting.
- 11.2. Delegation proposals (BreakThru Dance)
Board has declined to hear a presentation from this group as the funding is related to the facility rather than tourism. Recommend they approach Town for funding assistance.
- 11.3. Presentation on behalf of YMCA Simcoe Muskoka job fair (\$5,000 ask)
Discussion: Important to support hiring year-round. In future, this could be an in-kind donation (e.g. HMATA provides marketing support).
Motion: To provide \$5,000 to YMCA Simcoe Muskoka for its annual job fair on April 4, 2024.
Moved by: Steve Carr
Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda
CARRIED
- 11.4. Eclipse update (EOI/Deerhurst update)
Staff will publish a Request for Expressions of Interest to determine if there are property owners/businesses that would like to host and/or operate Eclipse.
- 11.5. Logo review (branded items)
The ED presented a sticker design for consideration using the community brand (with the addition of the word 'Explore'), which could also be used as HMATA's tourism brand. To be discussed further at a future meeting.

12. HLOBARA election process – Jeff Suddaby

Marisa Kapourelakos will be resigning from the Board at the end of March. HLOBARA will need to appoint a replacement from within their membership (Huntsville-based businesses only).

13. Closed session

Motion: To enter closed session at 3:37 p.m.
Moved by: Andrew Buwalda



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Seconded by: Marisa Kapourelakos
CARRIED

Motion: To leave closed session.

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda
CARRIED

14. Next meetings and adjournment

14.1. Next meetings:

- Tuesday, March 26 at 2:30 p.m., HfA Studio (58 Main St E – entrance off Dara Howell Way across from River Mill Park)
- Tuesday, April 16 at 2:30 p.m., Huntsville Curling Club (6 Veterans Way, 2nd floor lounge)

14.2. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda
CARRIED