

Sanford Center Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: April 23, 2025

Time: 7:00 AM

Location: City Hall - Conference Room, 317 4th Street NW

Attendees: Andra Vaughn, Jorge Prince, Eric Tweten, Britt Lauritsen, Brady Laudon, Audrey Thayer, Tracy Pogue, Kayla Winkler, Rich Spiczka, Donna Coe

Absent – Steve Johnson, Bobby Anderson

1. Call to Order

- **Time:** 7:00am
- **Called by:** Mayor Jorge Prince

2. Approval of Amended Agenda

- A motion was made to add an agenda item for a discussion on the performance and future mission of the committee. This item replaces subcommittee reports which had no updates.
- **Seconded by:** Audrey
- **Decision:** Approved

3. Approval of Minutes

- **Date of Previous Meeting:** February 26, 2025
 - **Edit spelling of Audra V in minutes**
 - **Attendance needs to be added**
- **Motion to approve minutes TABLED (put on May's Agenda)**
 - **Motion by:** AV
 - **Seconded by:** BL
 - **Decision:** Approved

4. Monthly Financials

- **Financials Reviewed:** January & February 2025 Financials
- **Discussion Points:** the financial report was reviewed by this committee

5. Subcommittee Reports – replaced- “Performance of this committee”

1. **Agenda Modification**: An item regarding the performance and future mission of the committee was added to the agenda, replacing subcommittee reports, due to the subcommittees not meeting.
2. **Reflection on Previous Year**: Members expressed concerns about the lack of progress and effectiveness in the previous year, suggesting that the committee lost momentum, particularly due to challenges faced by the Sanford Center.
3. **Control and Initiative**: There were discussions about the need for the committee to take more control over its functions and not solely defer to ASM (the management company). This included taking charge of committees, generating initiatives, and actively participating in meetings.
4. **Collaboration with Visit Bemidji**: Members emphasized the importance of more collaboration with Visit Bemidji to land conferences and events, suggesting that they should have a more significant role in driving initiatives rather than waiting for ASM to take the lead.
5. **Concerns about staffing and sales**: There were discussions about the need for a strategic sales approach at the Sanford Center. Members highlighted the promotion of the venue and the need for a dedicated sales representative.
6. **Financial Overview**: The financials showed a net income loss, with an estimate of \$190,000 projected loss for the year. Concerns were raised about staffing costs and the overall financial management of the center.
7. **Action Plan for Strategic Planning**: Members agreed on the necessity of developing a strategic plan for the Sanford Center, involving collaboration with various stakeholders, including the city council, to address ongoing issues and optimize operations.
8. **Future Workshops**: A proposal for a two-hour workshop meeting was agreed upon to discuss the committee's direction and objectives in detail, allowing for candid conversations without ASM staff present.
9. **Meeting Location**: It was decided to return to City Hall for future meetings to ensure proper access and support for the committee's activities.
10. **Final Thoughts**. Overall, the meeting focused on addressing past inefficiencies, enhancing collaboration, and establishing a clearer direction for the committee moving forward.

Misc Notes

- World Juniors announcement received 40,000 views
- Another meeting to discuss Strategic Plan ideas to present to City Council
- A two-hour work session is something we need to discuss Strategic Plan ideas
- City Manager will send out Doodle Poll to all of us and retrieve data from ASM

6. General Manager Report – written report provided

7. Meeting Location

- **Discussion Points:** moving back to City Hall for all Sanford Center Advisory Board meetings

8. Adjournment

- **Time:** 8:03
- **Motion by:** Brady Laudon
- **Seconded by:** Eric Tweten
- **Decision:** Approved