

Sanford Center Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Time: 7:02 AM

Location: Bemidji City Hall

Chair: Mayor Jorge Prince

1. Call to Order

- Meeting was called to order at **7:02 AM** by Chair **Mayor Jorge Prince**.
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2. Attendance & Quorum

Board Members Present:

- Jorge Prince
- Audrey Thayer
- Audra Vaughn
- Britt Lauritsen
- Tracy Pogue

Board Members Absent:

- Eric Tweten
- Brady Laudon
- Kayla Winkler
- Steve Johnson
- Donna Coe

Guests:

- Bobby Anderson – General Manager, Sanford Center
- Nate A. – Sanford Center Staff

Quorum: Achieved with 5 of 9 voting members present (excluding non-voting members).

3. Approval of Agenda

- **Motion to approve:** Audra Vaughn
 - **Second:** Britt Lauritsen
 - **Vote:** Unanimous approval
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4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2025 Minutes

- Correction to name spelling noted by Audrey Thayer
- **Motion to approve with correction:** Audrey Thayer
- **Second:** Britt Lauritsen
- **Vote:** Unanimous approval

April 23, 2025 Minutes

- Informal discussion occurred due to lack of quorum
 - **Motion to approve summary:** Audrey Thayer
 - **Second:** Audra Vaughn
 - **Vote:** Unanimous approval
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5. Financial Report

Presented by: Bobby Anderson, GM

- Revenues were under budget but balanced by effective cost control
 - March and April financials reviewed
 - Events performed in line with projections
 - **World Juniors** expected to significantly improve year-end revenue outlook
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6. Board Work Session Planning

- Board discussed the need for a strategic work session to clarify mission and direction
 - Confusion during previous polling efforts led to lack of quorum at the last scheduled meeting
 - Tentative date selected: **Friday, July 11 at 7:00 AM**
 - **Rich Spiczka** will follow up with the full board to confirm attendance and finalize the date
 - An agenda will be created once the date is confirmed
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7. Subcommittee Reports

Marketing Committee

- Members: Mark Ritchie, Kev Jackson, Lexi (Sanford Center), BSU Intern
- Guest invited: Brian Bissonette (absent)
- Key topics discussed:
 - Improving the Sanford Center's public image
 - Creating a comprehensive 5-year marketing strategy
 - Emphasizing revenue-generating convention bookings over large concerts
 - Strategies to increase BSU hockey attendance (e.g., family nights, dollar dogs)
 - Need for collaboration with **Visit Bemidji** to boost overnight stays and event traffic
 - Identified challenges: limited advertising budget (\$2,000) and lack of a standing marketing plan

Finance & Operations Committees

- **Finance Committee:** Inactive due to vacancy; promising Finance Director candidate identified
- **Operations Committee:** Has not met due to demands related to storm response

8. General Manager Report

Storm Response & Damage Summary

- Sanford Center activated as emergency shelter following regional storm event
- Damage included:
 - Major roof failure and water intrusion
 - Damaged terrazzo flooring, elevators, suites, BSU wing, and admin offices
 - Concourse and club-level areas affected
- Immediate mitigation (drying, sealing, repairs) helped limit long-term structural and financial damage
- Partnerships with vendors (ServPro, Sunbelt, Kraus-Anderson) were discussed as business's all trying to assist as best they can in these trying times post storm
- Insurance trust (League of MN Cities) is working closely with facility leadership on claims
- ASM's national reach and vendor leverage provided critical recovery resources

Operational Recovery

- Venue resumed hosting events (e.g., wedding booked for coming weekend)
- Repairs to continue through summer in phased approach
- Community use during crisis boosted public perception and demonstrated the facility's regional importance

Staff Recognition

- **Britt Lauritsen** shared appreciation from BSU Athletics
 - Reported that Associate AD Tom Serratore commended Bobby Anderson and his team for their fast, effective response during the crisis
 - Staff credited for preserving key BSU hockey areas and showing outstanding commitment under pressure
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9. Strategic Discussion

- Explored opportunities to pursue bonding or state support for infrastructure improvements:
 - Emergency generator capacity
 - Roof reinforcement
 - Storm shelter certification
 - Emphasis on formalizing collaboration with **Visit Bemidji** to align tourism and event goals
 - Agreed that major events improve image, but convention business is the financial foundation
 - Discussion supported holding regular joint meetings with tourism stakeholders
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10. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn:** Audrey Thayer
 - **Second:** Audra Vaughn
 - **Vote:** Unanimous approval
 - Meeting adjourned at approximately **8:50 AM**
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Minutes prepared by: Tracy Pogue