

Meeting Minutes

Meeting details:

Meeting: Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission Meeting
Date: February 5, 2025
Time: 12:30pm - 2:30 pm
Place: Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81411140803>

Commissioners present:

Chair Karis Stoudamire-Phillips, Damien Hall, Deidra-Krys-Rusoff, Dañel Malán-González, Deanna Palm and David Penilton

Commissioners excused:

Chris Oxley

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Stoudamire-Phillips called the meeting to order at 12:31pm

Public Communication

None

Commission / Council Liaison Communication

Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal: The Supportive Housing measure will likely be added to the November ballot, Solid Waste is working on the Regional Solid Waste Plan, Venues continue their work on the P5 and Expo Future projects. We continue to track Federal actions around funding and its effects on Metro and our region. Council remains united around sanctuary laws and will not allow our venues to be used for any kind of detention

General Manager Communications

Craig Stroud reported that venues budget process continues, and the full budgets will come to MERC in March for review and approval. Expo Future Phase 3 major activities include beginning a cultural resources assessment of Expo, seek funding for and pursue additional study and analysis of Hall A, propose short-term investments in sports equipment for Halls D and E, and develop criteria for solicitation of a public-private partnership. I will be attending a Public Private Partnership conference this April.

Finance Update

Ashley Sloan provided venue overviews

Attachment: [MERC Finance Report](#)

Commissioner Penilton: have there been any budget adjustments related to marketing and sales expense?

Wallace: OCC is not planning to reduce any sales and marketing expenditures as they are fully deployed to help bring in business. We will see cost savings in personnel, materials, and services

Commissioner Kryz-Rusoff: highlighted the 50,000 in reserves is troubling and leadership is aware and continues to address

Venue Business Reports

Portland Expo Center

Matthew Rotchford provided event highlights, EDI training in partnership with Travel Portland, food and beverage upgrades with Levy partners, and client appreciation. Metro Parks was thanked for the recent transfer of a snow removal vehicle for Expo use

Oregon Convention Center

Cindy Wallace provided updates on the PCMA conference, recent sustainability award, dynamic pricing model, recent bookings, and the Space to Grow program launch

Commissioner Penilton: can you speak to the impact of the recently booked Omega Psi Phi International Leadership Conference in 2029?

Wallace: the estimated attendance will be 1000 people, and we will follow up with the predicted economic impact

Commissioner Penilton: are any of the 17 business leads from the PCMA conference participating on the Travel Portland advisory board?

Wallace: I am not sure but can connect with Travel Portland for a complete list

Chair Stoudamire-Phillips: The Omega Psi Phi Fraternity is looking for partnership with our City, State, and local organizations along with corporate support. I see this as growth for our city and a great opportunity and endorsement

Portland's 5 Centers for the Arts

Brian Wilson provided staffing updates, event highlights, advisory committee, and workgroup updates

Commissioner Malán-González: suggested offering community space as another source of income for educational programming during the day

Consent Agenda

- **Consideration of the January 8, 2025, MERC Meeting Minutes**
This item was approved.

Attachment: [MERC meeting minutes](#)

Action Agenda

- **Resolution 25-03 For the purpose of approving rental rates at Portland's Centers for the Arts (Portland's) for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and Fiscal Year 2026-2027.**

Rachael Lembo, (she/her) Deputy Director Portland's Centers for the Arts

Attachments: [Resolution 25-03](#)

[Resolution 25-03 Staff Report](#)

[Resolution 25-03 Attachment A FY25-26 rates](#)

[Resolution 25-03 Attachment A FY26-27 rates](#)

Commissioner Kryz-Rusoff: voiced support of the proposed increases; appreciates the challenges for the nonprofit and resident companies but highlights our dire situation

Councilor Rosenthal: will the proposed 3% be fixed in the event of escalating inflation?

Lembo: it is our intent to stick to the 3% increases over the next 2 years. MERC does have the ability to approve different rates however these rental rates are about 10% of our operating revenue, so this is not the only area we can adjust if we need to respond to cost increases

Chair Stoudamire-Phillips called for a vote on Resolution No. 25-03. It passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Palm, seconded by Commissioner Hall, that this item be adopted. The motion passed by the following vote:

Aye: 6 Stoudamire-Phillips, Hall, Kryz-Rusoff, Malán-González, Palm and Penilton

Presentation: External Audit Report

Brian Evans, (he/him) Metro Auditor

Caleb Ford, (he/him) Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Ashley Osten, (she/her) Partner, Moss Adams

Commissioner Kryz-Rusoff: was there anything directly related to MERC that we should note?

Osten: There were no MERC specific recommendations noted

Councilor Rosenthal: thanked Auditor Evans and team for such a clear presentation

Adjourn

There being no further business, Chair Stoudamire Phillips adjourned the meeting at 1:31 p.m.

- *Minutes submitted by Amy Nelson*