



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

Convention and Visitors Advisory Board

Monday, August 25, 2025

12:00 PM

Regular

Walton Building, 300 S.

Providence Road

I. CALL TO ORDER

Richard Walls, Board Chairman, called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL & INTRODUCTIONS

Also present City Staff Amy Schneider, Julie Ausmus and Danielle Vardeleon.

Present: 11 - Barth Burgin, Heather Hargrove, Melody Marcks, Aric Jarvis, Scott Cristal, Donald Laird, Richard Walls, Raman Puri, Kristopher Kunz, Jamie Varvaro and Lori Lammers

Excused: 1 - Rusty Strodtman

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as is.

Scott Cristal made a motion, Kris Kunz seconded, motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes were approved as written.

Aric Jarvis made a motion, Jamie Varvaro seconded, motion passed.

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V. OLD BUSINESS

None to discuss.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Update on the FY2026 City Budget

Jim McDonald, Assistant Finance Director, provided an overview of the upcoming FY 2026 budget. Public hearings are scheduled for September 2 and September 18, with a Council vote to follow the second hearing.

The significant changes to the CVB budget were New Decision Items (NDIs) and included \$12,000 for new lobby furniture and \$45,000 for new special event software (Eproval). Additional funds were requested to host the 2025 NCAA Division 1 Men's and Women's Cross Country National Championships. The CVB will provide cash up front and be reimbursed for event expenses, with reimbursement expected in January. The event will also receive \$30,000 in Tourism Development funds.

Hotel tax revenues for FY 2025 increased by just under 5%, reaching a record high of slightly more than \$5 million. Expenses rose 11.6% in 2025, largely due to increased materials and supplies costs. Overall, the forecast for the CVB remains positive.

The City is required to maintain reserves equal to 20% of current year expenditures for emergencies. 2023: \$1.4 million; 2024 \$1.5 and projected 2025: \$1.7 million. Reserve growth indicates the fund is in a strong financial position. Restricted cash continues to grow, totaling \$7.4 million as of mid-August, with \$5 million from tourism revenues and \$2 million allocated for the airport.

VII. REPORTS

CVB August Staff Report & Updates

CoMo Restaurant Week was held July 25 - August 3 and was considered a success. Social media activity generated approximately 4,400 website visits and responses. Google ads achieved a 42% conversion rate with nearly 24,000 clicks. The event also earned media coverage from KOMU, St. Louis Magazine, COMO Magazine, and numerous Facebook and Instagram channels. Reports indicated that the event helped generate business during an otherwise slow season. Challenges included extreme heat and unexpected downtown street closures caused by resurfacing projects. The next CoMo Restaurant Week is scheduled for January 30 - February 8, 2026.

The CVB Sales Team has launched a Business Development application under the Tourism Development Community Sponsorship Fund. This initiative is designed to support new convention and meeting business in Columbia. More than five applications have been submitted, with one sponsorship already accepted.

Adam Ziervogel will be on paternity leave next month.

The CVB is partnering with the MU Thompson Center to undergo Autism-Friendly training. The training takes approximately 1-2 hours and is offered at no cost. The CVB's goal is to expand participation by working with other City departments and community partners to make Columbia more inclusive.

Report from The District

Aric Jarvis will provide updates on behalf of the District during the fall semester, as Nickie Davis will be teaching an adjunct class at the University during Board meeting times.

Currently, The District is focusing on downtown safety. Seminars will be held for businesses on addressing safety concerns and managing potential incidents.

At the Mayor's request, a pilot program for pedestrian-only streets in the downtown area is being planned for 2026. Columbia Police Department staffing is now near full capacity, enabling increased enforcement downtown, particularly during overnight hours and weekend. The District is working closely with CPD to further improve safety.

Report from the Boone County Commission

Boone County Commissioner, Justin Aldred, was unable to attend and provide a report.

VIII. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF

There were none.

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE

September 29, 2025

X. ADJOURNMENT

Members of the public may attend any open meeting. For requests for accommodations related to disability, please call 573.874.CITY (2489) or email CITY@CoMo.gov. In order to assist staff in making the appropriate arrangements for your accommodation, please make your request as far in advance of the posted meeting date as possible.

USB DRIVES PROHIBITED: A speaker who desires to display a presentation must upload the presentation, in advance, to the city network using an upload portal. To upload your files and learn more, visit CoMo.gov/upload.