

LANSING ENTERTAINMENT & PUBLIC FACILITIES AUTHORITY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

April 28th, 2026

At 8:04am, Chairperson Maureen McNulty-Saxton called the LEPFA Board of Commissioners to order in the Governor's Room located at the Lansing Center; 333 East Michigan Avenue; Lansing, Michigan 48933.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Kenric Hall, Dustin Howard, Maureen McNulty-Saxton, Charles Mickens, Tracie Kent

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Paul Collins, Lolo Robison, Danielle Lenz, Patrick Spyke, Deyanira Nevarez (EO), Crystal Thomas (EO), Rawley Van Fossen (EO)

OTHERS PRESENT: Tony Watson, Emily Shaull, Kirby Doidge, Mindy Biladeau, Ryan Tess, Paul Ntoko, John Page, Sherrie Boak City of Lansing, Julie Pingston Choose Lansing, Jack Alexander, Elizabeth Krochmalny

Chair McNulty-Saxton called the LEPFA Board meeting to start at 8:05 A.M.

Paul Collins arrived at 8:07am.

III. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AGENDA:

There were no changes to the agenda.

MOTION: Commissioner Hall SECOND: Commissioner Howard MOTIONED CARRIED

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A) Julie Pingston - Choose Lansing's CEO/President

- a. She gave an update for their organization. Their third quarter ended, and they're now moving into the fourth quarter.
- b. In January, they were up in occupancy for hotel guest rooms by 6%, but they lost it all and were flat in March. Now their hotel occupancy is 50.5%, which is year over year up above 1.5%. A lot of January movement was because of the events at the Lansing Center, a catalyst for their growth.
- c. The average daily rate for hotel rooms is \$103, which is consistent for this time of year. This weekend is the MSU graduation, their most lucrative weekend. The hotels, with a likely sell-out situation, will be able to get the rate where they want it to be.
- d. Overall demand is up 1.8% for the year. Those numbers aren't ideal for Julie who wants more growth, but she compared it to statewide averages in Michigan and other destinations. It is still a bit ahead of most places, other than Detroit, thanks to their city conventions, Red Wings hockey, and Tigers baseball.
- e. She hopes that the Spartan football team will play better and draw in more fans this year but is also hopeful because their last game is now guaranteed to stay in Spartan Stadium, rather than where it has been—Detroit for the last couple years. Even if the team isn't doing well at the end of the season, it'll still bring their industry a lift on that weekend in November.
- f. Overall, they are in a good spot and feel like the rest of the year will be headed in the right direction. They have lots of meetings, conventions, amateur sporting events, and other events in the future.

Question from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton: Could Julie talk about the campaign for an increase in the hotel/motel tax and what it could mean for LEPFA, if it's not too early to discuss?

Julie stated that talking about the campaign now isn't too early because they are "in the thick of it". A proposal will be on the August ballot in Ingham County to raise the occupancy tax from 5% to 8%. The commissioners are looking to use that 3% as transformational money.

Question from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton: What could that money be pointed to to really make change and bring more visitors to the community?

The fairgrounds want a grandstand. Commissioners and others that Julie has spoken to think

that it should go to the Lansing Center and Jackson Field, to tackle the big maintenance issues, bring people to the community, and provide a transformational posture. This must pass the ballot proposal, and it did not pass two years ago. Grand Rapids passed their own similar proposal two and a half years ago, but not by a lot. The commissioners want the fair to get money as well, but they will have to decide soon who gets it because the fair constituency gets out and votes. Also, since it is in August, there will be a lot of absentee voting, so the ballot starts going out in late June. The Choose Lansing board is going to finalize their involvement in this situation moving forward and how their advocacy will work.

Question from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton: Is this being spearheaded by the city? Julie confirmed that it was the county instead.

Question from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton: Does Julie know if a PR firm or any kind of messaging campaign will take place for this?

Julie said that that's what Choose Lansing is looking into right now. She also knows that the city is planning to send out a postcard to all voters with facts about the ballot proposal and selling the Lansing Shuffle. The clerk has stated that when the absentee ballots go out, he will provide a non-partisan oriented stance of information that goes with the ballot.

Question from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton: Does Julie know if Ingham County will do anything like that for all their voters?

Julie said she doubts it because they didn't do it last time. She also mentioned that the city's language regarding the ballot proposal is a lot better now, last time starting with "Do you support a tax increase?" Rather, the focus will first be on what the funds provide—to improve the entertainment and convention facilities, to modernize fairgrounds, and to promote the arts, which is what the Public Act calls them. Then, at the bottom, it will say, "would you support then the tax on visitors going from 5% to 8%?"

Julie also commented on how it will be a busy election year. In Ingham County, the Democratic constituency is fighting to go on the November ballot against the Republican. But the county is very Democratic, so August will determine who is elected. It will have a good turnout, and other issues on the ballot will contribute to that as well.

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

1. March 24 Board Meeting

Motion to approve the previous minutes as presented

MOTION: Commissioner Hall **SECOND:** Commissioner Mickens **MOTIONED CARRIED**

VI. REPORTS

A) Chairperson – Maureen McNulty-Saxton

- a) It has been a relatively quiet period since their last board meeting. The executive committee had interesting meetings, and Maureen got caught up with the finance and personal committees. She does not have additional information to share other than what the individual committee reports will say on their own.

B) Legends Global Report – General Manager / Regional VP

- a) He introduced John Page, the new regional Vice President from Legends Global, who is now overseeing the Lansing properties as of last month. He asked him to make any quick comments, if he wished.
 - i. John Page stated that he is honored to be here and to work with Tony and the LEPFA board. In the seven weeks he's been in the position, he has visited Lansing twice and is amazed by the hospitality within the community and their culture of service. He is excited for the opportunity to partner with, be part of this community, help elevate the convention and meeting destination growth, and to work back with their partners. He also mentioned that they'd hear from the DMO and get used to seeing him often.
- b) The Lansing Center is still searching for a sous chef. They had an interview a couple of weeks ago, but the interviewee had accepted another offer.
- c) The Lansing Center is also looking for a current employee to assume the assistant general manager role. The position was posted and is now closed.
- d) He thanked the Lansing Center and Groesbeck staff for their hard work over the past busy couple of months. He asked the board to thank the staff if they saw them.
- e) Sales has brought in new business with the promotional programs that they put in place last December. They've already signed a few contracts.
- f) They also initiated the In the Moment surveys on March 1st and the new client surveys in the middle of March. Only 6-7 have been received so far, so the scores are low right now. But they expect them to move up, and the sales report will show how. They are hoping that it will assist them in seeing where there are the most issues, where they need improvement, and where they're doing great.

- g) The food and beverage team is diligently working on new menu items for the Lansing Center and Groesbeck Golf Course. They hope it will add better options and provide better overall experience. They've also received some new equipment for their buffet displays, with new chafing dishes, and other similar items.
 - h) New equipment will be coming soon to elevate the Lansing Center's look. They are looking at options for carpeting in the banquet rooms, the second level hallway, and the 200 meeting rooms. They're also looking into additional updates, like painting and lighting. Once they get the shipping notice on the second level hallway and meeting rooms carpeting, they'll get the installation scheduled, and the second floor will be fully updated with new carpet and paint. They are also looking into renovating the Administration Office space. All of this will depend on how far the money from Legends Global will be able to go. They also are looking to get the carpeting of the banquet rooms taken care of quickly.
- C) Finance Committee – Paul Collins & Kirby Doidge**
- a) **Paul Collins**
 - i. The Finance Committee met on Thursday, April 23rd and discussed financials and other items. He then turned it over to Kirby.
 - b) **Kirby Doidge**
 - i. **March Financials**
 - 1. **Lansing Center**
 - a. **Revenue**
 - i. The Center brought in \$1,089,000, which is great because the budget was \$758,000 for a positive month of \$330,000.
 - 1. They are up in rental \$15,000 for March and \$33,000 year-to-date. Food and beverage was \$601,000, which beat the budget by \$204,000. That is a record for the center for March and brings it into the top 10 for their months. It puts them ahead of the budget for March by \$200,000 and year-to-date by \$242,000.
 - 2. Equipment rental brought in \$200,000 for \$84,000 over the anticipated budget and \$156,000 year-to-date.
 - 3. The smaller lines are ahead for the month and year-to-date, bringing the total revenue over the anticipated budget by \$304,000 for year-to-date. They will try to hang on to the positive variance to make sure they meet the overall budget; it will be tight but doable.
 - ii. Compared to the previous year, they are up \$1.3 million.
 - b. **Expenses**
 - i. Overall, they are up \$342,000.
 - 1. Salary wages went up due to the increase in hourly staff at events. They are still under year-to-date by \$47,000. This also includes the retro pay for the IATSE contract.
 - 2. Utilities are over budget by \$26,000 and year-to-date \$97,000 over. The consistent cold weather contributed to this increase.
 - 3. Events, which are directly tied to revenue, was over the budget of \$85,000 by \$22,000 and year-to-date by \$68,000. This is an okay overage since it's tied to revenue.
 - 4. Food and beverage was over budget by \$237,000, but still under by \$117,000. Overall, it was over by \$64,000, but year-to-date, was still under by \$165,000.
 - ii. After all non-operating expenses, they are still beating the anticipated budget by \$120,000, which is the first time this year that the Lansing Center is in the positive.
 - 2. **Groesbeck Golf Course**
 - 3. **Revenue**
 - a. They did not end up having carts in time for the month of March, even though it was budgeted. They brought in \$8,200 in greens fees, which beat the anticipated budget by \$3,200. Year-to-date, in cart rentals, they are still up \$27,000, and, in greens fees, they are up by \$60,000.

- b. They are behind in season passes and sponsorship, which they knew would happen.
- c. For the month, they brought in \$9,900, which was under by \$1,300, due to the cart rental. Year-to-date revenue is still up by \$71,000. He believes it will be a continued record fall, and the centennial is contributing to it.

4. Expenses

- a. Everything is fairly under the anticipated budget, apart from maintenance of equipment and supplies. The expenses that were known about are hitting now, so that line is over budget. There will be more to come for that as well, since pesticide and related items will be in the April financials.
- b. Salaries and wages were under, but he had anticipated having more staff opening the course. Year-to-date, they are still over by 16,000.
- c. Total operating was under the anticipated operating budget of \$32,000, but now, year-to-date, they are under \$890.
- d. Year-to-date, excess revenue over expenses is \$72,000 ahead of the anticipated budget, which always gets reinvested back into the course.
- e. Compared to the previous year, they are up \$76,000 in revenue but are also up close to \$100,000 in expenses. A lot of that is the professional services, which are part of the Legends Global contract.

5. Jackson Field

a. Expenses

- i. There will be some major expenses for HVAC since they were sitting dormant. Turning them back on with their age has caused some issues. They met with HVAC either a couple weeks or months ago to figure out how to mitigate the larger expenses, and they will be utilizing the appropriation that the city provides of \$767,006. They will utilize that whole subsidy for capital projects, whether it's in salaries and wages or additional supplies over there.
 - 1. After adding in operating and non-operating expenses, there is \$153,000 left for capital projects, which is over the anticipated budget by \$111,000. That is mostly due to the Lansing Center elevator that had to be fixed at the beginning of this year.

ii. Elevator Façade Upgrade

- 1. Kirby forgot to bring to the finance committee the elevator façade upgrade, an update regarding a project that was already approved. Adding in the flooring was originally missed, and the increase for that is \$31,200. If the board still wanted to approve this update, they could.

Question from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton: Is it only for the floor?

Ryan clarified that it is for the green granite tiles around the front of the elevator. They're updating it because they're redoing everything already and looking at a more sleek, single 5x10 tile. It'll be done for all three floor elevators as well.

Motion to approve the March financial reports as presented

MOTION: Commissioner Howard SECOND: Commissioner Kent MOTIONED CARRIED

D) Personnel Committee – Dustin Howard

- a) The committee met on April 9th. A lot of what they spoke about was already covered. The biggest item was about John Page coming. They also discussed the assistant general manager and sous chef positions and wrapped up making sure that the IATSE contracts were cleaned up.

E) Strategic Planning Committee- Charles Mickens

- a) Commissioner Mickens was unable to attend, so Tony confirmed that all the committee discussed was already covered as well.

F) Director /Staff Report

a) Kristy Doak, Director of Sales & Service

- i. On vacation. Did not attend.

b) Paul Ntoko, Director of Foodservice

i. Lansing Center

- 1. March was a very good start to the spring conference season. He hasn't seen numbers like that since last September. It unfortunately won't be repeated in April because of spring break.

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- ii. **Groesbeck Golf Course**
 - 1. There is strong movement for the start of the season.
 - 2. Most of the leagues started this week, and the rest should be starting at the end of this week or next week. Some are ready to go live on May 9th.
 - 3. They also made changes to league down times. What used to be called “the senior league” ran from 10am-1pm on Monday-Thursday. Now it opened up so that anyone who’s available can come and take advantage of those spots.
 - 4. Another part of the other promotion, made last year to fill in the gaps, was changing the 1pm-3pm to 11am-3pm. It’ll help them capture some of the food better.
 - 5. Also, the teams are doing three things to celebrate the centennial this year.
 - iii. **Paul’s departure**
 - 1. Paul extended his heartfelt gratitude to the board for all their support and encouragement over the last many years—“through some bright days as well as some not so bright days.” He thanked them all for all their support, all teams and the organization.
 - c) **Ryan Tess, Director of Operations**
 - i. He was on vacation last month.
 - ii. **Jackson Field**
 - 1. They currently are working with the city of Lansing for future capital planning, especially for the stadium and its current large expenses.
 - 2. Currently, there is some pooling in the center field due to the rain. They’re working with the city to scope out the drain tile to the city drain and make sure that nothing’s collapsed or if there is a block in the shore. In addition to the sonar done on the field, it will show them if there’s standing water underneath the grass as well. Once they receive all the data, they can pinpoint with six inches where something has collapsed.
 - 3. The roof leaks are continuing as well. Ryan got approval from the building code department to install fire-rated PVC ceiling tiles. They’re waiting for a big enough quantity so that way when they fix a suite, it’s not patchy and different.
 - a. Right now, with the normal drywall style tile, they saturate when they collapse, which is a safety issue. If it’s raining during a game, it could fall and hit customers on the head.
 - b. The PVC tile will maintain its shape, and each time it rains, it can just be cleaned rather than replaced each time until they can find the roof leaks. The tiles will be more expensive at first, but they save more money in the long run.
 - iii. **Groesbeck Golf Course**
 - 1. The turf is thriving. Before the centennial kickoff, they painted the clubhouse, replaced the blinds, and spruced it up. They did not get the flooring in time with the city approval, but they were still able to update the space a lot.
 - iv. **Lansing Center**
 - 1. The internet group sales are continuing to do well. He noticed in the last meeting minutes that there were some questions about the internet. Some of the complaints are about cost. Most complaints come from clients who have free internet in their contract, which is a slower speed than if they were purchasing. Ryan was concerned when the center initially offered the free two-hour window with purchase. He feared that if the free window was slow, then they’d be hesitant to buy internet again. But clients are still purchasing internet.
 - 2. Ryan appreciated not dealing with complaints about internet mistakes as much anymore but more budget issues instead. He feels that there is more discussion than complaining. They are looking into enhancing and involving the internet more in sales to build a better deal for clients overall.
 - 3. The IATSE contract is doing well.
 - 4. He is still waiting on samples and colors for the elevator façades. Either way, it’ll be a more expensive giant tile.
- Question from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton:** Hadn’t Tony mentioned new carpeting that’s been ordered for the banquet rooms?
Ryan clarified that it’s not here yet, but they picked it out. It’ll be a drastic difference—a fancier design. They must think about how many tiles repeating they want. Upstairs and in the ballrooms currently, it’s a one-tile repeat, which looks like a crazy pattern and makes the lines really stand out. They don’t want to go past four tiles per pattern because they need to keep replacement tiles in stock.

The samples they have gotten are not ideal. Ryan asked to see 4-5 more options, and a lot of what they're seeing are more of a battleship gray or show a lot of coffee and such. He says he is better at picking material and doesn't really pick colors, so he leaves that choice to others. He will advise on material that lasts a long time. He also advises that they pick a color that pops.

Question from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton: Once they select an option, will the installation happen fast?

Ryan says it'll depend on how custom they get. A lot of the samples they've received are custom coloring, which takes longer to manufacture. That's why he recommends not going past a two-tile repeat because, even with replacements, oftentimes, someone misorients it or takes a tile out of the wrong pile. While it can make the room fancier to do more tiles per repeat, it's probably not worth the effort, cost, or back stock supplying to maintain. He wishes they had more money to do a complete overhaul, but they cannot unless the city contributes more. They'd like to repaint the whole room, but the lighting was more expensive than they thought. It was just replacing fixtures and adding amenities. They can add some ambiance, but the 70-foot chandeliers cannot be replaced.

Question from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton: Will this be done in 2026?

Tony says that they are required to spend the money from Legends Global on it this year. Ryan said that with other items that have been approved, there's push to have it done prior to July 1st. Also, right now, installation won't affect customers because they can do it overnight. Overall, there will be good changes in the Lansing Center over the next few months.

d) Mindy Biladeau, Director of Marketing & Special Events

i. Groesbeck Golf Course

1. As Kirby alluded to, marketing is in full swing at Groesbeck for the centennial season, which is an amazing milestone, especially for a community course. Some attended on April 15th for the season kickoff and flag raising. It was a wonderful event, and the rain missed them. It was also super well attended by the media. Tim Stout served as the MC with WILX, many dignitaries and special guests attended, and they had Lynn Jansen, former PGA Tour Pro who grew up in Lansing and led the Michigan State golf team to their first championship. He won so many PGA championships. Burton Smith attended as well and still lives in Lansing. He won many championships at Groesbeck, went on to be a golf trailblazer, and broke the color barrier in the Ivy League at Princeton, leading them to two championships. Both Burton and Lynn teed off with the mayor.
2. Earned Media for the season is going well. The total mentions, as of April 23rd since coverage is still going, are 64 with a total range of 209 million and a total publicity value of over \$38,000. It even made some in Mobile, Alabama and Peoria, Illinois.
3. The ROI for the 1st Centennial kickoff was 19 times 1800%.
4. There is a direct correlation between the centennial season kickoff and more tee times for non-rainy days, compared to previous seasons.
5. Michigan Golf Journal is doing a feature on Groesbeck in the July edition and were at the kickoff event. Marketing has sent them lots of photos and believes it will be a great piece of media.
6. This Sunday is World Hickory Golf Day, and they've partnered with the Capital Area Hickory Golfers for this event. They have 11 sets of 1920-1930 era clubs to use for those who want to experience how the game was played 100 years ago. Period attire is encouraged but not required. 16 tee times have already been booked for people who are coming from Ohio and further out.
7. The Centennial Classic is also coming up, which is a four-person scramble on May 17th and then is followed by some Rollback Rates for May 18th-21st.
8. Groesbeck has partnered with the Lansing Public Media Center to do an outdoor Films and Fairway series, which will include movies like The Legend of Bagger Vance, Happy Gilmore, and The Greatest Game Ever Played.
9. The Marker Dedication poster will be unveiling on June 16th, the date the course opened.
10. Other upcoming events include the Groesbeck Golf Championship, which is a two-day tournament in July, the community 19th hole PAR-tee, the parent-child scramble in August, and the superintendent's revenge in October.

ii. Other Events

1. The Grand Concert series will kick off in June on the riverfront. They have two new sponsors joining BWL and Chase Creative, which are LAFCU and

Granger Waste Services.

2. Fundraising has started for Silver Bells.

Comment from Chairperson McNulty-Saxton: She had the wrong day on her calendar for the kickoff and really regrets missing it. She commended Mindy for how much media she got on the event.

VII. COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF COMMENTS

A) Tony Watson

a. He thanked Paul Ntoko for being here and for everything he has done over the many years. He announced that Paul was leaving Lansing Center on May 7th and that they are very sad to see him go. He says that it was nice to get to know Paul over the past year and asked him heartfully not to forget about the staff.

B) Maureen McNulty-Saxton

a. Maureen agreed and said that it was a pleasure to know and work with Paul. He will be missed and leave very big shoes to fill.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

e) Maureen talked about an executive committee item that she forgot to bring up earlier. The ASM/Legends Global calls for a list of KPIs to produce and then bring back to the committee for approval. Tony will be submitting them personally to the executive committee, and next month, the board will look over and approve the KPIs.

X. ADJOURNMENT - Date, Time, Location of Next Meeting:

At 8:51 AM, meeting was adjourned.

MOTION: Commissioner Hall SECOND: Commissioner Howard MOTIONED CARRIED

NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

MAY 26th, 2026 8:00 a.m.

Location: Governor's Room – Lansing Center

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Shaull, Recording Secretary