MEETING OF THE BISMARCK EVENT CENTER AUTHORITY BOARD

3/4/2026 - MINUTES

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The Bismarck Event Center Authority Board met in the Tom Baker meeting room on March 4, 2026, at 11:00 AM. Members present included Mike Gardner, Jennifer Wilson, Jason Tomanek, Joel Kostelecky, and Chad Wachter. Members Sheri Grossman and Mayor Schmitz attended the meeting via Teams.

2. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

3. Consider Approval of Minutes

Member Kostelecky moved to approve the minutes with the correction of a typographical error in item five, and Member Gardner seconded. Upon a roll call vote, all voted aye. M/C.

4. Enter into Executive Session under North Dakota Century Code Section 44-04-19.2 regarding contract negotiation/negotiation strategy under NDCC Section 44-04-19.1(9)

Member Gardner moved to enter into Executive Session under North Dakota Century Code Section 44-04-19.2 regarding contract negotiation/negotiation strategy at 11:03 AM, and Member Kostelecky seconded. Upon a roll call vote, all voted aye. M/C.

The board reconvened at 11:24 AM with all members present.

** See Secretary's Note for motion.*

5. Mission Statement Development Discussion

Member Wachter presented a draft mission statement for the Bismarck Event Center to guide the new Event Center Authority Board. The statement focuses on delivering high quality events that promote economic growth, community engagement, and strong returns on public investment while maintaining financial sustainability.

Board members generally felt the draft captured the organization’s goals but discussed a few considerations:

- Whether the wording should reference multiple venues (arena, exhibit hall, and Belle Mehus Auditorium) rather than a single venue.
- Whether the statement might function more as a vision statement rather than a concise mission statement, since it is relatively long.
- The value of reviewing and refining the wording outside the meeting.

The group agreed to review the draft individually and submit feedback to City Administration, who will compile comments for discussion at a future meeting before any formal adoption.

Proposed Mission Statement

6. Term Assignment Discussion

The group discussed implementing staggered terms for board members so that all members do not leave at the same time. They agreed to start with one 1-year term, two 2-year terms, and two 3-year terms, after which all terms will become standard 3-year terms. This structure ensures that some positions expire each year, maintaining continuity on the board. The Mayor's term will align with his elected term, and another position is tied to the staff role of the City Administrator. Members agreed that assigning the initial term lengths randomly is acceptable, though one member volunteered to take the 1-year term and reapply later. The city administration will track term exporations and notify members when their terms are ending.

7. Policy Discussion

The board discussed how to handle requests for free or discounted use of their facilities, particularly from nonprofit organizations. They agreed that a clear policy is needed to ensure consistency when these requests arise. Members expressed concern about having to judge or rank nonprofits by the value of their causes. Several participants suggested waiting for input from Oak View Group (OVG), the third-party management group, to learn how other venues handle similar situations. Ideas mentioned included creating rules, an application process, or a scoring rubric to evaluate requests fairly. Overall, the group agreed to continue the discussion later with OVG's guidance to develop a fair, structured policy.

8. Survey Discussion

The board discussed creating a post-event survey for groups utilizing the Even Center and Belle Mehus Auditorium to gather feedback on staff, facilities, and overall experience. An example survey from JLL contains 58 questions, but several members felt it is too long and may discourage people from completing it. Suggestions included shortening the survey and also waiting to coordinate with Oak View Group (OVG) once they are involved to ensure the right topics are covered. Members also discussed options such as using a third party to manage surveys, ensuring results go directly to the city, and designing questions that align with key performance indicators (KPIs) and possibly allowing voice-to-text responses to make completion easier.

9. Other Business

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 11:46 AM.

**Secretary's Note — The Bismarck Event Center Authority Board reconvened at 11:54 AM with members Gardner, Kostelecky, Tomanek, Wachter, and Wilson Present. City Attorney Julie Mees explained that the board did not vote after the Executive Session and must do so according to NDCC Title 44. Attorney Mees explained that while in the Executive Session, the Board made a decision and, as such, they need to make a vote on the record following the Executive session.*

Member Kostelecky moved to direct staff to move forward with the negotiation strategy agreed upon during the executive session, and Member Wilson seconded. Upon a roll call vote, all voted aye. M/C.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:56 AM.