

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)
March 12, 2020 9:00 am
Virginia City Conference Center
10 South E Street, Virginia City, NV 89440
MEETING MINUTES

Notice: Items on the agenda may be taken out of order; two or more agenda items may be combined for consideration; and items may be removed from the agenda or discussion relating thereto delayed at any time. This is the tentative schedule for the meeting. The Commission reserves the right to take items in a different order to accomplish business in the most efficient manner.

The following minutes are a summarized explanation of the topics discussed. A taped recording of these proceedings will be kept for review.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson A. Perry called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. ROLL CALL

Leah Kruse called roll.

Chairperson: A.Perry
Vice Chair: J. Carmona
Treasurer: Vanessa Stephens
Board Members: Angelo Petrini
Ron Gallagher
Corrado DeGasperis

L. Kruse noted there was a quorum present.

Others: Deny Dotson, Director
Katie Demuth, Tourism & Marketing Manager
Leah Kruse, Administrative Specialist

2. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS

Discussion may be limited to three minutes per person at the discretion of the Chairman. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this portion of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action may be taken.

Donna Flood, Comstock Chronicle, asked how much of the meeting she was allowed to publish. D. Dotson stated that the meeting was a completely open/public meeting.

D. Dotson gave the board an update on what the County and VCTC are doing regarding COVID-19. D. Dotson shared that, as of the moment of this board meeting, the County and the board will move forward with the Rocky Mountain Oyster Fry, but that there would be precautionary measures in place. D. Dotson said that they are not taking the virus lightly, but they will proceed with caution and will meet once more to make a final decision as to whether to cancel the event or not.

Jim Webster, Silverland Inn and Suites, stated that they have been monitoring the situation and they only have had two cancellations at their property so far and they were weather related. A. Petrini asked J. Webster if they were sold out, and J. Webster stated that he was at approximately 80% capacity.

Nicole Barde, Storey County resident, asked what safety precautions would be in place for the merchants during the event. J. Carmona stated that nothing had been addressed yet regarding the merchants at the event, but that he would reach out to the county to get an answer to her question. R. Gallagher asked if the Merchants Association had any plans for the merchants during this time. N. Barde stated that she did not know. N. Barde asked if the county would be able to place those handwashing stations on the board walk for the foreseeable future. J. Carmona stated that was a good idea. C. DeGasperis commented that COVID-19 is spreading all across the world and it is only a matter of time before it

arrives, full-force, in the United States and the only thing that seems to be slowing the spread is avoiding large gatherings. J. Carmona stated that, as a tourist town, the merchants are dependent on visitors coming and he will be looking into handwashing stations, etc. on the boardwalk.

3. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A. 12 March 2020

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R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – A. Petrini Approved – Unanimously

4. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

• 13 February 2020

C. DeGasperis made the motion to approve the minutes.

Second – R. Gallagher Approved – Unanimously

5. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: FINANCIAL UPDATE

- A. *Tourism Tax Report*
- B. *Transient Lodging Tax Report*
- C. *Discussion & possible approval of the fiscal year 2020/2021 tentative budget.*
**Discussion/For Possible Action*

D. Dotson shared the Tourism Tax numbers are still trending up.

D. Dotson stated that the Transient Lodging Report numbers are up about \$1,000 over the previous year and the numbers remain steady.

D. Dotson shared the FY 20/21 tentative budget. D. Dotson disclosed that there is a line item in the budget that is a contract with RAD Strategies and he is listed with the Secretary of State as part owner of RAD Strategies, but there are contingencies put in place that allow the County Manager to do the negotiating with the board on the contract and that he does not sign or approve vouchers. D. Dotson shared that the funding sources for the VCTC come from lodging tax, visitor center, Cemetery Gin sales, facility rentals, and special events. D. Dotson shared a spreadsheet that lists out, in detail, each account and the budget for each account.

N. Barde asked if there was a way to, if necessary, stop spending mid-year. D. Dotson stated that there was.

Austin Osborne, Storey County Manager, explained that the RV Park going in at the TRI area will be subjected to the same lodging tax rules as the other hotels in Storey County.

D. Dotson shared a list of expenses that the VCTC is looking into over the 2020/2021 fiscal year and highlights include Sky Fiber Internet, more printed maps, airport marketing, and possibly a trolley to use during high-volume events.

Vince Malfitano, Bonanza Saloon, stated that he is not sure what the legalities are of a government agency competing with private business. V. Malfitano also shared that having vendors stand in front of businesses at events and sell the same goods as the merchants needs to come to an end because it is hurting the merchants. A. Perry thanked V. Malfitano for his comments and asked that the next time he came to the meeting with comment, to please utilize the public comment portion of the meeting. A. Perry stated that the merchant coalition has been spoken to about the comments V. Malfitano made and that the board will continue to consider them.

K. Demuth gave an overview of Piper's 2020/2021 fiscal year budget and the highlights included several grants that Piper's will be applying for, the idea that Piper's will lower the wedding budget to try to get more arts and cultural events instead, and the completion of a new office in the building that will require new computer equipment.

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the fiscal year 2020/2021 tentative budget.

Second – C. DeGasperis

Approved – Unanimously

6. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: MARKETING UPDATES

Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies, presented a marketing report for February 2020, highlights of which include some Tahoe TV interviews, a Travel Nevada promotion on Instagram, and that Instagram is still growing in terms of followers.

N. Barde asked if anything would be said during the next few TV spots regarding the precautions being taken to protect against the virus. A. Demuth said yes.

7. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: SPECIAL EVENT UPDATE

D. Dotson shared that the Father-Daughter Day and Dance seemed to be flat, but he did not have the final numbers yet. K. Demuth said that the total numbers of packages sold was down, but the single dance tickets were up.

D. Dotson shared that the Rocky Mountain Oyster Fry ticket sales were down approximately 20%.

D. Dotson presented the Chili on the Comstock budget and asked for approval from the board.

C. DeGasperis made the motion to approve Chili on the Comstock budget in the amount of \$32,000.

Second – J. Carmona

Approved – Unanimously

D. Dotson shared that a local merchant would be taking on an Easter event in town which consists of a scavenger hunt among merchant participants. A. Perry expressed her gratitude towards the event planner regarding his cooperation with Saint Mary's Art Center's annual Easter egg hunt.

D. Dotson shared that the Grand Prix will be permitted to move the venue back down to the area in front of Silverland Inn and Suites.

8. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: GROUPS, FAMS, TRADE SHOWS, AND VISITOR CENTER UPDATE

K. Demuth shared that groups are still trending up for the year, but the numbers may change as groups have already reached out saying that some of their customers are cancelling due to the virus. K. Demuth said that she is working with merchants on a badge program that will take place during Rural Roundup. K. Demuth shared that the construction in the Visitor Center is complete.

9. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PIPER'S OPERA HOUSE UPDATE

Whitney Brunson, Piper's Opera House, shared that a recent 601 event held at Piper's completely sold out. W. Brunson stated that the country dancing events are averaging about 50 people so they will be continued. W. Brunson shared that Father-Daughter Day and Dance went well and photos are available to purchase through Raise the Stakes Photography. W. Brunson said that bingo will begin on the third Thursday of every month from 7:00 pm until 9:00 pm at Piper's and that there will be prizes from local merchants.

A. Perry asked if the wedding trade show Piper's is hosting will be collaborative with other merchants/vendors/locations in town. W. Brunson said it definitely would be.

10. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STAFF REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE & FUTURE MEETINGS

D. Dotson stated that the next VCTC Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 9:00 am.

11. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: ADJOURNMENT OF COMMISSION BOARD MEETING

Chairperson A. Perry adjourned the meeting at 10:51 am.

DRAFT