

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)

April 9, 2020 2:00 pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
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 2:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. ROLL CALL

Leah Kruse called roll.

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

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.

No public comment.

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

A. 9 April 2020

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R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – C. DeGasperi

Approved – Unanimously

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

- 12 March 2020

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the minutes.

Second – C. DeGasperi

Approved – Unanimously

5. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: COVID-19 UPDATE

Austin Osborne, Storey County Manager, updated the board in regards to what Storey County is doing in response to COVID-19, highlights of which include Storey County working with the Quad County EOC and the Quad County Health Coalition, the Tesla warehouse in TRI is housing personal protective equipment and other medical supplies, some county offices are not open to the public, public works has been deep cleaning several areas around town, and the county website and Facebook page is being constantly updated with new information, including some information regarding SBA loans. A. Osborne also highlighted several services being offered to the community such as the Senior Center offering health services, home deliveries for food, and errand programs for people to get rides to appointments.

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

- A. *Tourism Tax Report*
- B. *Transient Lodging Tax Report*
- C. *2019-2020 / 2020-2021 Budgets*

D. Dotson shared that the Tourism Tax numbers dipped below last year's numbers, but are still in line with the budgeted numbers.

D. Dotson said that Transient Lodging numbers are up over last year and that TRI is still carrying the bulk of the report.

D. Dotson shared that last month he shared the most robust budget that he ever had the pleasure to work on, but that about four hours after presenting the budget to the board, the Oyster Fry had to be cancelled. D. Dotson shared that the VCTC revenue stream stopped with the cancellation of the Oyster Fry and that adjustments will need to be made. D. Dotson said that a meeting will be scheduled in the next few days in which discussing a major budget overhaul will be the primary focus. D. Dotson stated that he feels that the budget will bounce back eventually, but getting through Quarter 1 & 2 will be key for the VCTC. D. Dotson mentioned that Liquid Blue Events will need to update the budget that they previously presented to VCTC in order to scale back the budget for events.

A. Perry asked if D. Dotson had a target percentage in mind in terms of how much the budget would be lowered. D. Dotson answered that he's feels as though he is looking at a 25% to 30% drop in revenue, but that he'll have more definitive answers in the coming weeks. C. DeGasperis stated that now is the time to only focus on what is needed, not what is wanted because it will be difficult to project too far out.

A. Osborne reiterated what was stated – the county also does not know what the revenue for this year is going to look like so they are budgeting for the necessary things and they are really focusing on what those necessary things are.

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

Ronele Dotson and Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies, presented a marketing report that included marketing strategies since people across the US began sheltering in place, highlights of which include a new webpage with information on how to connect with Virginia City virtually, a virtual FAM tour that recently took place with 30+ members of the media, and a story about how business are being affected in Northern Nevada Business Weekly and on KTVN. A. Demuth stated that RAD has shifted their focus from travel to the local merchants.

A. Perry asked if there was anything that the merchants could do to help RAD with their messaging. A. Demuth answered that everyone should keep RAD updated on any and all events the merchants are working on and to send in videos and images that RAD may use.

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

Jess Horning, Liquid Blue Events, shared that many of the events that they manage have been either cancelled or postponed. D. Dotson said that most of the events that Virginia City had planned up through the 4th of July have either been moved or cancelled. D. Dotson shared that the Grand Prix has moved to August 29th and 30th. D. Dotson said that the Paracon Ghost Hunters Convention was moved to August 8th and 9th. D. Dotson stated that the Chili Cook-Off will take place, tentatively, the weekend after the Outhouse Races (October). D. Dotson said that both the long-line and the short-line trains will probably be delayed in starting up for the season. D. Dotson shared that they are still thinking about the Memorial Day parade and that the Reno-Tahoe Odyssey, Mudding for the Tatas jamboree, and an archery competition have all been cancelled. D. Dotson shared that Street Vibrations is still planning on holding the spring run

and car show, but that is dependent on any future shelter in place orders. D. Dotson said that the event calendar will need to be updated as a lot of the events may not occur this year. J. Horning shared that he is happy to think outside the box in terms of event scheduling and that he is prepared to plan a “welcome back” event for Virginia City when things are back to normal.

A. Perry asked if Liquid Blue is concerned about staffing events due to the rescheduling of them. N. Horning stated that it is a concern, but that it is something he can work on as the events get closer as they have a lot of resources. J. Horning stated that he will be able to see what other events across the country are doing when events start back up again. A. Perry asked if Liquid Blue would look to Virginia City locals as volunteers as they are truly invested in the events coming back to the area. N. Horning stated that they would absolutely look to locals for help.

9. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION’S ATTENTION: DISCUSSION AND FOR POSSIBLE ACTION TO PAY ALL EXPENSES RELATED TO THE CANCELLATION OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN OYSTER FRY FOR ALL COOKS AND VENDORS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$13,200.62, PAYABLE OUT OF REMAINING BUDGET NOT SPENT ON THE EVENT.

D. Dotson stated that as this event was cancelled due to events out of anyone’s control, it only seems right to make sure the vendors and cooks are reimbursed their expenses. R. Gallagher stated that he feels that paying the cooks and vendors is an investment in the future of this event as it will be an excellent act of goodwill. A. Perry stated that she is glad to pay these vendors and cooks, but she is concerned that not all people who were affected by the cancellation of the event are captured, but she understands that there is no way to be sure. J. Carmona stated that he agreed with A. Perry and is also concerned that a way to make it right with the brick and mortar businesses be considered as well. R. Gallagher stated that he is not sure how to make it right with the businesses in Virginia City as it would be impossible to know the exact losses they incurred. J. Carmona said that one way to make it up to the brick and mortar businesses would be to make sure that they are advertised in the future. R. Gallagher agreed.

C. DeGasperis made the motion to approve paying all expenses related to the cancellation of the Rocky Mountain Oyster Fry for all cooks and vendors in the amount of \$13,200.62, payable out of the remaining budget not spent on the event.

Second – R. Gallagher

Approved – Unanimously

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

K. Demuth shared that the bus group that was scheduled to come to Virginia City every other Friday throughout the summer has only cancelled on date in July. K. Demuth stated that all groups scheduled to come up through Memorial Day have been cancelled or rescheduled. K. Demuth shared that the Visitor Center is closed and will remain closed while all of the social distancing guidelines are in place. K. Demuth stated that any information about local businesses can be shared with the VCTC staff so that it can be shared via the website and social media. K. Demuth stated that Rural Roundup has been changed to October 7th, 8th, and 9th. K. Demuth stated that she is going to be on quite a few webinars/online training courses and that she will pass on all pertinent information.

11. 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 all events at Piper’s are cancelled through the end of June. W. Brunson stated that they hope to reschedule the murder mystery play to sometime in July. W. Brunson stated that a wedding did cancel, but a new booking was made for the next fiscal year and that the wedding budget is still on track.

12. 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 not be held at the conference center as that is no longer available, but it will be available on Zoom or, possibly, at Piper’s. L. Kruse stated that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 9:00 am.

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

Chairperson A. Perry adjourned the meeting at 3:35 pm.