

**VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)**  
**October 8, 2020 10:00 am**  
**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

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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.

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

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson A. Perry called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**1. ROLL CALL**

Katie Demuth called roll.

**Chairperson:** A. Perry  
**Vice Chair:** Jay Carmona  
**Treasurer:** Vanessa Stephens  
**Board Members:** Angelo Petrini  
Ron Gallagher  
Corrado DeGasperi

K. Demuth noted there was a quorum present.

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

**1. 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.*

Austin Osborne, Storey County Manager, gave an update on the CARES Business Grant Program and stated that several businesses have applied and that the application process will be open until October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. A. Osborne stated that the third-party group is going through the applications. A. Osborne stated that there was \$100,000 total available to businesses.

A. Osborne stated that there are currently five active cases of COVID-19 in Storey County and that the cases are being monitored closely. A. Osborne said that there are no new mandates and that the old ones are all still in place (re: event capacity, etc.).

D. Dotson said that he walked door-to-door on the boardwalk and that he believes several more businesses will be applying for the CARES grant soon.

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

A. 8 October 2020

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R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – J. Carmona

Approved – Unanimously

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

*A. 10 September 2020*

C. DeGasperis made the motion to approve the minutes.

Second – R. Gallagher

Approved – Unanimously

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

*A. Tourism Tax Report*

*B. Transient Lodging Tax Report*

D. Dotson shared that the Tourism Tax Report for July 2020 is down approximately \$9,000 from last year. D. Dotson stated that the \$192,000 that was received last month seems to be correct and there is still no answer as to where it came from.

D. Dotson shared the Transient Lodging Tax Report for August 2020 in which the numbers are reporting close to the same as last year. D. Dotson stated that local hoteliers are sharing that they are fully booked most weekends.

A. Perry stated that this year is a case study in which we can determine how much events in town help and/or hurt business. D. Dotson said that now the focus will need to be on weekday visitation.

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

Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies, shared the September 2020 marketing report and highlights of which include marketing that pushes overnight stays, regional and digital radio campaigns, continued display of digital outdoor billboards and posters, a co-op marketing opportunity with Travel Nevada, a virtual haunted FAM tour, and continued growth on all social media platforms.

Ronele Dotson, RAD Strategies, shared a new Virginia City Latino Outreach Campaign that they are working on with a local agency which will include new campaign components such as billboards, radio, and social media ads.

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

Neil Horning, Liquid Blue Events, stated that they are still working on final partners for the Cemetery Gin's Hunt for Spirits. N. Horning stated that over 70 tickets have already been sold for the event. D. Dotson asked how many locations were participating in the Hunt for the Spirits event. N. Horning stated that 18 separate locations were participating. D. Dotson verified that the event was capped at 250 people total.

D. Dotson shared that the Veteran's Day Parade will be a hybrid cruise/walking parade. D. Dotson shared that the Halloween parade will also allow walking groups and that merchants are allowed to safely hand out candy for trick-or-treating.

**7. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF CHRISTMAS ON THE COMSTOCK BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$13,800**

N. Horning shared the Believe Again Christmas event budget. N. Horning stated that the event is free to attend and is a shopping event. N. Horning shared that the sleigh ride has been canceled this year in order to cut expenses. N. Horning said that the saloon crawl is expected to be very well attended.

D. Dotson stated that the items N. Horning is discussing are the items that Liquid Blue manage for the VCTC, but that Christmas on the Comstock includes many other events such as cruises, a North Pole at the Gold Hill Depot, train rides, a play at Piper's, and fireworks on two different weekends.

A. Perry asked if more money should be invested in decorations in town along the main roads. D. Dotson stated that the

VCTC budget includes more decorations in town.

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the Christmas on the Comstock budget in the amount of \$13,800.

Second – J. Carmona

Approved – Unanimously

**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 have not been coming to town, but she is still working with them and she has a lot of groups scheduled for 2021. K. Demuth stated that she has set up a virtual group tour for Sierra Nevada College with a docent leading the tour. K. Demuth said that the participants will receive tickets to attractions.

K. Demuth said that Everyone is a Local is going through the middle of November. K. Demuth shared that the bandit mask sign is for sale at the Visitor Center. K. Demuth said that also for sale in the Visitor Center is a Bloody Mucker package. K. Demuth asked for people to let her know if they are doing anything for Hauntober so that she can fill in the calendar as much as possible.

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

K. Demuth shared that, due to smoke, Bingo and Spirits with the Spirits events were cancelled. K. Demuth shared that country dancing was a hit. K. Demuth shared that the new office at Piper's is completed and Whitney will be moving from the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. K. Demuth reminded everyone that Bingo is the third Thursday of each month. K. Demuth shared that Bats in the Belfry Paranormal Investigations will occur over two weekends. K. Demuth stated that special events are still being booked for 2021. K. Demuth stated that tour schedules are posted on the merchant Facebook page.

**10. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STRATEGIS PLANNING**

D. Dotson shared a PowerPoint presentation that outlined a strategic plan: Marketing, diversity and inclusion, and safety. D. Dotson stated that he would like to form a subcommittee to discuss how to implement the strategic plan. C. DeGasperis stated that he is fully on board with the subcommittee and would be happy to participate. J. Carmona stated he would like to participate as well. R. Gallagher stated that he likes the idea of the subcommittee as well. A. Perry asked how they would choose people for the subcommittee and how people who represent the diversity and inclusion that the VCTC is looking for. D. Dotson stated that he feels it is important to keep the subcommittee small and that he encourages anyone who wants to provide input to attend the board meetings. J. Carmona stated that he feels if a resident is invited to the committee, a resident from all four Storey County communities should be invited. D. Dotson stated that he agrees as the marketing is not just about Virginia City. A. Perry asked how committee members would be selected. D. Dotson stated that he would reach out to people. J. Carmona stated that he feels it is important to put out a call to action and see if anyone is interested in order to avoid bias. R. Gallagher stated that there should be some criteria as to who should be picked in order to avoid bias. A. Petrini stated that he wants to be cautious in inviting other members of the county as they have little knowledge as to what happens in Virginia City. Nicole Barde, Storey County Resident, suggested bringing in someone from a large corporation in TRI as they have a lot of experience in strategic planning and diversity and inclusion. R. Dotson shared that in groups she's been involved in before have issued applications to people who may be interested in a subcommittee. A. Perry and D. Dotson stated that they like that idea. D. Dotson asked who the board participant should be. R. Gallagher and C. DeGasperis both stated interest, but in the end R. Gallagher will be involved.

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

K. Demuth shared that the next VCTC Board Meeting will occur at 10:00 am Thursday, November 12, 2020 via Zoom.

A. Petrini asked what the timeline is regarding a new parking lot in town near some property that was recently purchased by the county. J. Carmona stated that with winter approaching, he is not confident that paving will occur this year, but could possibly be completed by next spring.

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

Chairperson A. Perry adjourned the meeting at 11:32 am.