

**VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)**  
**February 11, 2021 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**

Vice Chairperson Jay Carmona called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**1. ROLL CALL**

Leah Kruse called roll.

**Chairperson:** A. Perry - Absent  
**Vice Chair:** Jay Carmona  
**Treasurer:** Vanessa Stephens  
**Board Members:** Angelo Petrini - Absent  
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. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE FIRST 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, County Manager shared that the governor would be speaker later in the day regarding the statewide pause. A. Osborne said that the strategic plan for the county is still being worked on and that it should be done by the summer or fall.

**3. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
NOMINATION OF OFFICERS FOR 2021**

**A. CHAIR / VICE CHAIR / SECRETARY / TREASURER**

R. Gallagher nominated A. Perry to be Chair.  
Second – C. DeGasperis                      Approved – Unanimously  
C. DeGasperis nominated J. Carmona to be Vice Chair  
Second – R. Gallagher                      Approved – Unanimously  
R. Gallagher nominated Leah Kruse to be Secretary  
Second – C. DeGasperis                      Approved – Unanimously  
C. DeGasperis nominated Vanessa Stephens to be Treasurer  
Second – R. Gallagher                      Approved – Unanimously

**4. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

A. 11 February 2021

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R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda for 11 February 2021 after noting that all voting items will be moved to the top of the agenda as C. DeGasperis has to leave the meeting early.

Second – C. DeGasperis

Approved – Unanimously

**5. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

A. 14 January 2021

C. DeGasperis made the motion to approve the minutes for 14 January 2021.

Second – R. Gallagher

Approved – Unanimously

**6. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
APPOINTMENT OF DENY DOTSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE VCTC, TO THE NV COMMISSION OF  
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE V&T RAILWAY FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM**

C. DeGasperis asked if this was D. Dotson's first time on the commission. D. Dotson replied that he is already on the commission and this vote is just to renew his term.

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the appointment of D. Dotson to the NV Commission of the Reconstruction of the V&T Railway for a four-year term.

Second – C. DeGasperis

Approved – Unanimously

**7. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
CONSIDERATION & POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF THE 2021 OYSTER FRY BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF  
\$15,800**

Neil Horning, Liquid Blue Events, said that this year's event is in no way the same event as it has been in the past. N. Horning stated that the plan for the event is based on events in which they have been able to control the crowds. N. Horning shared that the Oyster Fry will be a sampling tour and that tickets must be purchased ahead of time to avoid congregation. N. Horning said that if the guidelines change, more tickets can be released. D. Dotson said that this year, there will be a cruise instead of a parade and that the saloon crawl and the oyster fry are being combined into this sampling tour. D. Dotson stated that the event has been vetted by a special events committee made up of people from the county. N. Shared that the cooks will be paid a flat fee and that there will be merchandise available to sell. N. Horning stated that trophies will not be handed out from a stage to avoid congregation.

C. DeGasperis made the motion to approve the 2021 Oyster Fry budget in the amount of \$15,800.

Second – R. Gallagher

Approved – Unanimously

**8. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
FINANCIAL UPDATE**

A. *Tourism Tax Report*

B. *Transient Lodging Tax Report*

C. *FY 2021/2022 Budget Update*

D. Dotson shared that the Tourism Tax Report is trending very closely to the numbers from two years ago which is what the numbers were budgeted to look like.

D. Dotson shared that the Transient Lodging Tax Report is down slightly, but that it is still in line with the budgeted amount.

D. Dotson shared that the VCTC and R. Gallagher met for their first 2021/2022 budget meeting and they will continue to meet with the Comptroller to get the numbers finalized.

**9. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
CEMETERY GIN UPDATE**

D. Dotson shared that Frey Ranch, who currently makes Cemetery Gin, has changed their business model and they will no longer be able to produce Cemetery Gin as they will only be making bourbon. D. Dotson stated that there is another distiller in the state who is very interested in potentially taking over the production of Cemetery Gin and that there are still a few distillers that he can reach out to but would like to know what the board thinks should be done. J. Carmona stated that he would not be opposed to transiting to a bourbon or to trying to keep Cemetery Gin. R. Gallagher stated that he is all for Deny exploring all options. C. DeGasperis agreed with all members of the board and he liked the idea of producing Bonanza Bourbon.

**10. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
BLACK & HOWELL**

D. Dotson shared that he has met with the Comptroller and the County Manager and some engineers/architect firms and they hope to continue moving forward and could possibly start building in the next year.

**11. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
MARKETING UPDATES**

Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies Inc., shared the January 2021 marketing report and highlights include continuing billboard advertising, heavy Everyone is a Local advertising, and a 2021 planned content calendar. Regina Flores, RAD Strategies shared some social media updates and highlights include posting in Spanish, Instagram is continuing to grow, and a new TikTok account. Ronele Dotson, RAD Strategies Inc., shared an update on the Women of the Comstock video series.

**12. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
SPECIAL EVENT UPDATES**

D. Dotson reminded everyone that there will not be printed events calendars this year and they will instead be digital so that they can be changed as needed.

Jess Horning, Liquid Blue Events, shared that he feels that the public is very excited to get back out to events as is evident by recent event ticket sales. Christine Verrier, Liquid Blue Events, shared that merchants are very excited to participate in upcoming events and they have brought some great ideas to the table.

**13. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
GROUPS, FAMS, TRADE SHOWS, AND VISITOR CENTER UPDATE**

K. Demuth shared that a group of 20 people will be coming to town in March. K. Demuth stated that this is the first group to come to Virginia City in one year. K. Demuth said she will be attending the American Bus Association's virtual conference soon and that should give her a better idea to how the bus tours are now handling things. K. Demuth shared that some CARES fund grants that VCTC applied for will amount to a \$32,000 reimbursement which was used to advertise Christmas and to have new photos produced. K. Demuth reminded everyone that Rural Roundup in Virginia City has been postponed until April 2022.

**14. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:  
PIPER'S OPERA HOUSE UPDATE**

Whitney Brunson, Piper's Opera House, shared that the monthly events (Spirits with the Spirits, Country Dancing, Bingo, and the Lecture Series) are scheduled for February. W. Brunson said that ticket sales for the murder mystery play, "Murder at the House of Dolls" are on sale now and that the show dates are in April and May. W. Brunson said that tours are still available at Piper's when events are not scheduled.

**15. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STAFF  
REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE & FUTURE MEETINGS**

L. Kruse shared that the next VCTC Board Meeting will occur at 10:00 am Thursday, March 11, 2021 via Zoom.

D. Dotson shared that many merchants have signed up to stay open from 5:00 to 8:00 pm for Everyone is a Local at night on the third Thursday of each month. D. Dotson encouraged everyone to come out to the event each month.

**16. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION:**

**ADJOURNMENT OF COMMISSION BOARD MEETING**

Vice Chairperson J. Carmona adjourned the meeting at 11:09 am.

DRAFT