

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)
May 13, 2021, 10:00 am
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 recording of these proceedings will be kept for review.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson A. Perry called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

Pledge of Allegiance

2. ROLL CALL

Leah Kruse called roll.

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

L. Kruse noted there was a quorum present.

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

3. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY 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.

Tony and Jill Clough introduced themselves as the new managers of the Gold Hill Hotel.

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

- 13 May 2021

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R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda for 13 May 2021.

Second – J. Carmona

Approved – Unanimously

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

- A. 8 April 2021

A. Petrini made the motion to approve the minutes for 8 April 2021.

Second – R. Gallagher

Approved – Unanimously

6. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STOREY COUNTY REOPENING PLAN

D. Dotson shared the county's reopening plan which states that as of May 1st, the county will be at full occupancy. D. Dotson stated that indoor gatherings will still be limited to 250 people for the time being. D. Dotson said that the reopening plan continues to evolve.

D. Dotson asked the board's opinion on meeting in-person again. R. Gallagher stated that he would like to resume in-person meetings as soon as possible. J. Carmona shared that he is fine with either option. A. Perry shared that she has no opinion either and is fine with both options. Neil Horning, Liquid Blue Events, shared that for his team, it really depends on the month and sometimes it is nice to have Zoom as an option. Ronele Dotson, RAD Strategies Inc., stated that she is fine with both options as well. T. Clough stated that he is comfortable with Zoom and can help with setting things up, but that meeting in person is usually preferable. D. Dotson voted for in-person although he understands that Zoom is convenient. L. Kruse said that recording an in-person/Zoom hybrid meeting would be difficult but could be done. K. Demuth suggested one more month of Zoom and that in-person meetings start in July. Clayton Mitchell, Storey County Commissioner, commented that he can consult on equipment/setup on a hybrid meeting. A. Perry reiterated that the June meeting will be via Zoom and future meetings will be discussed at that time.

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

- *Tourism Tax Report*
- *Transient Lodging Tax Report*
- *Approval of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Operating Budget*

D. Dotson shared the Tourism Tax Report and stated that the number is still ahead of the budgeted amount.

D. Dotson shared the Transient Lodging Tax Report numbers have been consistently going up and that TRI is still experiencing a great amount of room rentals.

D. Dotson gave another quick overview of the tentative 2021-2022 operating budget. D. Dotson stated, for transparency's sake, that his wife, R. Dotson, is an owner of RAD Strategies Inc., which handles the marketing for the VCTC and the county.

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 operating budget.

Second – J. Carmona

Approved – Unanimously

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

R. Dotson shared the April 2021 marketing report and highlights include outdoor advertising of Third Thursdays and the Comstock Adventure Pass, digital radio ads through Pandora, local merchant highlights regarding advertising for Third Thursdays, several nationwide media reporters visiting Virginia City, and a list of top pages that people visit on the Virginia City website. Regina Flores, RAD Strategies Inc., shared that all Virginia City social media is still growing and that the open rate of eblasts are above industry average.

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

N. Horning shared that the Chili Cookoff is coming up and that 700 packages have already been presold, which is more than has ever been presold in the past. N. Horning stated that there will be chili stations at Silverland Inn & Suites, on C Street, and on B Street near the courthouse.

N. Horning stated that 450 fathers and daughters attended the Father-Daughter Day and Dance, which is 150 more than ever before. N. Horning stated that many people commented on how happy they were to be able to attend events again.

N. Horning shared that Camel Race tickets will go on sale on Monday.

D. Dotson said that the Memorial Day parade is still going to be a cruise with a few walking groups at the beginning. D. Dotson shared that Spring Vibrations may be a bit busier than previous years.

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 groups are slowly returning to Virginia City, and she has approximately 649 people scheduled to be in town through the end of the year. K. Demuth said she is attending a virtual conference in which she will take appointments with tour operators and travel planners to tell them about the area. K. Demuth shared that there is a new area in the Visitor Center which highlights a different local merchant each month. K. Demuth reminded everyone that Rural Roundup will be held in Virginia City April 27th – 29th, 2022.

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 the Murder at the House of Dolls spring performance has been met with great reviews and that tickets are still available for the remaining shows. W. Brunson shared that the next Bingo night (Thursday, May 20th) is 80's night. W. Brunson said that a comedy show will be at Piper's on May 21st. W. Brunson stated that country dancing and the lecture series will continue in May. W. Brunson shared that she will be working on renting the Freight Depot and the Gold Hill Depot for events. W. Brunson reminded everyone that tours are still available at Piper's.

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

- *Director's Report: Restaurants, Black & Howell, V&T Railway, Cemetery Gin*
- *Next VCTC Meeting*

D. Dotson shared that the country is facing a labor shortage and restaurants are especially in need of help and he shared that he has some contacts restaurant owners can reach out to in order to receive help from the state. D. Dotson said that the V&T longline will not run until the end of the year (except for special events). D. Dotson shared that he is getting some direction from legal regarding the production of Cemetery Gin. D. Dotson stated that there will be a county BBQ at the fairgrounds on June 11, 2021, from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm and the event is free to the public.

John O'Brien, Silverland Inn & Suites, shared that the comments he hears most from guests is that there are not enough restaurants open during their stays nor is there enough transportation around town. J. O'Brien stated that he has been talking to local food truck vendors to possibly come to his property and that he will be using an SUV for courtesy transportation. J. O'Brien stated that even with these things in place, it is hard to sell the town when things are closed.

J. Carmona stated that the courtroom in the courthouse is set up for Zoom meetings and that the VCTC board may be able to host meetings there.

N. Horning stated that merchants received over \$6000 in kickback from the Father-Daughter Day and Dance.

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

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 11:15 am.