

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)

November 21, 2022, 2:00 pm.

Piper's Opera House
12 B St. 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.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson A. Perry called the meeting to order at 2:15 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Rebecca Clark called roll.

Chairperson: A. Perry
Vice Chair: Jay Carmona
Board Members: Angelo Petrini – absent
Ron Gallagher
Paul Hoyle

R. Clark noted there was a quorum present.

Others: Linda Ritter, Interim Tourism Director
Rebecca Clark, Administrative Assistant
Leah Kruse, Event & Business Development Manager/Acting Director
Keith Loomis, Deputy District Attorney
Austin Osborne, County Manager
Jennifer McCain, Comptroller

3. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 21, 2022

Chairperson A. Perry made the motion to approve the agenda for the November 21 meeting.

First – R. Gallagher

Second – P. Hoyle

Approved Unanimously

5. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: DISCUSSION ONLY: WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT AND FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION AND STOREY COUNTY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF MEMORIALIZING THE RELATIONSHIP IN AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT.

After the item was introduced, L. Ritter stated that it was important for the Commission to understand their powers

and duties as listed in NRS 244A.597. She asked that Keith Loomis, from the Storey County DA's Office, provide an overview of the "independence" the Commission had from the County.

K. Loomis reported that the Commission had wide latitude to operate as they wish, including contracting for services, suing, or getting sued and directing the marketing and other tourism related operations for Storey County. K. Loomis said they were independent; however, they were not a separate political subdivision. He also indicated that the VCTC had to follow general laws regarding budgeting and finance.

R. Gallagher gave some history of the VCTC and stated that it had been an "independent" entity in its early days. But as it grew, the decision was made to make the employees of the VCTC County employees so that they could enjoy the benefits that come with being a county employee.

Chairperson A. Perry asked that the Commission indicate any issues they had with the relationship between the VCTC and Storey County.

R. Gallagher stated that he was unhappy that the Commission was not involved with the personnel actions involving the prior director. P. Hoyle agreed with Mr. Gallagher and stated that the process took entirely too long.

R. Gallagher said a study on the financial impact of going back to that former relationship should be completed to determine the best way to move forward.

P. Hoyle indicated he was not happy with the lack of independence they had and provided an overview of how tourism promotion and support activities were accomplished in Santa Barbara CA, where the Board had much more discretion as to how the organization operated.

J. Carmona stated that the VCTC could examine the possibility of severing ties with Storey County, but all ramifications of such action should be considered. Questions concerning impacts on employees were discussed. If the VCTC was not a governmental entity, the employees would not receive County benefits including health insurance. It was noted that the benefits offered by Storey County often help in recruiting qualified candidates for openings.

J. Carmona also emphasized the need for specifics when writing up any sort of memorandum.

A discussion ensued regarding current room and sales tax revenues totaling over \$1,000,000 and whether those revenues would be available to a non-governmental tourism organization. L. Ritter, along with Jennifer McCain, Storey County Comptroller, indicated that those revenues can only go to a Fair and Recreation Board. The discussion then turned to the role of the County Manager in directing the work of the Tourism Director.

Austin Osborne, Storey County Manager, indicated that he was not interested in directing the work of the Tourism Director, but rather, he wanted to ensure that the Director was following County policies so that liabilities could be avoided. He pointed to the responsibilities of the County Comptroller in terms of budgeting and the necessity to have the VCTC adhere to all budgeting and finance rules so that assurances could be made that the VCTC was falling within the Local Government Budget act.

Past issues related to budgets and expenditures involving the recently purchased shuttle bus and bleachers at the Fairgrounds were discussed. P. Hoyle indicated that he had no problem with the County oversight of the budgeting but wanted to verify that the VCTC would make all of the budget decisions. He said that if the VCTC hired and performed regular reviews of the Tourism Director, it would be appropriate for the County Manager to provide input into the administrative portion of his job. R. Gallagher agreed with that approach.

Next, Chairperson A. Perry asked that L. Ritter review the various services that the County currently provides to the VCTC. L. Ritter indicated that during her tenure as Interim Director, the VCTC utilized the services of Human Resources for employee matter, IT for equipment purchases and to secure passwords, the Comptroller to assist with budgeting and oversee the financial statements, Public Works for work on the Visitors Center and Fairgrounds and to maintain the shuttle, and Fire and Sheriff for invaluable service during events. P. Hoyle indicated that he appreciated those services and would like to see them continue.

The facilities currently managed by the VCTC were discussed. Those included Pipers Opera House, the Virginia City Freight Depot, the Gold Hill Depot, and the Fairgrounds. It was clarified that VCTC operated those facilities, however, Storey County owned and maintained them.

It was noted that Pipers Opera House was different from the other facilities as it was used for programming a wide variety of entertainment and community events. It was noted that this facility would be better served if a nonprofit organization operated it. A. Osborne indicated that the status of Piper's Opera House may change in the future so that programming could be managed by a separate entity. J. McCain indicated that there was a separate budget for Pipers, and that the VCTC had budgeted for operating expenses for both the Depots and fairgrounds.

L. Ritter reported that she would draft a new interlocal agreement based upon the discussion and present it at the December 8 Commission Meeting.

6. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

7. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 3:45 PM.