

White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes

Date: March 21, 2019
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location Bristlecone Convention Center – White Pine Room

Members Present: Steve Stork
Bryane Goeringer - via phone
Marietta Henry
Jolene Gardner
Caroline McIntosh - via phone

Staff Present: Kyle Horvath

Members Absent: None

Public Present: George Chachas Barbara Jirak-WP Public Museum
Mark Bassett Michelle Beecher-RNDC

Chairman Stork called to order the meeting of the White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board on March 21, 2019 in the White Pine Room at the Bristlecone Convention Center. Chairman Stork led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

- I. **Public Comment:** Barbara Jirak from the White Pine Public Museum spoke. She said that their organization failed to get on the agenda, so she wanted to take a few moments to give updates on what they have been doing. In McGill, thanks to the volunteers, we are making great progress. We have been able to remain open all through the winter months on Fridays and Saturdays. We have been averaging nine to ten people per day which for McGill is good. Only two or three are locals; the rest are people traveling through the area. We are currently working on getting the fountain up and working so we bring back the old-fashioned ice cream and soda jerk. In Ely, our Cave Bear habitat is being restored. It is close to being revealed. Currently we have a tea pot and tea cup exhibition going on and we also have some extraordinary photography. These exhibitions will run until the end of March and then we will regroup and bring something else out. We have been

doing a lot of updates on our cases in our building so we can highlight some of the exhibits. We have already started to display the 150-year exhibits for the centennial; we will be rotating them out through the entire year. Our second annual B&B – beer and bacon – is scheduled for 6/22/19. We are hoping the proceeds from that will be used to start a fund to go towards the restoration of our caboose. We are also in plans for a Christmas cowboy ball. It will be in November. We would like to make this an annual event. The profits from that will go towards the restoration of our 1850 hearse. It sits on the back of a buckboard. Chairman Stork inquired where the Museum acquired the hearse. Barbara said they have researched for seven months and all they know is that it came in the same time as the stage coach. Our volunteer hours from December through February were 476.5 hours. Our gift shop made a profit of \$2,097.94. which averages out to about \$699 a month. Our visitors in 2017 for this time frame were 52; in 2018 it was 153; in 2019 we're at 294. We started a survey last November asking people who visited how many of them were spending the night; in that three-month period, we had 72 of our visitors who spent the night or spent several days in the area. We Thank You for your help and look forward to your continued support.

Michelle Beecher was present to introduce herself as a candidate for Ely City Council. She lives in Ely. Her day job is working for Rural Nevada Development Corporation as well as the Small Business Development Center. She wanted to let the Board know how supportive she is of the work that they are doing in building a sustainable Ely; she is passionate about Ely and rural Nevada and developing it to make it all that it can be. She is so proud to see Ely and White Pine County showcased in the way that you have been doing it lately. She is hopeful that she will have the opportunity to work with the Board in the future in making Ely even better than it already is.

George Chachas commented he has yet to see the Board put the thirty-day rule on the agenda. Those people who are staying in motels who can't find rentals have nothing to do with tourism. If you want a true reflection of how you are doing with tourism, then take these people off the tax. Mr. Chachas wanted to remind the Board that the downtown community wants four lanes. We are dying downtown. There was snow for fourteen days in the center which would have been a turn lane. You are going to discourage

traffic from coming downtown and winter is the time when you need traffic downtown. The \$4,000 given to the Community Choir needs to be returned. I see the letter that Mr. Beecher has written but that facility does not have ADA compatibility. It is a private club. It has nothing to do with recreation. You have no business promoting a private business. You cannot do that. Mr. Chachas has yet to see any information for Mr. Spear reference business license, a home occupation or if he had a commercial license. Mr. Chachas indicated to Member Gardner Jolene that she needed to stay accountable being on the Ely City Council. Mr. Chachas said he may not be able to make the evening meeting and he is concerned on some of the items. He expressed his concern on 01-19, White Pine Rodders/Car Show; on 05-19, Chamber of Commerce/Concert at the Lake; 09-19 Eastern Nevada Landscape/Weed Conference; 09-19, Chamber of Commerce/Take It To The Lake; 23-19, Nevada Museum Association/Conference; 24-19, WP Men's Golf/four tournaments; and on 27-19, Nevada Northern Railway/Reindeer Express. On numerous funding applications, they are asking money for facility fees. Mr. Chachas said when he was on this Board, if 50 percent or more were from out of town, there was no charge for the facility. If that is not the policy now, you need to change it to encourage those who want to bring a meeting or a convention to Ely. Some of the concerns of Mr. Chachas were that the numbers did not pencil out correctly. Director Horvath commented that he is aware that some numbers do not add up and we are going to have to cut \$40,000 out of what is requested versus what we have so that is what we will be discussing tonight.

II. New Business:

Chairman Stork said that at the request of Member McIntosh who is with us on the phone and traveling, we are going to take Item No. 8 out of order and take that first.

1. Approval of Agenda, Including Removal of Agenda Items-Chairman Stork:

Motion: Caroline McIntosh to approve agenda as presented.

Motion seconded: Jolene Gardner **Unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

2. Approval of Minutes:

a. February 21, 2019

Motion: Jolene Gardner to approve February 21, 2019 minutes.

Motion seconded: Marietta Henry **Unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

At this time, 10:50 a.m., Member McIntosh signed off.

3. Review of the Financial Report: Kyle started with the room tax for February. The taxable receipts for February were \$549,803.36 for a tax collected of \$74,014.93. For the RV Parks and Campgrounds, the taxable sales were \$553,735.03 and that is with several reporting zero with the total room tax collected of \$74,467.07. The breakdown is as follows: Tour and Rec received \$47,688.13 to the budget, the Railroad received \$11,074.81, the pool received \$143.94 and the City of Ely received \$13,483.67. This was our lowest month. Kyle expects next month to be better. If you look at the 8 percent comparison, it showed pretty much a flat line essentially from this time last year. It just confirms the trend that February is a rough time. Big events in January kept things going well. In the future we will look for some February events. On the year-to-date, for City room tax we are at 74% of what we were budgeted for; County 74% of what we were budgeted for. We have exceeded what we budgeted for Center Events. That will continue to grow. If you look down further, Employee Benefits are high because we paid benefits for two employees that departed. That will not be an annual thing. For internet connection, we are still waiting to get that transferred over. Billboard advertising is well under budget. That is where we could maneuver some money around next year. Essentially, we are still operating at a surplus of \$117,306.90. Financially there is no reason to panic.

4. Ratify Bills: Chairman Stork said through March 18, 2019 we have \$121,856.10 in payables and of that there is one bill for Bath Lumber, Check No. 23928 in the amount of \$243.55 as well as one for the Jailhouse Motel and Casino, Check No. 23940 in the amount of \$739.41 bringing a sub-total for payables excluding those two vendors to \$120,873.14. Chairman Stork called for the motion.

Motion: Bryan Goeringer made the motion.

Motion seconded: Jolene Gardner **Unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

5. Approval to pay bill to Bath Lumber: Chairman Stork called for a motion to pay Check No. 23928 to Bath Lumber in the amount of \$243.55.

Motion: Jolene Gardner made the motion.

Motion seconded: Marietta Henry **Unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

Chairman Stork called for a motion to pay Check No. 23940 to Jailhouse Motel and Casino in the amount of \$739.41 for the Valentine's Concert.

Member Goeringer abstained from this vote.

Motion: Jolene Gardner made the motion.

Motion seconded: Marietta Henry **Unanimously approved. Motion carried with three in favor and one abstention.**

6. Acceptance of auditor for budget year 2018-2019: Kyle said this item was on last year's agenda at this time, so he went ahead and pushed that through. Robert is under one more year of contract so there is really nothing to decide currently. Kyle said he recommends we continue with our current auditor under contract. Chairman looks for a motion to approve Robert Moore as auditor for budget year 2018-2019.

Motion: Bryan Goeringer made the motion.

Motion seconded: Marietta Henry **Unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

7. Approval to purchase a new compressor for the convention center freezer totaling \$1,430.00: Kyle said that the freezer compressor went out last week. When we contacted O'Flaherty who does our maintenance he said it was basically shot. We are supposed to get ten years out of the freezer; we have had it for five. Our options are to buy a new freezer for \$5,000 to \$6,000 and potentially get another five years out of it or buy a new compressor for \$1,430 which would be under a warranty. The question was asked as to how long the warranty is. Kyle said it is a three-year warranty.

Motion: Jolene Gardner made the motion to approve the purchase of a new compressor for the convention center freezer totaling \$1,430.

Motion seconded: Marietta Henry **Unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

8. Preliminary Budget Review for FY 19/20 Budget: Director Horvath displayed on the screen a working Excel spreadsheet so as recommendations are made, they can calculate it/them in real time. Kyle then proceeded to go through the budget in detail. He said we are projecting a very modest increase in revenues, decreasing some of the expenses, and moving some numbers around to accommodate the new Strategic Plan and some of the requests that have already been approved.

Income:

- A projection in City Room Tax is at 3% which is \$1,390,500; for the County Room Tax an increase of 3% which is \$129,780.
- An increase in Center Events is projected with the reason being we have a lot more events already on the calendar than the year before. That is shown at a 25% increase to \$50,000.
- Interest of \$3,000 is a factual number. Currently year-to-date we have made \$3,000 in interest so we are over the \$2,000 that was budgeted.
- Grant Reimbursement is staying the same but if you look at the Fund Balance, that was the \$250,000 we borrowed from our savings account last year to make the big capital improvements that were needed – the bathrooms, the street – but Kyle doesn't feel comfortable borrowing money from our savings account every year. Consequently, he went ahead and reduced that to zero;
- Miscellaneous is being pushed through the same as it was at \$20,000.
- Right now, an income of \$1,619,280 is projected.

Expense:

You'll notice in Expenses that a lot of things have been pushed through from what we are budgeted. If you look at year-to-date that will be reported on the financial report. We are spending about what was budgeted for last year.

- No changes were made to Payroll or Employee Benefits because we still need to get with the County to see how any change in hiring a new employee next year is affected. That is left quiet for right now.

- There is an increase in Accounting Fees because we know that Jeff is a \$2,000 a month cost so that was brought up to actuals at \$24,000.
- General Government total is \$92,771.46, an increase of \$11,000.
- In going through Culture and Recreation Expenses, an increase is proposed to Center Advertising. We didn't have any money budgeted for advertising the center to try to bring in more conventions. I am asking for \$5,000 so that we can do the facilities guide marketing piece that can go ahead and be sent out to different events and conventions that will reflect not only this facility but all the facilities available in town. It will include an approved catering list, contacts to our hotels and things like that.
- You will then see a lot of items pushed through because those are bills that we know what the actuals are going to be.
- The next one where there is a big change is Billboard Advertising. We had budgeted last year \$50,000. In the actuals we are only at about \$20,000 and there are no more big expenses regarding billboards, so a recommendation is being made at a decrease of \$20,000 in that line item which leaves us at \$30,000.
- For the next item Webpage Maintenance, there was no money budgeted for that. A recommendation of a real conservative \$1,000 in case we need to do any upgrades to our plugins or to buy any new plugins to add functionality to our website.
- Historic Asset Maintenance is a new line item that is being proposed. This would be if we have historic buildings that are on the National Historic Registry, whether that is in Ely or Lund or McGill, there is a large expense to keep these buildings kept up. If we let them go, soon those historic buildings are being demolished. This is specifically for anything that is on the National Historic Registry and it would be to where organizations that manage those facilities would have to come with a plan, with a map and we could supplement actual facility improvements to try to preserve these buildings.
- Printing is the next one. For as much printing we are doing for organizations, an increase to \$2,000 from \$500 is proposed.
- The next one is a new line item – Public Art. Murals are our big asset. We are known as a mural community, yet we ask for these organizations to come and ask for money here and there for mural restoration so a proposal of \$15,000-line item for public art. This

would be restoration of our current mural assets as well as helping to fund new public art projects. That could be murals, it could be sculptures, it could be theatre, it could be music in the park. If approved, in April I would like to post a public meeting for the future of arts in White Pine County and bring in all the stakeholders and ask what do you want to see the arts in White Pine County look like for the next five years.

- For the Main Street America Program, \$10,000 was approved so I went ahead and put what the Board currently approved. There have been some requests to change that, so this is the time to have that discussion.
- The Community Marketing Campaign was pushed through at \$80,000 because we have so many grants in the last two cycles; a lot of the expenses for this marketing has come out of grants. I don't want to do a big reduction in this item because that is our meat and potatoes but if there is a need to move money around and free up money for other things, I would feel comfortable reducing that to even \$70,000 and making sure our grant writing was really on point for all our special events. If you look at the year-to-date, our Community Marketing will have a lot of bills come in next month for that but right now it is still looking like we have a lot of money in there.
- The Consulting Services line is still in and pushed through. I want to keep that line in there because having the ability to call Joel or Sherri for consultation services is important. You will notice on our year-to-date that we haven't used all that money. We could reduce it down to \$40,000 if we needed to free up money.
- You will see for the White Pine Public Museum there is budgeted \$22,000. That was in the conversation with the Board, we give them \$12,000 and they would ask for a \$10,000 grant and there was all this stuff so why not make it just a line item. They are our visitors' center on the weekends. We would like them to put a sign up that says something like Visitors' Center or Visitors' Information as part of this partnership.
- Outdoor Rec Grants is a push through.
- Aid to Organizations stays at \$70,000 which is what was awarded last year.

- The Capital Outlay that was at \$330,000 is essentially our Capital Improvement grants program but that was also where the money came out for the streets and the bathrooms. That is where that money was budgeted. So right now, year-to-date, it doesn't look like we have used all of that but that will change. We will use all of that. What is budgeted for 2020 is \$150,000 the reason being we have reduced \$250,000 from borrowing at top. With what was granted for Capital Improvements this last go around plus having money for major facility improvements, \$150,000 is running lean but will not be handcuffing us to what we will be able to do in continuing to improve the facility.
- At the bottom in Due to Other Governments, I went ahead and increased those to 3% since they are associated with our room tax. I was looking at past grants and there have been times where it has been underbudgeted and times where it has been overbudgeted, so this is the first year where it actually looked like it has been a true accurate example. I figured with a 3% increase on top there will be a 3% increase on the bottom.

To summarize, Kyle said right now what we are looking at is a \$31,925.26 surplus in the budget. This is now where the conversation and recommendations start.

A procedural note: To more easily digest the comments of the Board, they have been grouped together by Board member which will not necessarily be in the order they were given.

Chairman Stork:

Chairman Stork asked what the pleasure of the Board is. Kyle said a good tool would be the year-to-date budget report. This will show you where we're at with these exact line items, to give you an estimate of whether we should increase or decrease.

- Chairman Stork said that when we had talked about the Main Street Program, we initially talked about \$10,000. He would like to see that doubled to \$20,000 if we can.
- With respect to the Museum, he is not opposed to giving them the \$22,000; however, I think that we need to stipulate that perhaps

\$2,000 of that be earmarked for a sign designated as a visitors' center so that people know that they are a visitors' center. Maybe we can formulate a form that we can give to them that will provide some of the data that we are looking for. He didn't think that is asking too much to get that information in return for the money given to them with that information being so valuable to this Board in making decisions.

- Chairman Stork said the one unknown item, and he will get this information tomorrow, is we were going to work with White Pine County on providing Human Resources for our staff. He doesn't anticipate that being a substantial amount, but it is probably going to be in the thousands. Chairman Stork said it is important that the employees have the resources to go to. Every other employee in the County has Human Resources.
- Chairman Stork said the other thing we need to look at is I would like to see us evaluate our Director in the near future and I'm sure he will be due a pay increase so let's program in at least a 6% increase. Kyle said that we have part-time employees that are probably due for a pay increase as well. I would like to invest in some of our staff that is doing really good job and keep them and retain them. That is something I would like you to consider. We had talked about increasing pay but then not offering the holiday hours because what is happening is with our part-time employees if they come in on holidays and work, they claim the time and half for the hours and that actually dings us for how many hours we can work them. If we didn't offer that but increase their pay, it would kind of be six and one-half dozen of another but there would be a benefit on how many hours that we can still use our part-time staff. Kyle said another thing to consider is moving the visitor center to Aultman Street and utilizing shared space with the Chamber. We would have an employee there as a visitor liaison. For your consideration, possibly bringing on another part-time employee to be that utilities person during the day at the visitor center and then relieving staff in the afternoon as needed.
- Chairman Stork asked Kyle to put together an abstract for the Board of employees, the current wage and Kyle's recommended or proposed increase. The Board can look at that and take it from there.

Member McIntosh:

- When Chairman Stork inquired of Member McIntosh if she thought \$2,000 was a reasonable price for signage, she thought it was; however, it could be up to \$3,000. She felt we need someone with design ability to take down some of the signs as they are confusing as they stand now. She would like to see hours indicated on any signage. She would also emphasize since this is a large chunk of money for our budget and while she appreciates their oral reports, we don't have data presented on paper such as the railroad so it is transparent to where this money is going and what the increases are. They are doing a great job, but we don't have any way to prove it with documents. And she would like to see an updated strategic plan, no more than two pages, of where they are going and what are they doing with this money. I need transparency so if we have questions from the public as to why this amount is so high so we can prove that yes, it is a positive effect. Member McIntosh supports everything the Museum is doing. She would like to see a written report submitted at each of our meetings or at least quarterly. If they need help with a strategic plan, we can help them.
- Member McIntosh would concur and support doubling the money to the Main Street Program up to \$20,000. That has a broader impact than the Museum.
- Member McIntosh looked at the legal and suggested we put it up a couple thousand from \$6,000 to \$8000.
- She would like to see the Historic Asset Maintenance changed from \$3,000 to \$5,000. Kyle wanted to clarify that the Historic Asset Maintenance is budgeted at \$30,000 not \$3,000. Kyle's rationale with that is construction is not cheap.
- Member McIntosh also supports budgeting an increase for our director and then also looking at that abstract of the staff.

Member Goeringer:

- Member Goeringer agrees with the extra money being earmarked for the Main Street Program up to \$20,000.
- He also agrees with the museum money if they change the signage and any amount of money we give out should probably come back with a written report.

- As far as the staff goes, he agrees that we should look at it.

Member Henry:

- Member Henry said she would like to see more money given to the community. Member Henry would like to see a little bit more money to Aid to Organizations since we get so many requests. Kyle said that last year with the borrowing of the money was the first year that we have given that much. In the past, it was usually around \$45,000 to \$55,000. So last year there was increase of about \$20,000. Member Henry said this is where people say we should be giving more to the community. Kyle said last year we gave \$250,000 out in grants between capital improvement, aid to organization and outdoor rec. Member Henry said that was a one-time deal. Kyle agreed. Last year was a special time in that there was more money than had been in previous years and it was used properly. It benefited a lot of people. Unfortunately for the sustainability we would have to increase our revenues a lot more to be able to parallel what we were able to do last year. With that said, what we have budgeted in our room tax from last year, we are exceeding that. This our lowest month and then we are starting to build back up again. We could do a 5% increase in city and county. I really wouldn't recommend doing any more. I really want to be conservative on the increase of room tax. There are two ways to open up money. You either project more revenue or you cut out expenses. If we wanted to open up more revenue, Consultation could go down to \$40,000 and Community Marketing could go down to \$70,000 and still have ample money to satisfy the goals of those lines. With that change Kyle said we now have a surplus of \$41,925.26.

Chairman Stork felt that we had enough notes. He asked when the preliminary budget is due into the Department of Taxation. Kyle said April 15. It was determined that a public hearing needed to be held before April 15 to finalize the budget. After further discussion, the date and time of April 4 at 10 a.m. was set for a budget workshop/public hearing. Chairman Stork said we will have our budget workshop first, finalize our numbers and then do the public hearing.

9. Executive Director's Report:

a. Marketing

b. Events

c. Facilities

On the digital marketing campaign, we have three of them out there right now. Overall between the three campaigns we have reached well over a million people. Social media is going very well. Continuing to grow. We are pushing about 2,000 followers organically on Facebook. Our goal now will be to go after the paid followers. We will be doing a lot more advertising to try to get more followers, particularly out of the Las Vegas area. We have been putting out YouTube videos, short and longer ones. Over 151,000 minutes of viewing time on our YouTube page. We are still active on twitter with over 100 followers. Grants are coming up. We will be writing grants for special events marketing; writing grants for NV Magazine ads; writing grants for marketing campaign for the golf course that targets college golfers; and also a campaign that focuses strictly on Las Vegas. May 10 is the driving of the gold spike. We had Nevada Momentum out here last week and they started working on the visitors' guide. We will have the new visitor guide prior to June. Closed out on Monday and Tuesday with Drop Media who has done all the mountain bike videos and Polaris snow mobiles. We were filming that winter promotional video that we received a grant for from Travel Nevada. We will have our own winter activities video. Nicole has been on full time for the last two weeks. Meg has been working on an hourly basis helping with the transition. Her last day will be 25th. She has offered, if necessary, to come in hourly for certain things. Thanks to her for helping with the transition.

III. Old Business:

1. Parking Lot Sub Committee – Goering: Bryan plans on putting in for some more bids and get a rough number of what we want to spend on fixing the parking lot. Kyle said he wants to get the RFP out once Bryan has some numbers and he wants to do the one for the bathroom remodel because it is probably going to take until the end of the fiscal year before the whole process fully goes through.

2. White Pine Golf Course – McIntosh: Member McIntosh unavailable.

3. White Pine Trails Update – Goeringer: Bryan said he is waiting to hear back from SNIPLMA for our big funding. As soon as the snow melts, we will finish another two miles of trails.

4. Nevada Northern Railway Update Bassett: Mark Bassett gave his report on the status of the locomotives. All is going very well. The railroad carried in February about the same number of passengers as we did the previous year. The big difference in February and what was started new this year is a photo workshop. We also got our media placement. We received a \$50,000 donation from Kinross Bald mountain which will be used in the restoration of Locomotive 81. The AT&T commercial was shot from February 11 through February 14. It should be out in late April or early May. The Union Pacific Railroad is bringing out the world's largest steam locomotive to Ogden. The locomotive's nickname is Big Boy. It is three times as big as locomotive 93. Kyle asked for an update on the star pad and flat car. Mark said the new Dodge Ranger is supposed to be here any day now. As soon as it comes, we are going to ride the rails. The flat car should be done by July

5. Board Member Reports: Member Henry said she is the new chairman of the horse race committee. We are working hard on sponsorships.

IV. Public Comment: George Chachas referenced the digital sign that is on Great Basin Boulevard between Family Dollar and the parking lot at Mt. Wheeler. He said as you are coming from the south you have two informational signs blocking your advertising. The City gets a sizable amount of money from this Board to take care of their streets. At their last meeting, they took over \$4,300 or \$4,500 out of that fund for other items. They need to be told that when that money is dedicated, it needs to go into the streets. Chairman Stork asked George specifically what was the \$4,300 used for. George said they took it out of the street funds for beautification. He said that has nothing to do with repairing the streets. Member Gardner said the money coming in is new money. She said that we can use it for what we want to use it for. George said that when it comes from this Board and it is designated for infrastructure, that is what it goes to. Kyle said that he will pull the meeting minutes that relate to this issue. He thought that right at the very end there was a caveat that said, "or whatever they see fit." In the very beginning it was street repairs, earmarked for something very specifically, or as they see fit. He said he would pull those minutes and have them on the next agenda to address that. Kyle is also going to put on the next agenda our policy on the thirty-day rule so it can be addressed.

V. Adjournment: Chairman Stork called for a motion to adjourn until 5:30 this evening.

Motion: Jolene Gardner made the motion that we adjourn until 5:30 p.m.

Motion seconded: Marietta Henry **Unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

Minutes submitted by: Judi Bourbeau

Minutes approved by:

Name

Date