

White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes

Date: August 25, 2020
Time: 4 p.m.
Location Bristlecone Convention Center – White Pine Room

Members Present: Caroline McIntosh
Ian Bullis
Bryane Goeringer
Marietta Henry

Staff Present: Kyle Horvath
Errol Porter
McKinzie Hilton

Members Absent: Kurt Carson

Public Present: George Chachas, Maureen Otzelberger

Chairman McIntosh called to order the meeting of the White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board on August 25, 2020 at 4pm in the White Pine Room at the Bristlecone Convention Center. Bryane Goeringer led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

- I. **Public Comment:** Mr. Chachas said the money that was given to the Community Choir for pigeon control needs to come back to the Board. NRS forbids you from assisting a private business. They were not a 501c at the time they applied. Mr. Chachas said the new parking lot for the convention center is close to being completed yet the center walkway has not been put back in. It does not meet minimum ADA standards for the handicapped. It forces the handicapped into the street which could be hazardous, especially for those in a wheelchair. It also appears that one of the lights involved in the renovation located on the corner of 7th Street and Lyons was installed onto private property. Mr. Chachas said the Nevada Northern Railroad is continuing to get additional grant monies from this Board in addition to the \$240,000 it received in room tax. They are not operating under the Open Meeting Law and the taxpayers cannot see how the money is spent. At a City Council meeting on September 19, 2019 the Railroad was seeking to borrow approximately \$450,000 and for what we do not know. At the City Council meeting held on August 13, 2020 the Railroad asked for approval of an amendment to paragraph iii of the joint development agreement with the Nevada Northern Railway Foundation. The approval gave the Railroad permission to incur debt up to 10 percent of its total assets as reflected on a current balance sheet. What is the value of the current balance sheet? Time was called.
- II. **New Business:**
 1. **Approval of Agenda, Including Removal of Agenda Items-Chairman McIntosh:**

Motion: Member Henry made a motion to remove under New Business, Item 2, approval of minutes of July 17, 2020 as they have already been approved.

Motion seconded: Member Bullis. **Motion carried.**

2. Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Member Goeringer moved to approve minutes of July 28, 2020 4pm.

Mr. Chachas said a picture of the Silver State Motel was to be included with the July 28, 2020 minutes and he did not see it attached. (It should be noted that the picture Mr. Chachas is referring to is attached to the July 17, 2020 minutes – the date that he submitted it.)

Motion seconded: Member Henry. **Motion carried.**

3. Review of the Financial Report: Kyle presented the Room Tax Report for monies collected in July 2020. He gave the breakdown of monies collected from Hotel/Hotel and RV Parks/Campgrounds; he then gave the disbursement totals to the various entities. Chairman McIntosh noticed that monies were collected from Bill and Karla's Townhouse Airbnb. She said there are many more Airbnbs and asked who is notifying them. Kyle said he is trying to work with Airbnb but has found it very frustrating. He is not getting cooperation from Airbnb. We have the City ordinance but with the County not adopting the same policy, we can only require the City properties to comply. Chairman McIntosh proposed we have our attorney write a letter to Airbnb. Member Henry had requested that we notify the City Council members each time that the City receives their check because most of them have no idea how much money we give them. Chairman McIntosh suggested a form be devised that the room receipts for the City of Ely collected through room tax in the month of and in this amount be shown and given to them as part of the report with their check. A request would be made that this be part of their minutes. We are 11 percent over where we were this time last year mainly because of all the contractors staying in town in individual rooms because of COVID.

Kyle discussed the year-to-date budget. Last month we were reporting an operating deficit at the beginning of the fiscal year of \$58,000 which is normal in the first month. It usually takes about three months to get back into the black because everyone is getting their grant reimbursements and the beginning of the year bills. In the second month of this fiscal year, we are only reporting a \$19,000 deficit so we covered quite a bit of ground in the matter of a month. Chairman McIntosh inquired about the category of Dues and Subscriptions which shows us at 120 percent. Kyle says it shows the Chamber subscription that we are holding on paying. This is a bit inaccurate since we are pulling back on that check. The only other one over budget is Insurance and Taxes but that is a one-time payout. Kyle is glad that we caught up as well as we did.

4. Ratify Bills:

Motion: Member Henry removed Check No. 24847 payable to the WP Chamber of Commerce in the amount of \$1,925 and with that removal a motion was made to pay

the bills in the amount of \$107,665.15, check nos. 24811 through 24855 minus check nos. 24847 and 24825.

Motion seconded: Member Bullis. **Motion carried.**

Kyle was asked to give an explanation as to why the WP Chamber check was removed for payment. He said it is our annual membership dues and looking at the bill, he feels we are being categorized incorrectly or being charged for employees that we no longer have. It seemed a little excessive, so we are going to ask to look at the rate chart and see how that figure was arrived at.

5. Approval to Pay Bill to Bath Lumber: Member McIntosh advised she will abstain from this item due to her interest in Bath Lumber.

Motion: Member Henry to pay \$289.28, check no. 24825, to Bath Lumber.

Motion seconded: Member Goeringer. **Motion carried with Member McIntosh abstaining from vote.**

6. Update on Chamber Master Plan re: Sculpture Park: Kyle started out by clarifying that the area that does not have the sculptures on it is owned by Andy and April Bath of Economy Drug and the side that has the sculptures on it is owned by the Renaissance Village. The Chamber has always been acting as the agent in the past to do the Christmas decorations. It was felt that it would be good to bring everybody that had a stake in the game, especially the property owners, to the table. We have had several meetings. Right now, we are essentially making a checklist of items we want to see. Because of the costs involved, we are looking at making this a three-year plan. At our next meeting, Kyle will have a checklist of what we are looking at. If we divided it into a three-year plan, we are looking at a \$5,000 investment each year.

7. Update on Strategic Plan with Museum: Kyle did get back four or five surveys from the Board. He has been compiling the answers to the questions. The next step is to set up a meeting the Museum Board to go over the answers to discuss the priorities.

8. Funding in the Amount of \$5,000 for the EDA Planning Grant Application for a Trails Institute: Kyle pointed out the information in the packet that outlines the description and deliverables in the grant proposal that is being written right now. Essentially a grant is being written for a feasibility study to develop a work force program around standardizing a trail building program. Communities are building and planning trails. The problem is there is not enough qualified trail builders. There is a need to create a workforce that can build quality trails. It puts Ely in the center of educating people to become leaders in the outdoor recreation field. This is a \$200,000 grant; there is a twenty percent match of \$40,000. The group is trying to go out and find five thousand-dollar commitments in multiple organizations. There is partnership with Ely Shoshone tribe, with private investors at the state and national level. We have received six letters of support from our elected officials. The ask upon Tour and Rec is can we find \$5,000 to kick in? It is a four-to-one ratio. A five thousand match unlocks twenty thousand dollars toward this grant. At the end of it we would be given a document that says this is our trail building

certification program. Chairman McIntosh said the trails and our outdoor recreation is our number one priority. The big issue that we have is a skilled work force. Kyle said when you hire a trail building company, they bring their top-level people and then hire locally. This would not only be for non-motorized mountain bike trails; this would also be OHV trails and for winter trails. Chairman McIntosh said it looks like we could take five thousand out of outdoor rec grants. We can see how our lodging receipts continue but she felt this where it would fit in nicely.

Motion: Member Henry that we fund the five thousand dollars for the EDA planning grant for a trails institute.

Motion seconded: Member Goeringer. **Motion carried.**

9. Update and Completion Timeline of the White Pine County Facilities Guide: Kyle said he tabled this item. There is no progress currently.

10. Annual Review of Executive Director – McIntosh: Chairman thanked publicly our HR who we have contracted with through the County. Specifically, Mr. Bunch who prepared a form, did all the calculations, and made it all look so professional. It is a one to five scale and it went from 3.2 to 5.0 on different levels. Overall, Kyle received a 4.0. The Board members will sign along with Kyle. Chairman McIntosh said she as well as the Board appreciates all of Kyle's service. Kyle said he appreciates being able to work with such a great community and to be able to do all the great ideas we come up with.

Motion: Member Bullis to accept the annual review of Executive Director Kyle Horvath.

Motion seconded: Member Goeringer. **Motion carried.**

11. Executive Director's Report:

a. Marketing; b. Events; c. Facilities

Errol spoke to Marketing. He covered Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube. He said we have started to include COVID safe/conscious community guidelines at the end of major events we post on Facebook at the request of the Mayor. He then discussed targeted digital covering display targeting which covers search retargeting, search engine marketing and site retargeting. Next was targeted Youtube ads and Facebook retargeting. He went over our Website sessions last month (up 23 percent), our page views and the top five pages visited. A few updates include a new article on Jake Kate's Kerouac's Restaurant, a reordered mountain bike brochure, top 15 poster and brochure, and a brochure with a list of restaurants and attractions. We have what we are calling a local cheat sheet which will be passed out to front-line staff to give to patrons asking questions about places to eat and attractions. Another one will be a mailer entitled Your "Staycation" Destination. This will go to our neighbors in the surrounding counties letting them know what White Pine County has to offer. Our influencer Jenny Wilden will be town this weekend. Chairman McIntosh appreciated the graph Errol included.

Kyle said East River had coordinated two different news spots for Kyle to do Zoom interviews. Jenny Wilden is with Outdoor Sports Guide in Salt Lake City. She is coming out this weekend and is interested in mountain biking and the train. Bike Magazine will

be out from October 4-16. They will be out here a week before to set up and a week after to break down. Kyle is looking for adequate housing. They are working with our local caterers and local riders. Kyle is working on the trails institute grant, an RTP grant for the Cave Lake trail expansion and a rerecording of the mural audio tour (28 of them) and adding it to the website. BLM is doing a massive upgrade to the Garnet Hill area. The IMBA portion will include twenty-five miles of single track. When all is said and done, the downtown area will be connected with the Keystone area, with the top of Squaw Peak as well as another access point at the Lackawanna intersection. The disc golf course paperwork is due to be approved this week. Kyle has written four letters of support this past month – one to the USFS for the Ward Mountain trail expansion, one to BLM for the Garnet Hill Recreation Area expansion, one for the GBC Toiyabe Trail Building University Program and NDOW to speed up the Cave Lake recovery. Events that are coming up include Race the Rails on September 12. Right now, there are 51 registrants. The cost of Race the Rails per person – medals a little over \$7, the Thank You coins are \$5.50, the t-shirts are \$11.50, the catering is done at \$17 and the train ticket comes out to \$15 per person. Per person cost to us is \$56. Our registration fees are between \$65 for early and \$85 for day of. If everyone registered early, our breakeven point is about 77 riders. Fears, Tears and Beers is happening September 26. In reference to the parking lot, the water is connected to City water, so all our landscaping is on a timer. The power is getting connected to the lights. Fire inspection for the whole building happened; we passed. They did say we do not have a fire monitoring system here because when it was put in it was grandfathered to not have one. When the alarm goes off in the building and we are in the office you do not hear it. If we are outside of the building and nobody is here and the fire breaks out at night, there is nothing to alert anybody that anything is going on. Our fire extinguishers are refilled. Court is still on the books here, but nothing has happened yet. We are still working on the technology upgrade in the back. The first quote was for \$60,000. In reference to the Broadbent park survey, Kyle would love all input. Still working on the facilities guide. We are working on an OHV brochure that will mimic our mountain bike brochure. We are working with the film fest on a short film poster and letterhead right now as well as the permanent signage that will go for the walking murals tour. Kyle showed a report he is working on that he hopes to include in the financial report. This is something Nicole has taken the initiative on. It is a seven-month spread right now. You can see trends of the good months and the lean months; you can see if properties fall off the charts so you can follow up with them and offer support. Kyle is asking the Board if they would like to see this in the monthly financial report. The response was Yes. Thank you to Nicole.

III. Old Business:

1. Discussion Only: Board Member Reports: Member Goeringer said he put in the SNIPLMA grant for the trails. It is all finalized, and we finished trail building. There are more people on trails right now than we have ever seen. Member Bullis said he came awfully close to possibly getting a Les Schwab tire here. They are concerned with the

outcome of the election. Perhaps afterwards, we can have more serious discussions. Member Henry said ranch rodeo and the 4H auction for the kids both went well. Chairman McIntosh said Thank You to Kyle because he underplayed the planning grant. It is everyday on a Zoom call or you are doing your homework. It has taken an extraordinary amount of time. It has been truly relevant and matches our strategic plan.

2. Discussion Only: Agenda Item(s) for Next Board Meeting: No comments.

- IV. Public Comment:** Mr. Chachas continued with the Ely City Council meeting held on August 13, 2020 the railroad asked for approval of an amendment to paragraph iii of the joint development agreement with the Nevada Northern Railway Foundation. The approval gave the railroad permission to incur debt up to 10 percent of its total assets as reflected on a current balance sheet. What is the value of the current balance sheet? No one knows. Mr. Chachas said Shane Bybee failed to collect approximately 15 years of track rental fees from S&S Shortline when he sat as Chairman of the Railroad Board. We need to cut their funds off. Mr. Chachas said going back to previous presentations that he has given to the Board, the Airbnbs operating now continue to operate in violation of City and County codes. They are operating a commercial venture in a residential zone. They have not made any attempt to apply for the proper licensing. He is requesting a list of all the properties and their addresses that are known to be conducting business. Time called.

V. Adjournment:

Motion: Member Henry to adjourn at 5:03 pm.

Motion seconded: Member Goeringer. **Motion carried.**

Minutes submitted by: Judi Bourbeau

Minutes approved by:

	
Name	Date