

**White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board  
Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** September 22, 2020  
**Time:** 4 p.m.  
**Location:** Bristlecone Convention Center – White Pine Room

**Members Present:** Ian Bullis, Kurt Carson  
Marietta Henry, via Zoom  
Caroline McIntosh, via Zoom

**Staff Present:** Kyle Horvath  
Errol Porter, via Zoom  
McKinzie Hilton

**Members Absent:** Bryane Goeringer

**Public Present:** George Chachas, Wayne Cameron

Chairman McIntosh called to order the meeting of the White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board on September 22, 2020 at 4:03 pm in the White Pine Room at the Bristlecone Convention Center. Member Bullis led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

- I. **Public Comment:** George Chachas spoke to Item 2.6. You are to review a sketch regarding update to the Chamber three-year plan on the Sculpture Park. Mr. Chachas would like to know who submitted the sketch. Is it the same individual who did the redesign of the Convention Center parking lot? The submitted sketch is not informative. I want to know if it was done by a licensed person or a firm. On agenda Item 2.4 you consider ratifying bills. There is nothing in the packet for a member of the public to review. When I made out my request for a meeting packet, I requested a copy of everything that was to be presented before the Board and that includes bills. I have yet to receive any bills whatsoever. The new parking lot for the Convention Center appears to be close to completion. The center walkway has not been put back in. This is new construction and it is mandated to meet minimum Federal ADA requirements. One of the lights involved in the renovation on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Lyons was installed on private property. It needs to be corrected. You are required to stay on City easement only. Pedestrian strips were painted on one corner of the lot but not on the other. He wants to know who designed the fiasco, who approved it and inspected it. Mr. Chachas said he presented before the Board a question regarding the Silver State Motel licenses. Vehicles are still parked there. The money that was given to the Community Choir needs to come back to this Board. NRS forbids you from assisting a private business. They were not a 501c at the time they applied. I have been told they rent the building to the tumble bugs. Again, does the building basement have a second fire exit? Does the Community Choir have a state business license, a city license, or any other license? Time was called. Mr. Chachas gave his written comments to the Board via the Executive Director.

Wayne Cameron from the Chamber of Commerce spoke. At the last meeting of the Board there was a discussion of the Chamber dues. I am hoping there will be a report on that when you get to Board member reports.

**II. New Business:**

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

**Motion:** Member Bullis moved to accept agenda as presented.

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

**2. Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** Member Henry moved to approve minutes of August 25, 2020 4pm.

**Motion seconded:** Member Carson. **Motion carried.**

**3. Review of the Financial Report:** Kyle went over the Room Tax report showing tax collected from the individual properties and how it was broken out to the various entities. He said they did follow up with Jennifer Lee and created the form and document to send to the City with the room tax collection. We are doing this for everybody who gets room tax, so they know what the contribution is. In looking at the room tax revenues comparison report, you will find it is only down .8%. Despite not being able to have our largest event of the year, the horse races, our room tax was still supplemented by the contractors. The new report is the one we went over last month by Nicole who took the initiative and has been keeping track of the running tally for all the lodging properties. What you see here is the trends of which properties are doing well, which months are lean, and we can start to see where the gaps in the schedule are. It also shows the contributions of room tax allocated to the various entities. In reviewing the year-to-date budget, you can see we are operating with a \$46,841.04 surplus. Chairman McIntosh gave compliments to Nicole on the new month-to-month report. It was asked that she add a header and footer on it, so we know what the document is to be called. Member Henry also said Thank You to Nicole for the new report. It helps everyone who is a recipient of funds to know where they are month-to-month plus the cumulative total.

**4. Ratify Bills:**

**Motion:** Member Henry moved to ratify bills in the amount of \$139,703.86, check nos. 10000 through 10042, minus check no. 10016.

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

**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 moved to pay \$138.14 to Bath Lumber, Check No. 10016.

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

**6. Update on Chamber Three-Year Plan re: Sculpture Park:** Chairman McIntosh gave her compliments on all who have been working on this plan. Kyle went over the design presented. Kyle said they have created and designed a space by using larger than life features to create this magical Christmas destination that would promote families coming down and taking pictures. He went on to say there are eight- to ten-foot-tall pin-striped pillars that are defining the space. The tree would be in the middle on a raised platform. Ginda has 25 white LED snowflakes that we will be purchasing to put on the tree and to hang from different sculptures. The main entryway, which may fall into Phase Two, will have ten- to twelve-foot-tall light up nutcrackers. They will stand sentinel on each side of an arch which will create a grand entryway with the tree in the center and the sculptures in the background. You can also enter in from the sides. On the corner of Clark and 7<sup>th</sup>, we are discussing doing a façade like a western Santa's village. Ginda has a Santa's village already made that was in a casino in Reno which is not being used so we are going to be able to get that. It will be a Santa's workshop that kids can walk into. It will be a good photo area. We had budgeted \$5,000 which we will meet. This will essentially define the space, raise the tree up and create a picture area. The additional phases will be getting the arches and the nutcrackers and doing professional LED color changing lights. The lights will be in the recesses of the sculpture. Member Carson asked how we were going to get the tree up with the NDF crews gone. Wayne Cameron said they have an honor camp at the prison, and he is hoping they can accomplish that.

**Motion:** Member Carson moved to approve following the three-year plan as presented.

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

**7. Update on Finalized Strategic Plan with Museum:** Kyle has been working on recording answers from the survey. He did not have a further update currently except to say it is on his list of things to do. Chairman McIntosh suggested this item be moved to the November Board meeting for an update.

**8. Update and Completion Timeline of the White Pine County Draft Facilities Guide:** Kyle said the idea of the facilities guide was to not only promote the Convention Center and all that it offers but to also highlight other meeting spaces, parks and facilities that people can rent out for weddings, reunions, business meetings and so forth. The concept initially was to have a printed piece that we can send out to attract new events and to be given to people when they ask where can I do things. Nicole went around to all the people on the lists to confirm the contact information and assets. This will be one of our main pieces. Kyle asks that the Board look through it to see if anything has been left out or if any changes need to be made. Chairman McIntosh said she would like as many people as possible to see it for input such as the City Council and Commissioners. Kyle will put in Council and Commission meeting packets and make a short presentation during those meetings' public comment times. No action necessary.

## **9. Executive Director's Report: a. Marketing; b. Events; c. Facilities**

Errol gave a report on social media starting with Facebook. As of today, we have 4,000 followers with 54% being women and 45% being men, ages 34 to 54. There were several posts and an article. He spoke to Instagram and twitter and the number of followers. For targeted digital, he gave a breakdown on display targeting for search retargeting, search engine marketing and site retargeting. He also gave a breakdown on targeted Youtube ads and Facebook retargeting. For the website, the top pages were Homepage, Lodging, Fears, Tears and Beers, Dining and Things To Do. Our average session duration was up 47%; our bounce rate was down 16%; 81% were new visitors and 19% were returning visitors. We had a new article come out on Jake and Kate's Kerouac's Restaurant which was written by Errol. Errol will be doing some upcoming articles on the opening of the disc golf course and ghost towns. The mailer version of our cheat sheet went out in the mail recently and will be given out at the Fears, Tears and Beers event. He showed the printed version of the Top 15 brochure. Chairman McIntosh asked if any Youtube ads were being done before Kyle's arrival. He said those were started when he came on board and we have gone through one summer, winter and another summer with three different videos we have done for the seasons and having a 50% view rate was outstanding. Thank you to Errol on your report.

- Kyle addressed the Broadbent Park survey. He has been working with Chairman McIntosh and Jim Alworth in trying to create a community survey that we can send out that will get an appetite from the community as to what they want to see in Broadbent Park. Kyle is asking that before he puts this draft into a digital form or a more well formatted print form, is there anything we want to add. George Chachas asked if Heritage Park is Love's. He said he is against that. He said he does not want prime commercial property off the tax rolls. We have sufficient parks that we can enhance. But Heritage Park needs to go away. Do not take commercial property that is prime off the tax rolls. Kyle said that he will pass it on to the appropriate people in the County.
- The parking lot is almost complete. The sculpture needs to be installed. It was damaged in shipping. It has been sent back to be fixed. The lights are on. The irrigation to the trees is on. The crosswalks have been painted.
- We had eighty riders for Race the Rails. It is the first year that we made money. We are showing a \$1,700 gain from putting on that event.
- Trails university – This is the standardized trail building school or curriculum that would be based out of GBC. It would be amazing for our branding as an outdoor recreation destination, but it would provide work force development opportunities for people either displaced or getting into the work force. They would get certifications not just in trail blazing but in CDL license and possibly fire crew, forest service. This would be motorized trail, non-motorized trail, and winter trail. We are trying to find funding for the match.
- Disc golf course – This is a project we have been working with BLM to expand our disc golf course to an 18-hole course.
- IMBA Trail Accelerator Grant – The maps are still being worked on. We were asked to announce the next round of grant recipients by producing a video.

- Trail Map Kiosk – Now that the parking lot is done, Terry said the trail map kiosk that is going into the parking lot across from Sport’s World will be done as soon as he gets done with the Ridley’s parking lot.
- This weekend is Fears, Tears and Bears. Fire and Ice is scheduled from January 15-17, 2021. Rotary ice fishing derby is scheduled for January 30, 2021. The Ely Film Festival is March 12-14, 2021.
- From a print and design standpoint, this is the one thing that we must be cost conscious of as we go into the winter time, is how much material we are making. We will have to make marketing material for Fire and Ice, the Ice Fishing Derby and we are working on the Film Festival print material right now. The Facilities Guide will be a major expense from a print standpoint. The Visitors’ Guide is still on the table. There are two billboards in the downtown. One of them is the old Jailhouse one in mid-town and the other one is right as you are coming out of the canyon on the west side of town. Kyle has gotten permission from both owners to do something with that space. A welcoming message and showcasing our assets are probably the direction we will be going.
- Kyle just had a meeting with East River PR. They just got done sending out the two influencers here recently. Started brainstorming on Fall pitch. They will be putting out the southern Nevada Road Mountain Bike Trip Itinerary that Kyle has been working on with Caliente, Tonopah, and Beatty. They will be doing a Fall color pitch which will be OHV and Success Loop. They will be working on a snowmobile road trip itinerary. We did get a grant from Travel NV two sessions ago to create all that snowmobile and back country skiing content. It will also include the Ruby Mountains. They will be doing press release on our new mural audio tour. We are working on creating an E blast templates for Errol.
- From a grant standpoint, Nevada OHV Commission just came out with their grant. We are talking about doing an OHV brochure with maps like our mountain biking brochure. Kyle would like to apply for a grant for money to pay for the completion of that one since that would be an expensive piece. It would mimic the NV OHV Commission’s website and have all the highlighted rides for our County.
- Working with the Forest managers to put better signage up on those routes. That is still the number one thing we get from outdoor recreationists that say our signage is poor. Kyle would want to design a unique and identifiable logo around OHV. It would essentially be an OHV marketing campaign for our featured rides in the County.
- RTP Grant through the State Parks. That is for non-motorized trails. It was a pre-application to see if our idea was good enough. It was planning for a Cave Lake expansion. It was approved to move on to the next stage.
- Travel NV grants. They will be opening their cycle for marketing.

From the meetings Kyle has been on, he said it makes his team look like rock stars because we are putting out two to three times the amount of work of any other community right now in the rurals with the amount of content we are doing. Kyle is stoked on Errol and Nicole and what we have been doing. He likes the direction the community is heading right now. Member Henry said it was great to see Errol doing in-house articles.

### III. Old Business:

#### 1. Board Member Reports

- Member Bullis spoke to Wayne Cameron's question at the beginning of the meeting. Member Bullis said what we need to clarify on what is the value for the money. We need to talk about that. What is someone getting if they pay X amount of dollars. In our case, it was a \$1,500 membership so we want to talk about what is the scale benefit to paying that versus what another business pays for \$200. We do not want to pay for things because we have always paid for it. Let us be judicious about what we are doing.
- Chairman McIntosh said she had contacted Member Bullis about the Chamber question because he is the liaison from Tour and Rec; it made sense for him to be the conduit of the request and to work out the value documentation. She also felt the new financial report with the comparisons are helpful and seeing what properties are doing well.

**2. Agenda Item(s) for Next Board Meeting:** Chairman McIntosh wants an update on the Sculpture Park progress. The Museum Update will be moved to the November agenda. We will have another update on the Facilities Guide. Kyle said that since we are not having the Beatles concert, Wayne would like to see that money reallocated to the Christmas fund for decorations and downtown celebration. That will be put on the next agenda.

**IV. Public Comment:** George Chachas asked Kyle for any information he gets from any engineer regarding the parking lot or any other concerns he brings up, tell them to put it in writing. He is disappointed from where they are coming from. George wants to remind the Board that the Nevada Northern Railroad is continuing to get additional grant money from this Board in addition to the \$240,000 they receive from room tax. They are not operating under the Nevada Open Meeting Law and the citizen, the tax payer, cannot see how that money is spent. At a City Council meeting held on September 19, 2019, the Railroad was seeking to borrow approximately \$450,000 and for what – we do not know. There are recent rumors that tens of thousands of dollars have been embezzled from the Railroad. I have also heard rumors that the Railroad has purchased Avenue A. Is that true? At 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 ten percent of its total assets as reflected on a current balance. What is the value of the current balance sheet? The tax payer needs to know. Shane Bybee failed to collect approximately fifteen years of track rental fees from S&S Shortline when he sat as Chairman of the Board. With all the money that the Board has given to the County golf course, what is the increase in play over the last four years? This request is three or four years old. Time called. Mr. Chachas gave his written comments to the Board via the Executive Director.

Wayne Cameron said the high desert trail blazers is having their ride this Sunday up Success Loop. It is going to be a pot luck lunch.

**V. Adjournment:**

**Motion:** Member Bullis made motion to adjourn at 5:05 pm.

**Motion seconded:** Member Carson. **Motion carried.**

**Minutes submitted by:** Judi Bourbeau

**Minutes approved by:**

<u>Carole M. Vatch</u>	<u>10/27/20</u>
<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>