

White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes

Date: October 20, 2016
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Bristlecone Convention Center – White Pine Room

Members Present: Ernie Flangas
Jacki Hansen
Lorraine Clark
Richard Howe

Staff Present: Ed Spear
Lori Drew

Members Absent: Bruce Setterstrom

Public Present: Wayne Cameron
Mark Bassett
Melody Van Camp
Bob Winder

Geri Wopschall
Wade Robison
Mike Coster
George Chachas

Ernie Flangas called to order the meeting of the White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board at 10:00 a.m. on October 20, 2016 at the White Pine Room at the Bristlecone Convention Center. Lorraine Clark led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. Public Comment: George Chachas commented that he had just received his meeting agenda in the mail the day of the meeting. Mr. Chachas expressed concern that the Nevada Northern Railway no longer has to follow open meeting law therefore he does not feel they should receive taxpayer money. He also feels they are in violation of the City of Ely's nepotism policy.

II. New Business:

1. Approval of to Hold White Pine Ministerial Association Christmas Day Dinner: Bob Winder addressed the board and asked to be able to hold the Annual Community Christmas Day Dinner at the convention center again this year and thanked the board for their support in the past.

Motion: Jacki Hansen. To approve holding the Community Christmas Day Dinner in the convention center.

Motion seconded: Lorraine Clark **unanimously approved** **motion carried**

2. Report on Meeting Regarding D.O.L. O.T. and I.C. Regulations: Mr. Spear stated that he has been in contact with Senator Heller's office and that he attended a meeting with the Department of Labor. Several states have filed a lawsuit against the new regulations. The convention center has one employee that is affected by the changes in the law. Compliance is required by December 1, 2016. He will be making a proposal to the board at the next meeting. The representative from the Department of Labor said you can keep things the same and risk a fine that can exceed \$100,000.00.

3. Approval to Organize and Hold New Event: Wade Robison spoke to the board as a representative of the committee that would like to bring a new event to the community that would utilize our biggest tourist attraction, which is the train. The new event will be a race the train bike race. The race will include routes for both mountain bikes and road bikes and a barbeque at the depot at the end. Mr. Robison felt this event has the potential to grow into a large and unique event. The event would be held in September. Richard Howe asked how the committee was planning to fund the event. Mr. Spear explained that the group approached the convention center about taking this event on in conjunction with the chamber and the train. Mr. Spear said that if the board approves he would then put this event into the budget and we would promote it through our advertising.

Motion: Jacki Hansen. To approve to organize and hold this new event.

Motion seconded: Richard Howe **unanimously approved** **motion carried**

III. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Sights, Sounds & Smells of Christmas: Ed Spear informed the board that we have confirmation from the group re: Voiced to be our entertainment and they will give a matinee performance for some of the school kids. The fashion show is going well and will be meeting later in the day.

2. Update from SH Architecture/CORE Construction: Ed Spear stated that there were a few design issues. The architect had put columns where they aren't approved by the building inspector. This need for a change has pushed the project to early next spring to allow for weather.

3. White Pine Golf Course Update: Lorraine Clark stated that the advisory board had not met. The course was being winterized at this time.

4. Approval of September 22, 2016 Meeting Minutes:

Motion: Lorraine Clark. To approve the September 22, 2016 meeting minutes.

Motion seconded. Jacki Hansen **unanimously approved** **motion carried**

5. Review of the Financial Report: Ed Spear said that the year is coming in better than he had hoped. Income already at about 40% of our projected for the year. Expenses are staying with budget.

Motion: Jacki Hansen. To accept the financial report.

Motion seconded. Lorraine Clark. **unanimously approved** **motion carried**

6. Approval to Ratify Bills:

Motion: Jacki Hansen. To ratify checks #22245-22286 in the amount of \$108,566.08

Motion seconded. Lorraine Clark. **unanimously approved** **motion carried**

Lorraine Clark abstained from check # 22263

7. Correspondence: Lori Drew explained that there was a copy of an email received from the State Bar in the packet and that the email states that it is their understanding that the move comes solely from the desire of the section committee to expand the convention. A thank you card from the Ranch Rodeo was passed around and an email from Matt Bowers was read informing every one of the article in Golfdom Magazine generated as a result of the cave convention.

8. Nevada Northern RR Director's Report: Mark Bassett reported that the new sound system has been installed and is working wonderfully. The new system even allows for controlling the sound in each car separately. Engine #40 is running while engine # 93 is down for a 15 year inspection. About half of engine #109 is done. Ridership is down a bit. There were three charters the previous year that did not happen this year. The Haunted Ghost trains are selling out. Last weekend there were people in from Florida, California and several other states with the Road Scholar group. The cost for locomotive #81 will be just over \$1,000,000.00 and a new fundraising brochure has been created to bring in more corporate donors. Jacki Hansen asked how many volunteers it takes to put on the Haunted Ghost trains to which Mr. Bassett responded about 60. Mr. Bassett stated that the vast majority of riders were from out of town. Gift shop sales are down slightly.

9. Executive Director's Report: Mr. Spear reported that he had a pretty busy month. He had been invited to attend the ASTA event in Reno and where he had the opportunity to meet with several operators as well as that being where he met with the representative from the Department of Labor. We also just returned from the Governor's Global Tourism Summit which also offered great opportunities to meet with tour operators and media from around the world. Lorraine met with the media side and he and Meg Rhoades met with the tour operators. Ely also hosted a pre-convention FAM that started in Las Vegas came to Ely then went to Tahoe and the conference. There were 10 countries represented with 30 attendees. Several have already decided to include Ely and the Great Basin National Park in their brochures. Nagel tours, which already comes through Ely, is very excited about now making Ely a longer stop with the train and the park being included. We also had a group of 6 tour operators from Australia and a film crew from Brazil that came and did a feature on the train, Great Basin and the outdoor opportunities in the area. Mr. Spear also met with Peter Greenburg in Fallon about the history of the Pony Express in Nevada. Mr. Greenburg is syndicated in several countries and he has express interest in coming out and doing a feature on the area.

10. Staff Report: Lori Drew said there were 104 domestic and 35 international walk-ins for the month of September as well as 115 mail inquiries with more still coming in. Mrs. Drew will be on vacation for the next two weeks and will not be in the office except for payroll.

11. Board Member Report: Lorraine Clark reported that she attended the Tourism Summit and met with a variety of international writers. She used the itinerary guide and our visitors guide to show them the area. The conference focus primarily on China as it is a very up and coming market. The Nevada Arts Council hosted a meeting at the Art Bank that analyzed our cultural assets and helped to put together some action plans for

marketing it. Trick or Treat the Street and the Children's Halloween were set to take place as well. Jacki Hansen stated that she thought it was great the room tax revenue was up 4.9% from the previous year. Ernie Flangas said that the board is doing the best they can and that the publications coming out of the office are bringing in new travelers. He also stated that he has been told the cover of the new Nevada Visitors guide will be the night skies of Great Basin National Park.

IV. Public Comment: Mr. Mike Coster stated that he received emails from several attorneys and board members of the section committee stating that they had issues with costs and feeling welcome in the community. He understood that those issues were beyond the board's control but he had not heard of there being an issue with space constraints. Mr. Spear gave him a copy of the email that was received by the office. George Chachas stated that he has asked for a breakdown of all of the conventions held in the convention center for the last five years but has not received that report. He also asked for a copy of Mr. Spear's salary and bonuses received. Chairman Flangas informed Mr. Chachas that his inquiries have been answered multiple times. Mr. Spear does not receive a bonus, his pay is determined by his contract which is in the packet every time the contract is renewed. He also told Mr. Chachas that he has been given his options to obtain the other information as those reports are not standard reports compiled by the office. He can come in and research it himself or pay the hourly rate to have the staff do the research for him. Mr. Spear read the NRS that confirms this process and that if Mr. Chachas would like to make the request in writing he will have an estimate prepared as to the cost of preparing those reports for him.

V. Adjournment:

Motion: Lorraine Clark. To adjourn the meeting.

Motion seconded: Richard **unanimously approved** **motion carried**

Minutes submitted by: Meg Rhoades

Minutes approved by:

Name

Date