

Meeting Minutes

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting

August 12, 2021 at 4:00pm MST

West Nebraska Arts Center
106 E 18th Street
Scottsbluff, NE

Chairman of the Meeting: Commissioner Roger Jasnoch, Chair

Commission Chair Roger Jasnoch called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Commissioners present: John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB (arrived late); Ashley Olson, Willa Cather Foundation; Jeanna Stavas, Whispering Pines Bed and Breakfast; Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau; Robert Sabin, Hilton Omaha; Starr Lehl, Scottsbluff Economic Development.

Commissioners absent: Darrin Barner, Heritage Homes of Nebraska; Barry McFarland, Mac's Creek Vineyards and Winery; Sarah Sortum, Calamus Outfitters.

Commission staff present: John Ricks, Karen Kollars, Shirley Wichman

1. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Commission Chair Jasnoch welcomed the commissioners; introductions were made; and Jasnoch asked for motion to approve agenda.

Chapo motioned to approve the agenda. Olson seconded the motion.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Chapo, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, Olson, Sabin, Stavas. Absent: Barner, McFarland, Sortum. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

2. Community Engagement Presentation – Scottsbluff representative

Starr Lehl welcomed the group to Scottsbluff. Gave a report on the Hot Air Balloon Festival and schedule of events. Introduced Stephanie who told us about the Arts Center, significance of the building and different events coming to the center.

3. Public Comment Period for items listed on the Agenda

Jasnoch opened the public comment period at 4:17pm.

With no members of the public coming forward, Jasnoch closed the public comment period at 4:18pm

4. Approval of May 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Jasnoch requested motion to approve the May 18, 2021 meeting minutes.

Kuhn motioned to approve the meeting minutes from May 18, 2021. Loseke seconded the motion

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Chapo, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, Olson, Sabin, Stavas. Absent: Barner, McFarland, Sortum. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

5. Director’s Report and NTC Project Updates – John Ricks and NTC staff

- a. Sentiment Study Update – presentation by Jennifer Simmons
Jennifer Simmons gave presentation. Talked about the process. there was discussion on solutions/goals. Discussion on Leadership Nebraska-a program to talk about tourism and what we can do.
- b. EDA Grant update – Director Ricks led discussion on update. RFP has gone out for contract employee.
- c. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) update – Director Ricks said this update is still fluid. Went over some funding amounts and distribution.
- d. Travel Conference Budget – Director Ricks presented handout on budget. Went over some details on costs and registrations.

Motion to accept the budget as presented made by Loseke. Seconded by Olson.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Chapo, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, Olson, Sabin, Stavas. Absent: Barner, McFarland, Sortum. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

- e. 2021-2022 Grant Cycle Timeline
 - i. Guidelines available October 18, 2021
 - ii. Deadline for applications December 10, 2021
 - iii. Announce grant awardees February 1, 2022

Director Ricks went over the timeline as written. Discussion on dates and process/ways to upgrade.

Motion to accept the grant guidelines made by Stavas. Seconded by Chapo.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Chapo, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, Olson, Sabin, Stavas. Absent: Barner, McFarland, Sortum. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed

6. Financial Update and Finance Committee Report – Commissioner Stavas

- a. Lodging Tax Performance – Director Ricks went over lodging tax numbers and high performance over last month. Discussion on Runyan report and how numbers are trending.
- b. FY21-22 Budget

Stavas went through spreadsheets that were previously distributed. Discussion on lodging tax performance and financials. Director Ricks spoke about the narratives, and various elements including marketing dollars spent. Commissioners discussed possibilities of outstanding dollars.

Motion to approve working FY21-22 budget made by Jasnoch. Seconded by Lehl.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Chapo, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, Olson, Sabin, Stavas. Absent: Barner, McFarland, Sortum. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed

7. New Business

- a. Upcoming Meeting:
Grand Island -- October 19th, 4pm-6pm

Jasnoch reminded commissioners of the meeting in Grand Island and the Commissioner breakfast on Wednesday, October 20th.

8. Adjourn

Commissioner Jasnoch thanked the staff for all they do. Thanked attendees for participating and attending the meeting. Jasnoch requested motion to adjourn.

At 6:07pm Stavas motioned to adjourn. Chapo seconded the motion.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Chapo, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, Olson, Sabin, Stavas. Absent: Barner, McFarland, Sortum. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed

Respectfully submitted by Shirley Wichman