Nebraska Tourism Commission Videoconference Meeting

January 27, 2022, at 10:00am CST at the following location:

Nebraska Tourism Commission

Nebraska State Office Building

301 Centennial Mall South, 1st Floor

Lincoln, NE 68509

Commissioner Chair Roger Jasnoch called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

Commissioners present: Darrin Barner, Heritage Homes of Nebraska; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Starr Lehl, Scottsbluff Economic Development; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB; Ashley Olson, Willa Cather Foundation; Jeanna Stavas, Whispering Pines Bed and Breakfast; Barry McFarland, Mac’s Creek Vineyards and Winery, Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau, John Chapo, Lincoln Children’s Zoo, Robert Sabin, Hilton Omaha.

Commissioners absent: Sarah Sortum, Calamus Outfitters

Commission staff present: John Ricks, Heather Hogue, Jenn Gjerde, Michael Collins, Erin Lenz, Madison Johnson, Callie Austad, Jenna Bartja, 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. Loeseke seconded the motion.

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

1. **Public Comment Period for items listed on the Agenda**

Jasnoch opened the public comment period at 10:04am.

With no members of the public coming forward, Jasnoch closed the public comment period at 10:05am

1. **Approval of October 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Jasnoch requested motion to approve the October 19, 2021 meeting minutes.

McFarland motioned to approve the meeting minutes from October 19, 2021. Loseke seconded the motion.

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

1. **Financial Update and Finance Committee Report – Commissioner Stavas**

Stavas went through spreadsheets that were previously distributed. Director Ricks spoke about the budget spreadsheets, budget narratives through a PowerPoint presentation pointing out various elements of financials and expenses. With uptick of lodging tax dollars, as well as federal money, rework the budget to increase by $720,000.

Motion to approve update with increase of $720,000 in budget spending was made by Olson. Sabin seconded the motion.

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

Motion to accept status review and financials as presented by Loseke. McFarland seconded the motion.

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

1. **Director’s Report and NTC Project Updates – John Ricks and NTC staff**
   1. Nebraska Hospitality Association – Zoe Olson, as of January 1, 2022, is the executive director. 700 members with room to grow. Is all lodging, restaurants sports bars across the state. Commissioner Kuhn commented it is a great strategic move- mesh together. The Tourism Commission is here to support in any way.
   2. AARPA non-competitive funds update – Director Ricks had discussion on ARPA non-competitive funds. What happens to the $3 million dollars? Need answers to how administered. What are ramifications if we don’t. Asked to table vote on ARPA non-competitive funds per discussion.

Motion made by Stavas to table vote and go back to get clarity before we agree to elements of funding. Seconded by Chapo.

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

* 1. FY2021-2022 Grant Program Awards - Heather Hogue gave updates. There were 76 grant applications for a total of $1.5 million. 66 were funded or partially funded for a total of $603,984.50.

Motion made to approve the grant awards as recommended by McFarland. Loseke seconded the motion.

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

* 1. Final Report from 2021 Tourism Conference – Callie Austad discussed revenue/expense of conference and balance left for next year.
  2. 2021 Annual Report – Jenn Gjerde reported that annual report is on the website. Once report is printed, will email industry.

1. **Commission Committee Reports** 
   1. Legislative Committee/NETA Legislative Update – Commissioner Lehl - 592 bills were introduced in the session this year. This is a 60-day session. Went over several bills that NETA is watching. Discussion followed.
   2. Marketing Committee - Commissioner Chapo

Chapo deferred to John Ricks for marketing updates. John gave presentation on marketing campaign. Talked on broader outreach of marketing this year. Commissioners discussed various elements of the campaign.

1. **Commission Chair Report - Commissioner Jasnoch**
2. Tourism Conference in Lincoln – Commissioner Jasnoch wanted to have commissioners something to think about. Tourism Conference should be the largest conference in the state. Need to have Senators be our best friend. Give some thought to have conference in Lincoln each year. What opportunities do we have to do more? Discussion on this. Decided to put on agenda at later meeting. John Ricks will send a query to all state tourism offices. Callie will put together notes on what other states do and present at next meeting.
3. Director Performance Review

Requested a motion to go into closed Executive Session.

Motion made to go into closed Executive Session at 11:50am for Performance Review by Kuhn. Seconded by McFarland.

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

At 12:05pm Motion made to come out of Executive Session by Lehl. Seconded by Stavas.

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

Commissioner Jasnoch said commissioners had discussion on the ongoing pandemic and effects it has had on industry. Director Ricks has continued to lead the industry in a positive way. Jasnoch will go over the review with Director Ricks. After discussion, agreement was to have salary raised by 5% and will be effective immediately January 27, 2022.

Motion made with respect to annual evaluation and the salary raise this year by 5% effective January 27, 2022 by Chapo. Second was made by Olson.

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

1. **New Business**
   1. Upcoming meetings: There was discussion and agreement on the following dates:

March 24 – Kearney 10:00am

May 17-18 – North Platte

August 10-13 – Scottsbluff, exact day TBD

October 25-27 – South Sioux City

* 1. Election of Executive Committee Officers - There was discussion on election of officers and nominations for each position.

Motion to have the officers stay the same as the slate last year made by Loseke. Second made by Chapo.

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

Officers will be as follows:

Committee Chair is Commission Chair: Roger Jasnoch

Committee Members: Robert Sabin (Vice), Roger Kuhn (Past Commission Chair), Jeanna Stavas (Treasurer), Barry McFarland (At-Large)

1. **Adjourn**

At 12:15 McFarland motioned to adjourn. Second was made by Chapo.

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

Respectfully submitted by Shirley Wichman

\*Denotes Action Item

Open Meetings Law of the State of Nebraska will be available in the meeting room. Proposed agenda, posted January 21, 2022, kept current and available for inspection on the Commission’s website, visitnebraska.com. Items of an emergency nature may be added to the agenda by the Commission at the meeting. The Commission reserves the right to enter into closed session, should a closed session be necessary.