

**Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
August 30, 2016-10:00 a.m. (CST)
Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Columbus NE**

Commissioners present: John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo; Roger Dixon, MECA of Omaha; Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau; Lisa Burke, North Platte CVB; Carol Schlegel, Red Willow County Tourism; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Jeff Boeka, Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites of North Platte; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County Visitors Bureau.

Commission staff present: Heather Hogue, Micheal Collins, Angela Sears, Erin Wirth

Public Comment signed-in: N/A

Commissioner Chapo called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Deb Loseke motioned to approve the agenda. Roger Dixon seconded the motion. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Open Comment Period for Items on the Agenda

John Chapo, Commission Chair opened the public comment period at 10:07 a.m. No comments were presented. Commissioner Chapo closed open comment period.

Approval of June 24, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Deb Loseke had two changes to the minutes: Replace Carol Schlegel with Roger Kuhn in the Executive Committee Director Search Committee under the Chairman's Report. Replace Tourism Maker Committee with Tourism Marker Committee under Section V of the Commission Committee Reports. Roger Dixon motioned to approve the minutes from June 24, 2016 with changes made by Deb Loseke. Carol Schlegel seconded. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Financial Update and Finance Committee Report

Deb Loseke, Commission Treasurer, reviewed the budget status report and general ledger and discussed the Commission's cash fund balance.

Jeff Boeka motioned to approve financials as presented. Roger Kuhn seconded. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

The large scale tourism project evaluation criteria RFP received two bidders but Heather Hogue noted DAS recommends the Commission conduct a "best and final offer" (BAFO) in order to accurately compare the bids. The Finance Committee agreed, State Accounting will begin the BAFO process. This requirement will add time to the RFP process. Roger Kuhn wanted to know if this extra step would set the project back so far that the bidders wouldn't be able to complete the project on time. Micheal Collins explained that he included extra time within the project timeline in case an issue came up that needed to be addressed. Deb Loseke explained that the Finance Committee met August 16, 2016 to discuss the Commission's FY2017-2019 Biennial Budget Request draft and again on a conference call on August 23, 2016. There

were no questions on the narrative. All commissioners received the draft budget request for review prior to this meeting. Future lodging tax projections were calculated by the head researcher with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and are considered to be accurate forecasts. Deb Loseke said the Finance Committee is comfortable with the amounts included in the Commissions budget request, which has been reviewed by the Commission's State Budget Analyst, Robin Kilgore, for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the state budgeting software. It was noted that the budget included the required modification of an 8% reduction in request for general funds, which was a requirement by the Governor's office for all general-funded state agencies.

Roger Jasnoch requested a breakdown in marketing activities listed in the budget, which Angela Sears said she could email to all the commissioners. Carol Schlegel noted some possible discrepancies in the budget on pages 48 and 55, line items 521500, 521501 and 521502. Deb Loseke said she would look into this to see if there is a clerical error that needs to be corrected. Deb Loseke explained that the budget deadline is September 15, 2016. John Chapo acknowledged the Finance Committee for their work in putting together the Commission's budget.

Lisa Burke motioned to accept the Tourism Commission's FY2017-2019 Biennial Budget Request. Seconded by Roger Kuhn. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Commission Contract Updates

Heather Hogue reviewed the emergency contracts between the Commission and Nelnet and Bailey Lauerman, previously provided to Commissioners for review and approval. DAS has recommended the Commission create emergency contracts to prevent interruption of vendor services while allowing the contract to accurately reflect the Commission's current needs.

Deb Loseke motioned to accept the emergency contracts between the Commission and Nelnet and Bailey Lauerman. Seconded by Roger Dixon. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Executive Committee Elections

Roger Dixon listed the nominations for the executive board: Deb Loseke, Chairman; Roger Kuhn, Vice Chairman; Lisa Burke, Treasurer. These three commissioners were nominated based on their experience in working inside state government, financial management, and familiarity with policies and procedures. It was confirmed that John Chapo would remain on the executive board as Past Chairman. Roger Kuhn praised John Chapo for his work and dedication as the Chairman.

Roger Dixon motioned to accept the nominations for executive board as presented. Seconded by Jeff Boeka. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Commission Committee Reports

Executive Director Search Committee: Deb Loseke noted there were 35 applicants for the position to date and that the deadline to submit applications was September 13, 2016. The committee's goal is to conduct interviews by the end of September in Lincoln. They would like to have someone hired by the time of the 2016 Nebraska Travel Conference but are not sure if this is possible within such a narrow timeframe. Deb Loseke explained that all commissioners would be able to weigh in on the decision and that all commissioners would need to be acceptable of the hire.

Policy and Procedures Committee: Roger Kuhn explained that the committee has expanded to include creating rules and regulations for the Commission. The committee met in Lincoln on August 26, 2016 to start this process. They are dealing with rules and regulations first and have identified four areas where rules and regulations will need to be created: tourism markers, grants, travel conference, and administration and execution of contracts. The committee will work on creating policies and procedures once they've finished with the rules and regulations in order to remain organized and not take too much on at one time. Commission's Attorney General Representative, Marna Munn, recommends drafting a letter to the Legislature letting them know the Commission is working on this issue raised in the audit. The committee will meet again on September 29, 2016. Their goal is to have some rules and regulations ready for the all commissioners to review at its January 2017 meeting. Roger Kuhn explained that the Commission adopted the policies and procedures of the Department of Administrative Services but that they want to tailor this document to the Commission's needs.

2016 Conference Committee: Lisa Burke said that they're still working with legal counsel at DAS on waiving the insurance requirement for speakers. A new award has been added, Best Social Media Campaign, and one has been deleted, Outstanding Tourism Association in this year's awards list. The deadline to submit nominations is September 9. The conference format also changed this year. It will end with an awards luncheon on Thursday afternoon instead of an awards banquet that evening. Carol Schlegel encouraged all commissioners to attend the conference.

NETA Legislative Update: Roger Jasnoch said the committee is getting ready for the next legislative session that it would be beneficial for the policies and procedures committee to use the assistance of the NETA lobbyist when drafting these items.

Tourism Marker Committee: Carol Schlegel handed out the application that applicants will use to apply for an official marker. Roger Jasnoch said the committee is working with State Purchasing on creating an RFP for a company to create the signs and that this also could include a partnership with the Nebraska State Historical Society. Lisa Burke suggested that the committee include a section on the Commission's website showing where the markers are located.

Marketing Committee:

Media Plan/Pre-approval process: Mary from Bailey Lauerman gave an overview of items that discussed to create a media plan for the Commission. They said the Commission's target markets are millennials, young families and Baby Boomers. She explained that the Commission's sports sponsorships have made a huge impact in encouraging visitors to the state. They are using a variety of print media vendors; not only ones that are travel publications but other publications that make readers think about travel plans.

2017 Calendar: Angela Sears passed out copies of the 2017 calendar and explained that this was a collaborative effort between the Commission, the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Hildegard Center for the Arts called "Bridges: Sharing Our past to Enrich the Future." The project issued a call to amateur and professional photographers to take photos of historic sites and hidden treasures from all Nebraska 93 counties. The photos printed in the calendar were selected from winners of this contest. The Commission plans to print the same amount of calendars this year as it did last year. Lisa Burke motioned to approve the 2017 calendar as presented. Seconded by Deb Loseke. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

2.0 Marketing Phase Updates: Ron Sack of Bailey Lauerman explained the new marketing campaign for the Commission. It will focus on incorporating Nebraskans into the ad campaign by having them share/tell their stories. "Through My Eyes" will include stories from across the state and give visitors a more personal view of the state. Ron Sack said they're looking for additional stories and story ideas from around Nebraska. Deb Loseke motioned to approve the 2016-2017 media plan. Seconded by Roger Kuhn. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Nebraska Travel Guide Updates: The Commission is working on putting together the 2017 Spring/Summer travel guide and plans to incorporate the "Through My Eyes" project in it.

Media Tours: Angela Sears said that the Commission plans to conduct three media tours in 2017. Lisa Burke motioned to approve the three media tours for 2017. Seconded by Carol Schlegel. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Social Media Influencers: Angela Sears explained that the Commission and Bailey Lauerman are looking for high profile influencers to help promote the Commission's social media.

Nebraska Passport Program

Heather Hogue introduced Erin Wirth as the new passport program coordinator. Roger Jasnoch asked if there were ways we track how successful the program is and if the money spent on it is worth it. Angela Sears noted that the money spent on the program was a good marketing investment and that the program has grown in popularity since its inception. She explained that more marketing was done this year for the program than in previous years; however, she plans to reduce this amount next year to lower the cost of the program. She said the program has garnered a good following over the years and she's seen great growth in it. Erin Wirth noted that one of her first duties as program coordinator is to create a strategic plan to encourage more people to become involved in the program. She also wants to expand and grow the passport program.

Grant Report

Heather Hogue said that the grant guidelines for this cycle are located on the Commission's website and that she's been receiving a lot of questions about grant projects. The deadline to submit applications is September 15th.

New Business

Upcoming dates for Commission meetings:

October 18, 2016-Nebraska Travel Conference, Gering

January 12, 2017-Senator's Luncheon at the State Capitol

February 21-23, 2017-Ag/Eco-Tourism Conference, Broken Bow (meeting date TBA)

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Micheal Collins