

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
Thursday, August 31, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. (CST)
Kearney Visitor's Bureau - Kearney, Neb.

Commission Chair Deb Loseke called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Commissioners present: Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB; Carol Schlegel McCook CVB, Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau; Lisa Burke, North Platte CVB; Mitch Glidden, Sandhills Motel and Glidden Canoe Rental; John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo; Roger Dixon, MECA & Tony Moody of John Q. Hammons Hotels & Resorts

Commissioners absent: Roger Kohn, Nebraska Game and Parks

Commission staff present: John Ricks, Angela Sears and Shelly Reed

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Commissioner Schlegel motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Dixon seconded the motion. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: all. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Open Comment Period for Items on the Agenda

Deb Loseke, Commission Chair, opened the public comment period at 10:11 a.m.

Comments presented: None

The Public Comment Period ended at 10:12 a.m.

Approval Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Jasnoch requested that a correction be made to the May 2, 2017 minutes. The minutes reflected the wrong sign company chosen for a contract. He asked that it be changed from Sewah Studios to Eagle Sign and Design/Hawke Acquisition Co. Commissioner Dixon motioned to approve the May 2, 2017 meeting minutes with the change that Commissioner Jasnoch requested. Commissioner Chapo seconded the motion. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: all. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Financial Update and Finance Committee Report

Lisa Burke, Commission Treasurer, shared the following report.

Fiscal Year-end balance June 30, 2017

As of June 30, 2017, NTC our General Fund Account for Grant Allotments for Marketing and Community Impact Grant reflect a zero balance because all previously general funded grants were paid out. Beginning on July 1, 2017, NTC is a fully cash-funded agency, we no longer receive general funds. Our

current grant encumbrance amount is \$271,656.42 in cash state aid - which was awarded through the Directed Marketing Grant Program on May 18, 2017.

The Commission ended the fiscal year on June 30, 2017 with \$597,932.41 cash funds remaining.

July 2017 Finance Report 8-31-17

As of July 31, 2017, we have paid out \$0 from our General Fund Account for Grant Allotments for Marketing and or Community Impact Grants our total budget for fiscal 2017-18 is \$852,600. We have \$271,656.42 encumbered from the last budget cycle.

To date we have spent \$756,685.19 from our cash funds. Our Cash Fund Budget for Fiscal 2017-18 is \$6,530,577.00

June 2017 lodging tax figures:

Tax revenues were down \$82,671.98 in June compared to last year:

June 2017: \$688,532.39

June 2016: \$759,799.37

2017 through June: \$2,636,586.25

2016 through June: \$2,760,628.42

Year to date tax revenues are down \$124,042.17

Commissioner Moody motioned to approve the financials as presented. Commissioner Chapo seconded the motion. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: All. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Agency Cash Reserve Balance Policy – The Financial Committee made a recommendation that the commission set a policy stating that the Commission needs to maintain a minimum balance of \$500,000 in the cash fund reserve account.

Commissioner Burke made the motion to set a policy that the commission maintain a minimum balance of \$500,000 in the cash fund reserve account. Commissioner Chapo seconded the motion. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: All. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Mid-Biennium Adjustment Request – NTC's Executive Director John Ricks explained most state's do not maintain a large cash reserve for their tourism agencies and that instead they put as much of their budget as possible into advertising to promote the state's tourism industry. He informed the commission that NTC previously received a million dollar increase in spending authority for next two years. The Commission's finance committee discussed the reserve balance and is recommending that NTC request an additional \$1 million in spending authority over the next two years in order to invest the money into additional state tourism marketing, while also maintaining a minimum \$500,000 cash reserve in the fund.

Commissioner Burke motioned to have Director Ricks make a mid-biennium adjustment request for \$500,000 per year over the next two years. Commissioner Schlegel seconded the motion. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: All. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Discussion of future Commission meetings being held via videoconference – discussion was tabled

Commission Chair Report – Commissioner Loseke thanked the committees who reviewed the RFPs and is helping with this process.

Director's Report

A. Japan Trade Mission

- a. John Ricks is leaving a week from tomorrow for Tokyo for the Japan Trade Mission with the Governor and Department of Economic Development Committee. Midwest / Japan Annual Conference which will come to Omaha next year. NTC will do a lunch seminar with Japanese tour operators and Japanese media to tell them about Nebraska. The goal will be to get them to add Nebraska tours and also to discuss possible familiarization tours linked with the Midwest / Japan conference in Omaha next year. Partners with us on this effort include the Omaha CVB, the Crane Trust and Brand USA. Nebraska beef will be served at the luncheon. The Governor is going to try to attend.

B. State Fair / 2018 Trade Show Outlook

- a. State fair is going on and we do have a presence there. We will be at NWSS in January and are looking at some other travel show options in our target markets. We have been told that NETA is not doing shows this next year but we are still looking for industry volunteers and support to staff the shows that we plan to participate in.
- b. Commissioner Dixon recommended that we have the August commission meeting at Nebraska State Fair again next year.

C. Nebraska Visitors Development Act Changes / LB222

- a. An announcement about the makeup of the new Nebraska Tourism Commission may be made by September 21st.

D. Research efforts

- a. Starting in June we did a market analysis to identify key markets to do a campaign in (used MRI, website and travel guide data), we marketed in Des Moines, Kansas City, Springfield and Denver. The campaign was very successful.
- b. Director Ricks has been working on some Branding research with Brand Lever. They did focus groups in Des Moines, Kansas City and Denver. The final report should be out by the October conference. This research is used to create a values based marketing strategy that NTC will use to create its next advertising campaign.

E. Status of Commission RFPs

- a. The process has been lengthy. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel.
 - i. Web, publishing and content – Has been posted and Miles Partnership out of Sarasota, FL was the winner.
 - ii. The other two RFPs are still in process and have not been posted as of the date of this meeting.

Commissioner Dixon motioned to approve the hiring of Miles Partnership for the commission's web, publishing and content work. Commissioner Burke seconded the motion. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: all. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

F. Commission / Department of Roads Partnership Roadway Signage

- a. Communities can pay to change them if they like. The commission is reaching out to those who have asked about signs in their area to inform them of the process and the costs of changing the signs.

G. Advertising Sales Cash Fund creation

- a. Director Ricks notified the committee that the commission is working with state accounting to create an advertising sales cash fund for the commission so that we can collect money for ad sales in the commission's travel guide and on the commission's website in addition to other similar transactions. There may be a need for future legislation to authorize the commission to use this fund. The details are still being determined.

H. Eclipse Impact Study – NTC worked with community volunteers to do surveys in 10 different communities to try to assess economic impact of the eclipse. The plan is to try to announce the results at the annual conference in October.

Committee Reports

Tourism Conference Committee - Commissioner Burke shared the 2017 Nebraska Tourism Conference brochure with everyone. Staff member Lisa Karnatz, who had been working with Karen Kollars to coordinate the conference has resigned. So now Karen Kollars is working with the rest of the staff to wrap up the conference marketing and to run the conference. NEBtour announcements have gone out and awards nomination forms have gone out too. Commissioner Burke urged everyone to attend and said that it's going to be a great conference!

Policy and Procedures Committee – Commissioner Kuhn was not able to be present to share a report.

Tourism Marker Committee – Commissioner Jasnoch passed around a draft application for a tourism marker. He asked the commission for approval to present the information to the industry at the upcoming Tourism Conference. Estimated cost per sign is about \$2,700.

Commissioner Dixon motioned to approve the presentation of the information at the October Conference. Commissioner Moody seconded the motion. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: all. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Marketing Committee –

1. **RFP Process is almost over!** – Thanks to everyone who participated and helped with the judging.
2. **Eclipse** – Everyone in the industry worked together to promote Nebraska as the best place to watch the total eclipse. The Nebraska Tourism Industry received over \$140 Million in earned media coverage of the event.
3. **Passport Update**
 - a. As of 8/22
 - i. 45,054 participants (26,440 last year),
 - ii. 67,600 digital stamps so far (last year's total stamps were 87,492)
 - iii. visitors from 43 states participating (up from 28 last year),
 - iv. 104 people have visited all 80 stops already!
4. **Husker Sports Marketing**

- a. Listen for our radio interview and sponsorship of the Husker Pre-Game radio show and watch for our in stadium signage.
- 5. **ESTO** – Director Ricks, Angela Sears and Erin Wirth will be attending ESTO next week to learn about the latest trends and methods for enhancing our tourism marketing, working with partners and coordinating with government officials. Erin Wirth will be presenting about the Nebraska Passport Program at the conference.
- 6. **Coop Program Management** – We are in the midst of coordinating the most recent coop program and the commission's cooperative advertising efforts.

NETA Legislative Update – NETA is once again planning to join forces with the Tourism Commission to host a January 16th Legislative Luncheon in Lincoln, Nebraska. More details to come soon.

New Business

- A. Upcoming Commission Meetings
 - October 19: LaVista, Nebraska Tourism Conference

Adjourn

Commissioner Dixon made a motion to adjourn the commission meeting. Commissioner Moody seconded the motion. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: all. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Angela Sears.