

MINUTES of the NEVADA COMMISSION ON TOURISM
September 17, 2021

Call to order

Vice Chair Cynthia Mun Kate Marshall called the meeting to order at 9 AM.

Commissioners Present

Vice Chair Cynthia Mun
Donald Contursi
Edward Estipona
Charles Harris
Jill Lagan
Julie Pazina
Kristin Windbigler

Commissioners Absent/Excused

Lieutenant Governor Kate Marshall
Jane Moon
Steve Hill
Bob Stoldal
Brian Wadsworth
Jerry Schefcik

Staff and Guests Present

Brenda Scolari
M.E. Kawchack
Christian Passink
Harry Ward
Anton Eckert
Mikalee Byerman
Shari Davis
Yennifer Diaz

Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

MUN: Okay, great. Well, it's great to see everyone. Let's call the meeting to order. This is Nevada Commission on Tourism public meeting, September 17th at 9:00 AM. Can you please tell me if the meeting was properly noticed and posted?

KAWCHACK: M.E. Kawchack, for the record. Yes, it was.

MUN: So, will you take roll?

KAWCHACK: Bob Stodal? Absent, excused. Brian Wadsworth? Absent, excused. Charles Harris?

HARRIS: Here. Good morning

KAWCHACK: Morning. Cynthia Mun?

MUN: Here.

KAWCHACK: Donald Contursi?

CONTURSI: Here.

KAWCHACK: Edward Estipona?

ESTIPONA: Here

KAWCHACK: Jane Moon? Absent, excused. Jill Lagan?

LAGAN: Here.

KAWCHACK: Jerry Schefcik? Absent, excused. Julie Pazina?

PAZINA: Here.

KAWCHACK: Kristin Windbigler?

WINDBIGLER: Here.

KAWCHACK: Rick Murdock?

MURDOCK: Here.

KAWCHACK: Steve Hill? Absent, excused. And Lieutenant Governor Kate Marshall is absent, excused.

MUN: Do we have a quorum?

KAWCHACK: We do. Thank you.

MUN: All right. Then, moving to agenda item B. This is a public comment. This is the first time for public comment. There will be another opportunity for public comments at the end. Do we have any public comments? I don't think so.

KAWCHACK: None in the chat. M.E. Kawchack, for the record. There are none on the chat and I did not receive any via email.

MUN: Okay, then. Moving to agenda item C, which is the approval of minutes. This is for the June 16th, 2021, meeting. Are there any comments or proposals, by way of motion, for any matter relating to those minutes? I'd like to add, in the last meeting notes -- meeting

minutes, we discussed that Lieutenant Governor, Kate Marshall would be working with Director Brenda Scolari regarding the RFP process and budget information. And in the notes, it says that we were supposed to have a separate meeting. I would like to propose that we have that as a follow-up item in November's committee meeting -- commission meeting. Any discussion? Okay, so does that mean that -- you -- so this is a question from me. May I have a motion for that, so that we take the RFP process information to have it appear in the next agenda, in the November Commission meeting?

WARD: For the record, Harry Ward, Deputy Attorney, Harry Ward. Madam Vice Chair, I don't think we can take a motion. It's not on the agenda. Maybe we -- if it's at the bottom of the agenda for something additional, and I'm looking at the agenda right now, for something to add to the next agenda, maybe we can, but the issue is just not properly agenda-sized. It's in the minutes, and I suggest that we just stick to approving the minutes, and then from there, maybe we can work it in at the end of the agenda for an added item. Thank you.

MUN: So, does that mean that we go ahead, take a motion to approve the minutes, and then afterwards say that we will go ahead and just discuss adding that for a future meeting? Or you don't think we can do that, either?

WARD: For the record, Harry Ward. What's on the agenda right now is approval of the minutes. So, yes, I would suggest we stick to the agenda, and we go ahead and either approve or not approve the minutes. We can make edits to the agenda, some misspellings, dates, and stuff like that. But from there, after that's been done, then I think we can, especially if it's on the agenda, discuss what you just discussed and have that as a separate motion. So that would be my recommendation.

SCOLARI: For the record, Brenda Scolari, Director of Tourism and Cultural Affairs. Vice Chairwoman, I'd like to suggest that in Item J, when we discuss upcoming meetings, that we make that recommendation, that I bring the RFP process to the Commission for review, as an agenda item.

MUN: Great. That sounds wonderful. Okay. So, then do we have a motion to accept the meetings -- meeting minutes from June?

PAZINA: Hi, this is Julie Pazina, for the record. I would like to make a motion to approve the June 16, 2021, minutes.

ESTIPONA: This is Edward Estipona, for the record, and I make a second.

MUN: And we have a motion, and we have a second. For all those in favor, can you signify by saying, aye?

MULTIPLE: Aye.

MUN: Opposed? None. So, it carries. So, moving on to agenda item C, no D. All right. So, we're going to move on to agenda item D, to welcome and recognize service. The Commission would like to thank Lieutenant Governor Kate Marshall for her service to Nevada as the Chair of the Nevada Commission on Tourism for the past three years. In addition, Lieutenant Governor Marshall served as the Vice Chair of the State Board of Transportation, was a member of the Board of Governor's Office of Economic Development, and a member of the Executive Budget Audit Committee. She also served as the Chairwoman for the Nevada's 2020, census. As Nevada's State Treasurer, Lieutenant Governor Marshall expanded access to college savings plans for Nevada families. In her role as Chair of the Nevada Commission on Tourism, Lieutenant Governor Marshall shepherded Senate Bill 52, also known as the Dark Skies Bill, through the legislature to expand dark sky tourism in the state. In May 2021, Governor Sisolak signed the Dark Skies Bill into law that protects and enhances Nevada's iconic night skies for their ecological, astronomical, and cultural and economic importance. Lieutenant Governor Marshall's dedication to Nevada's unique assets continues to make them more valuable for both Nevadans and visitors. Lieutenant Governor Marshall is a staunch supporter of tourism and outdoor recreation in the state, frequently visiting various partners throughout the state to learn more about their challenges to celebrate their successes and to hear their plans for the future. I personally enjoyed learning about her travels through her Twitter feed, that promoted greater visibility to many of Nevada's rural regions. I would like to personally thank Lieutenant Governor Kate Marshall for all that you've done for Nevada, and Nevadans. It has been my honor to serve on the commission with your leadership, and I will miss your wit and sense of humor on the Commission. Is there any other comments regarding Lieutenant Governor Marshall's service? I would just like to open it up for any other comments. Okay?

SCOLARI: For the record, Brenda Scolari. I would just like to say that personally, and on behalf of Travel Nevada, I'd like to thank Lieutenant Governor Marshall for her commitment and service, and her support of the tourism industry is renowned. And I would like to wish her well in her position in Washington.

MUN: Thank you so much. Anyone else?

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina, for the record. Thank you Vice Chairwoman, Mun. I really, really enjoyed working with Lieutenant Governor, and part of it was just her love and passion for tourism and her mentorship and opening herself up to people in the State. I had the opportunity to have her join a junior league session where she spoke to a number of women throughout the state of Nevada, from junior leagues of Reno and Las Vegas, speaking about her love and passion for the State, and it really bled through, and I feel

like she's inspired so many women to public service and with her passion and enthusiasm for tourism. So, she will be missed, and I, as Brenda Scolari said, just wish her the very best of luck.

MUN: Absolutely. If there are no other comments, I would like to also thank former Commissioner Herb Santos. The Commission would like to thank Herb Santos, Jr., for his service to Nevada as Commissioner of Nevada Commission on Tourism for the past nine years. As a lifelong Nevadan, Mr. Santos sits on the Nevada Board of Governors of the Nevada Association for Justice and is on the Board of Directors for the Sierra Kids Foundation. As a Commissioner of Nevada Tourism, Mr. Santos traveled to India with a delegation from Nevada to promote tourism to this key market. As a sports fan, Mr. Santos purchased and became managing partner of the Reno Big Horns and provided key insights to sports marketing and tourism on many occasions, including leading the crowd in a chant during the 2019, Global Governor's Tourism Summit, and I was there and there was a lot of energy. It has been a pleasure to serve on this Committee with Mr. Herb Santos for the past three years. Mr. Santos provided insightful legal perspective to the Commission and his curiosity and tenacity for truth has been a valuable character to encourage discussion on how we can serve Nevada better. Herb, thank you very much for all the work you've done on the Commission. I will miss the opportunity to have fruitful dialogue regarding Travel Nevada and I wish you well. Are there any other comments from the Commissioners or here? Okay. Great. Then, we will now move on to agenda item E. This is also discussion only for Director's Report and Budget Update and, Director Scolari?

SCOLARI: For the record, Brenda Scolari. Vice Chairman, we had some introductions in item D. If we could ret –

MUN: I am so sorry. I'm so sorry. Yes. We do. Some amazing introductions. So, three -- there are two new additions to Travel Nevada. The first one is Antonette Eckert, who joins Travel Nevada as Chief Industry Officer. The second is Mikalee Byerman, who is the Reno Marketing Strategist for Travel Nevada. And finally, but not least, is our new Commissioner, Donald Contursi, who is the founder of the award-winning Lip Smacking Foodie Tours, which sounds like an amazing experience in Las Vegas, and has, I believe expanded to Chicago, as well. I'm going to give them the opportunity to introduce themselves. And sorry for the mishap, there. So, thank you. So, should we start with Commissioner Donald Contursi?

CONTURSI: For the record, Donald Contursi. Hello, everybody. It's a pleasure to see you all. Some familiar faces. Very excited to be working with you. It's an honor to be serving as one of the Commissioners and I'm very excited to contribute and think of different ways to continue pushing Nevada forward. So, thank you, again.

MUN: Welcome. Should we move on to Antonette Eckert?

ECKERT: Good morning, everyone. I'm Anton Eckert, for the record, and I'm coming to you live from Beatty, because I am doing a familiarization tour of the State, as well as joining the Silver Trials meeting this afternoon. So, I may be popping out a little bit early from this meeting, but it is a pleasure to be here and to be working for Travel Nevada, and I hope to meet all of you in person soon.

MUN: Welcome.

ECKERT: Thank you.

MUN: We're looking to working with you. And, I've already met Mikalee, but we would love to have you introduce yourself.

BYERMAN: Thank you so much. For the record, Mikalee Byerman, Chief Marketing Officer for Travel Nevada. I've been here for about a month and a half so far, still learning every day under the guidance of Brenda and M.E. and an amazing team, and just really looking forward to fulfilling the strategic plan and telling the spectacular Nevada story and, really happy to be here. So, thank you very much.

MUN: Welcome. I know you're a very strong addition to the team, but I guess, from my experience so far, Travel Nevada, as a whole, is a very strong team. Okay. Now I think we can move on to agenda item E, for Director Scolari's report.

SCOLARI: Thank you, Commissioner Mun. I would also like to say that the press releases for both Mikalee and Anton are in your commission packets, if you'd like to read a bit more about their backgrounds. In the interest of time, I am not going to review the fourth quarter report, but it was sent in your commission packet. This represents team activities from April through June. I would, however, like to call your attention to the key performance indicators summary for TravelNevada.com in the report. It's a 12-month wrap-up and it indicates the success of the new platform. And just kudos to the marketing team and our digital development agency, Noble Studios, for their diligent work on what looks to be an extremely successful new site. I'd also like to mention that, beginning the first quarter of fiscal year '22, which normally we report the prior quarter at each Commission meeting, we plan to revise our reporting format to directly reflect the accomplishments that ladder back to the strategic plan. This was mentioned in the June Commission meeting as a desire of the Commission, so we'll bring you to the department activities related to program tactics and their performance. We'll present a visual matrix that makes the progress easy to absorb and track throughout the year, and we'll solicit your input about the new reporting format in the next meeting. I will ask M.E. to bring up the budget update. I'd like to review our fiscal year, in summary, of Budget Account 1522. So, our

fiscal year ended at the end of August. So, this represents Budget Account 1522, into which our lodging tax revenues flow. And I'd just like to step everyone through it. So, the far-right column represents our FY '22 legislative spending authority, with lodging projections currently at \$16.3 million. The middle column was our approved budget for fiscal year '21. The left column was our actual spending for that fiscal year. As you can see our lodging tax collections exceeded expectations by over \$2.3 million. That, in combination with the CARES funding, leaves us with a cash reserve of \$6.3 million, well over the projected \$2.6, which was woefully under budget. The Governor's Finance Office requires the agency to carry a 60-day cash reserve in this line item. M.E., if you could move on to the next page, which is the Category 31 spending. Category 31, which represents the breakdown of Travel Nevada marketing spending. Travel Nevada spent a total of \$4.9 million last fiscal year. The year was volatile, during the pandemic, with the marketing holds during the COVID surge and winter closures. We underspent authority by just over \$1 million, but those funds rolled over into the new fiscal year and comprised part of the cash reserve I just described. This chart shows a comparison to the two prior fiscal years. Marketing expenditure and in FY '21 was down 30%, due to the statewide closure in the final quarter of the spring of that year, as we all vividly remember. This second row demonstrates that our marketing effort, due to COVID and budget constraints, was fully a third of what we consider a normal spending year. So, in other words, the \$4.9 million in FY '21, is a third of the normal \$15 million, plus, that Travel Nevada has to spend. So, that's sort of our closing summary. We'll present some budgeted expenditures at the next full meeting of the Commission. If there are any questions I can answer those now. If not, I'll take a look at our current lodging tax projections. Are there any questions about the summary?

SCOLARI: No? Okay. M.E., if you could go -- so these scenarios and lodging tax projections are formulated by our Research Manager, Kyle Schulz. He is not available today, but I'm just going to give you kind of a high-level overview. As usual, we present a best, worst, and mid-level scenario for lodging tax collections and room demand. This is for fiscal year 2022. M.E., if you could move to the mid-level scenario, which is -- there we go. In this scenario, we look at how other organizations were projecting travel demand and travel spending, in the near-term. General consensus among forecast was travel demand to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023, and travel spending to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2024. Although we look at various forecasts for direction, some are a couple of months old and, given this, we incorporate a more timely knowledge surrounding the rise in COVID cases and hospitalizations resulting from the Delta variance. In our mid-level assumptions, we assume as people gather indoors, once again in the winter months, there may be a rise in COVID cases and subsequent fall in travel resulting from this, though not a drastic fall. We also use other near real-time indicators to inform this scenario. The TSA provides daily checkpoint data and how it compares to pre-pandemic levels, which provides a good indication of airport demand in a given month. Our consultant, Arrivalist,

also produces a daily travel index, which provides daily updates on road trip levels. When we combine these two data sources, it gives us a good indication of where travel is headed in a certain month, ahead of the release of visitation statistics. But we saw drops in these indicators in August. They weren't dramatic. For example, at the beginning of August, TSA levels were about 20% below where they were in 2019, and by the end of the month, they were about 24%, 2019 levels. We also look at traveler sentiment data regarding how travelers react to increases or decreases in COVID cases, to inform these projections as well. It's also important to note that we were assuming in this scenario that the health situation will worsen during the winter months, as it did in 2020. This may not occur, due to the number of vaccinated. It's possible, then, that the health situation may improve over the winter months, rather than worsen, and travel demand will continue on an upward trajectory. In the best-case scenario, if you want to quickly move to that, M.E., we're assuming that there is an improvement in the health situation, perhaps due to the FDA approval of vaccines, which has happened, leading to more vaccinations and lower COVID levels as a result. In this scenario pent-up demand and travelers continued spending of savings gained during the pandemic, leads to record levels of travel and room tax collections in the fiscal year. Alternatively, in the worst-case scenario, we are assuming that COVID cases rise more drastically, and health metrics worsened through the winter and into 2022. This leads to a fairly sharp and sustained drop in travel, lasting throughout the fiscal year. It's important to note that these are point-in-time estimates. Travel has played out better than was anticipated through the spring and summer months, and as we continue to get more data in, we will update these forecasts. I suppose the big takeaway in reviewing these scenarios is that if, M.E., if we could just go back to the mid-level case. The projection for FY '22, in this scenario, puts us at \$21.6 million, which is almost fully \$5 million more than what we have legislatively approved in the budget summary I showed you just a moment ago. So that's some happy news, I hope, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

SCOLARI: Edward?

ESTIPONA: This is Edward Estipona, for record. Have we -- the one variable in this, beyond COVID and sentiment of travel based on COVID, that we have never had data on; we have, probably one week of data, or one weekend where the data is. We didn't have the Raiders before this. I saw that stadium. That was packed. Can't be all Las Vegans. Gotta be some people from Oakland. Gotta be some people from L.A. I don't know what that's going to do with the numbers, but I suspect, based on the excitement of that first game, that, we could be getting more travel than maybe we were expecting, because there's just -- NFL didn't exist last year, with anybody in the stadiums. So, I think that, I don't know, if that was factored into this whole thing. Plus, we have several new properties that have opened up as well, I thought.

SCOLARI: Commissioner Estipona, I believe the increased room count is factored in. We don't, thus far track those event-specific, potentially impactful events, like the Raiders game you described, but I can certainly talk to Kyle about how we might be able to do that.

ESTIPONA: Thank you.

SCOLARI: Any other questions?

MUN: I have a question.

SCOLARI: Vice Chair Mun?

MUN: Cynthia Mun, for the record. In the projections you've done in the past, generally, where have we landed? Has it always been somewhere in the middle?

SCOLARI: I can say -- for the record, Brenda Scolari -- that we -- Kyle's projections have been remarkably accurate. I believe his projection for our lodging-tax collections and revenue for FY '22, is only off by about \$500,000, at that high end. So, yes, I think we've been cautious to just always go with the mid-level projection, in terms of our budget building, and that has been pretty darned accurate.

MUN: Yes, I think that's quite commendable. Because, I mean, it's tough to do, especially during this time where we've never been at a juncture with a pandemic. So, I just wanted to comment. I thought that was the case as well. And so, going forward, do you think the middle-case scenario is what you would peg?

SCOLARI: I do. I do. I think it's the cautiously optimistic category and that's where we like to stay.

MUN: Okay. Great. Thank you. Any other questions? All right. Well, our next item is for possible action. We will be reviewing Travel Nevada grants for fiscal year '22. Ms. Shari Davis will be reviewing the packet.

DAVIS: Good morning. Good morning, Madam Vice Chair, Members of the Commission. For the record, my name is Shari Davis, and I'm the Rural Programs Manager for Travel Nevada. It is my pleasure to present to you the fiscal year 2022, first-cycle, rural marketing grant recommendations, approved by the Territory Advisory Committee, consisting of our territory chairs with Rural Commissioner Jane Moon and Industry Programs Manager, Christian Passink as advisory members. In this cycle, we received 134 grant applications, requesting \$1,369,896.35, in funding. We only had \$730,547, to distribute, so \$639,349.35, had to be cut or denied. Typically, we have \$1.65 million over a year to distribute, through two cycles, so with a \$919,000, required cut in annual grant funding, and no guarantee of more funding or a second cycle, though we were optimistic, this

grant cycle was exceptionally difficult. I have now been here three years, and this was, by far, the most difficult and competitive cycle. One major unfortunate change from previous cycles was the decision to deny travel and mission shows, FAMs, and conferences across the board for this cycle, due to the current state of the pandemic. That was not an easy decision to make, but it was based on the likelihood of smaller audiences and attendees, resulting in less return on investment, the potential to shift to virtual, reschedule, or cancel altogether, which was seen, fan participants canceling last minute, and then the resulting need for reallocation when this grant cycle is already incredibly competitive. Through 2020, and 2021, there were several instances where funds had to be reallocated due to cancellations, or the full award was not used due to events switching to virtual, resulting in lower costs. One organization recently attended a consumer show so they would not lose their previous deposit and there were only 3,000 attendees instead of the expected 10,000. They still considered it successful, but the ROI was certainly drastically reduced. We are already also seeing conferences and other events canceling or switching to virtual. Just with a few, but we determined it to be too much of a risk and a potential waste of already precious grant funds, just because we have -- not as much as we typically do. So, I began as I typically do, by sorting the grants into categories so they can be compared, side by side, and then I reviewed all the backup documentation. If anything was missing, applicants were contacted and given the opportunity to submit additional backup, quotes, or information, though, some applicants did not respond to those requests. Each grant was read completely, and ineligible projects or portions of the budget were cut out immediately. Quotes were reviewed to see where cuts could be made, that would still allow the projects, or portions of projects, to be completed, and when ROI seemed similar for applicants with multiple projects, those applicants were contacted, so their priorities could be taken into consideration when determining which projects should be cut or denied. Once that was completed, the amount left to cut was determined, and then the projects with the lowest ROI were cut or denied until the correct total was reached. You've seen two different grant packets. The first one was approved by the Territory Advisory Committee on August 17th, and then another approved by the Territory Advisory Committee on September 8th. Due to the change in award date, and the Commission meeting date, there were a few projects, specifically events that became ineligible, due to timing issues, and a few others that had to be cut due to print deadlines. Per the Attorney General's Office, the Territory Advisory Committee needed to meet again, to approve the changes. So, I'd like to thank the members of the Committee for their dedication, time, and flexibility. I highlighted the changes within the spreadsheet and also included a document to list the changes and reasoning behind those changes. If there are no questions, I respectfully request approval of the fiscal year 2022, first cycle, rural marketing grant recommendations.

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina, for the record. First of all, thank you so much to you and to the committee, because this is such an incredible amount of work, and there's so many amazing projects on here. I can't imagine how challenging it was to allocate funds. So,

thank you, first of all. One question I had, and I had two. One question I had, was in regards to the Nevada Northern Railway Foundation. I saw they were not in compliance. Are they aware of that? That they're not in compliance, and know that they need to do whatever it is necessary in order to get future grant funds?

DAVIS: Yes, they are aware.

PAZINA: Okay. Thank you very much. And the second -- I guess it's more of a comment. Because I noticed what you shared in the beginning, in regards to returning to live events and FAMs. Is that something that, once the numbers go down, we'll look at adjusting and prioritizing those funds again.

DAVIS: 100%. The issue this time was just -- we've seen in the previous grant cycles, through 2020, and 2021, the funds that were -- are still sitting there as deposits, that weren't used, and things like that, and we just -- looking at the amounts and looking at what we knew we could accomplish, there's just a little too much gray area, I guess, and we wanted to make sure that those funds were used to the absolute maximum capability that they could be, without having to reallocate or readjust and all of those things. So, I guess we learned a couple lessons from 2020, and 2021, but we're super optimistic that this is hopefully the very last time that we have to maybe do that, across the board. It was not an easy decision. There was a very long conversation that went into all of that.

PAZINA: No, I'm sure. Thank you so much.

DAVIS: Thank you.

PAZINA: Live meetings and live events and getting people in person are what we do, as tourism. So, I can't imagine how challenging of a decision that was and thank you.

DAVIS: Thank you.

MUN: Do we have any other questions? Okay. If there are no more questions, can I get a motion to approve the proceeding with the fiscal year 2020, Rural Marketing Grant Recommendations?

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina, for the record, and I would like to make a motion to approve the fiscal year 2022, first cycle Rural Marketing Grant recommendations, as presented today.

MUN: We have a motion by Commissioner Pazina. Do we have a second?

ESTIPONA: This is Edward Estipona. I second the motion.

MUN: Okay. Thank you. I have a motion and a second. Any discussions? Okay. Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying, aye.

MULTIPLE: Aye.

MUN: Any opposed? Okay. So, the motion is carried and it's unanimous. I guess we can now move on to agenda item G, which may also have an action. Mr. Christian Passink will provide a final report on the Commission on Tourism's Recovery Committee.

PASSINK: Good morning, Madam Vice Chair and Members of the Commission. The Recovery Committee was formed in July of 2020, in response to the pandemic and the resulting crisis within the tourism and hospitality sector. The Committee met on a quarterly basis, in advance of the full Tourism Commission meetings, to which they had reported on the progress of the recovery programs. The Committee recommends that Travel Nevada retain and advance the programs that were successful as part of the recovery plan during the pandemic. Destination Development, which provides for long-range tourism asset planning for rural communities, the Volunteer Impact Program, which provides for grant support for volunteer power infrastructure projects, the Discover Your Nevada Campaign, directed at and Nevada residents, encouraging them to travel within their home state to enjoy its parks, outdoor spaces, and western heritage. In addition, the Committee recommends that the tourism forum, which was conducted in March of 2021, become an annual event. The virtual meeting was a beneficial gathering of the leaders within the industry, who offered an overview of their activities and their perspectives. The meeting was well attended and greatly appreciated by tourism partners throughout the state. With the adoption of the fiscal year '22-'23 Strategic Plan at the June Commission meeting, Travel Nevada staff will now move forward with these new initiatives as their guide. Though we face some uncertain times regarding the COVID landscape within our industry, the Strategic Plan has defined a focus on programs that bring the highest benefit to residents and local economies, which will be impactful, despite the continuing presence of the virus. With that understanding, we have faith in the new Strategic Plan, and the direction of the agency. We conclude that the pressing need for the Recovery Committee's insight has passed and recommend the dissolution of the Committee. This committee came together to guide staff through the most difficult period in our tourism industry's history. We'd like to thank Julie Pazina, Kristin Windbigler, Patty Herzog Tim Haughinberry, Tracie Barnthouse, and Jessica Grundy, for their time, commitment, and particularly, Chairwoman Pam Robinson for her leadership and insight that she's provided over the past year. Thank you.

MUN: Thank you so much, Mr. Passink, for the report. I know that we are going to request a motion, but before then, are there any questions?

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina, for the record. I'd also like to thank the Travel Nevada staff, who worked so hard alongside the Committee, to ensure it was successful. So, thank you to the Director, for Christian, for Jessica, everyone who really just worked so hard and made that a success. Thank you so much. And I feel like we found, out of a horrible situation, some things that worked, like the virtual forum and all of the initiatives that Christian mentioned. So, thank you so much to Travel Nevada.

MUN: Thank you so much, Commissioner Pazina. I think, would someone like to make a motion for the recommendation for the dissolution of the Committee?

ESTIPONA: This is Edward Estipona. I make the motion for the dissolution of the Committee.

MUN: Okay. I have a motion. Do we have a second?

CONTURSI: This is Donald Contursi, for the record. I second the motion.

MUN: Great. We have a motion and a second. And there are no discussions, or are there any discussions?

WARD: For the record, Harry Ward, Deputy Attorney General. Vice Chair, this motion, it's in relationship to which item on the agenda? And I'm a bit confused. I just want to make sure that we are compliant with the open-meeting law and that we can do this at this time under this agenda item.

MUN: So, it's agenda G, and it may have an action, it says. So, agenda item G?

WARD: Okay.

MUN: So, basically, Mr. Passink has requested a recommendation to dissolve the Recovery Committee?

WARD: Okay. Proceed.

MUN: Okay. So, we have a motion and a second and no discussion so far. So, all those in favor, signify by saying, aye.

MULTIPLE: Aye.

MUN: Any opposed? Okay, so the motion passed. Motion is carried. All right. And then next item is H. We can move to next item, agenda item H, for possible action. Director Scolari will review funding opportunities for Commission on Tourism.

SCOLARI:

Thank you, Vice Chair, Mun. M.E., if you could bring up the application, that might be helpful. I know this was supplied to the Commission after the initial Commission packet was sent. So, let's take a look at that on screen. This funding opportunity through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Agency comes to the State of Nevada through the American Rescue Plan Act, which was championed by our Nevada Senators for industry recovery and support. Each state was allocated a grant amount, based on COVID impact indicators for recovery. The Governor's office has approved this breakdown of eligible funding, which will be administered through the Division of Tourism. As you can see in the destination marketing category, the Governor's office has recommended recovery dollars for the Las Vegas and Reno Sparks Visitor's Authorities, as well as Travel Nevada and our Marketing Grant Program. Within economic development planning, the Destination Development Program, which grows community tourism assets, is funded along with site planning for adventure centers, a collaborative infrastructure project with the Department of Outdoor Recreation. Let me read that. This may be a new concept for some of the Commission. I did talk about this in our workshop, but not everyone was in attendance. During the initial stages of the pandemic, many states experienced a surge of outdoor recreation visitors, as people sought a healthy, safe, and travel outlet. That experienced an unprecedented number of first-time, outdoor enthusiasts, many of whom were uneducated about safety, best practices, and stewardship of public land. Adventure centers will be regional activity hubs that express the character of the region through their site placement and architecture. These facilities will welcome visitors and residents with local ambassadors, who will provide adventure seekers with safety and conservation best practices information, connection to vetted tour guides, connection to outfitters and appropriate gear, outdoor activity demonstrations, and this site planning allocation is needed to identify the ideal communities and locations for these local outdoor recreation economic drivers. Other outdoor recreation initiatives include trail system and outdoor recreation infrastructure planning, outdoor recreation economic impact analysis, Dark Sky tourism market analysis and community planning toolkit, and Tahoe Meadows managed recreation planning. In the technical assistance category, funding for an Adventure Nevada mobile app, which will compile maps for an array of outdoor activities for visitor wayfinding and safety information, which is a much-needed travel advancement and resource. So this comprises the complete allocation of \$13.56 million, and what I ask of the Commission today, is to endorse the programmatic spending, detailed here, for Travel Nevada. I also know that Colin Robertson, the Director of the Division of Outdoor Recreation, is on the call, if you have any questions about the outdoor recreation programs. Any questions?

MUN:

I don't have a question. This is Cynthia Mun, for the record. But, I would like to congratulate Travel Nevada, because I remember you guys talking about applying for these grants and it was such a great opportunity. And then, to see that you did get them. I know a lot of work has gone in for the application, so, congratulations.

SCOLARI: Well, thank you. We see this as an amazing recovery opportunity and, having endured a painful budgetary year, we have spent a great deal of time and been very thoughtful about the programs and initiative that will best serve our missions. And I'm very encouraged and happy about the collaboration with the Division of Outdoor Recreation. Really see that as an opportunity for our rural communities to build a new tourism economy.

MUN: I think it speaks very highly of the strength of your team, and you in the leadership role. So, thank you so much.

SCOLARI: Colin, would you like to say anything?

ROBERTSON: I'm happy to, but I think Commissioner Estipona had a question.

MUN: Okay.

ESTIPONA: Not a question, just a quick comment, as well. I want to thank the Travel Nevada staff for all their hard work on this. And I do see this as an amazing opportunity to reinvest back into Nevada and reinvest in areas where we've never been able to do this. And so, you know, you got to get something good out of COVID and if this is what's going to come out of it, I'll take it, because it's a win for our state and congratulations, and Colin, go out and do your job and make it happen.

ROBERTSON: Thank you, Commissioner. Colin Robertson, Administrator of the Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation, for the record. I just want to acknowledge Director Scolari, and the Travel Nevada team for what has been two months of pretty significant and important collaboration across our departments, and my division, and that's been enormously gratifying, and I think very meaningful, for the future of outdoor recreation in Nevada and the related tourism in our state. And, I think that there are a ton of really great opportunities represented by this framework, so appreciate all the hard work that many people put into getting us to this point and look forward to continued collaboration. Thank you.

MUN: Great. Are there any other questions? If not, then I think we need to take a motion to endorse the \$13.56 million of programmatic spending detailed in the packet.

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina, for the record. I'd like to make a motion to endorse the grants as outlined, totaling \$13.56 million, as presented today.

MUN: Do we have a second?

MURDOCK: Second –

ESTIPONA: This is -- this is Edward. I think it was Commissioner Murdock.

MURDOCK: Commissioner Murdock seconds the motion.

MUN: All right. So, we have a motion and a second. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying, aye.

MULTIPLE: Aye.

MUN: Any opposed? The motion carries unanimously. Okay. So, I think that's the agenda item, so far, for H. And then, before we begin to wrap up today's meeting, any Committee comments? Okay. No comments there. And then, Director Scolari would like to look at upcoming Commission meetings.

SCOLARI: Thank you, Vice Chair. I would like to discuss having another full Commission meeting in the first two weeks of November. I know the Lieutenant Governor had expressed a desire to have the Commission meeting prior to the holidays. So, I just wanted to garner input about polling for a meeting prior to Thanksgiving. Any objection to doing that?

MUN: Do you think it might be in person, or would that be on Zoom, as well?

SCOLARI: Well, that's another question for the Commission. I'd be happy to do an in-person. I'm looking forward to that. So, any comments?

MUN: Commissioner Estipona?

ESTIPONA: This is Edward Estipona, for the record. I would like to have it in person. We have so many new Commissioners and so many new faces, and honestly, I came, I guess, into this whole thing as an official Commissioner, and then all of a sudden we went into COVID, so I haven't seen anybody. So, as long as it's safe, and I'm crossing my fingers by then the Delta variant has weighed off, I feel comfortable meeting in person, if we can.

MUN: Okay. Any other comments regarding the meeting? Yes?

ESTIPONA: Yes, this is Edward Estipona, for record, again. Just, as a reminder, maybe this is an opportunity, as we had talked in the beginning of the meeting to, this is where we discuss the RFP, in this meeting. So, I want to, if we can put that on the agenda, that would be great.

MUN: Okay.

SCOLARI: Yes, I agree. We had made a promise to bring the RFP process and contracts with consultants to the Commission. So, let's make that an agenda item and I'll completely review the process, as it stands, and solicit any improvements to that process.

MUN: Great. So, we're trying to look for the first two weeks in November, for the next meeting, and we will add the RFP process into that agenda. And we are going to, hopefully, make it an in-person meeting. Is that what everyone understands it to be? Okay, great. Any other comments?

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina, for the record. I'd just like to welcome Donald Contursi, who I know from Las Vegas Hospitality Association, as a new Commissioner. So excited and thrilled to see you and welcome to the new Travel Nevada staff.

MUN: Yes, we are very excited.

SCOLARI: I think we should ask Donald to tell us a little bit about his company.

MUN: That would be great.

SCOLARI: For those who aren't aware.

CONTURSI: Donald Contursi, for the record. Thank you, very much for the introduction and warm welcome. So, my company is a little over six years. Started as a passion for the food industry and hospitality. And what we do is we take our guests to about four different restaurants, in an outing, so, for lunch or for dinner. And it's been very successful. We've expanded, as you mentioned, to Chicago and to different parts of Las Vegas, like Chinatown and Green Valley in Henderson, Nevada, downtown, and we're continually expanding, to basically not just show off the different restaurants, but also the neighborhoods and the communities. So, it's been -- it's grown from just a passion of food to ambassadors of our state and introducing all of these visitors, and even locals, to these independent restaurant tours. And we take the most pride when we're shuttling groups from the strip down to neighborhood restaurants that are independently owned and they're not asking for a return shuttle so they could explore and stay in the area. And so, we just want to continue helping get the word out on all the amazing people and the city and the state. So, thank you.

MUN: Well, it sounds like a fantastic organization, for sure. And one I will definitely check out afterwards. So, thank you and welcome.

CONTURSI: Thank you.

MUN: Do we have any other comments?

SCOLARI: I'd like to just thank you, Commissioner Mun for stepping in, in this circumstance, and chairing today.

MUN: Yes. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to learn as we go. So, if there are no more comments, we can now move to any additional public comments from anyone on the phone. Do we have anyone on the phone?

SCOLARI: We do not.

MUN: Okay. Great. I think this has been the fastest meeting we've ever had. With that, I moved to adjourn today's Commission on Tourism at 9:55 AM. Can I get a second?

ESTIPONA: This is Edward Estipona. I second.

MUN: All those in favor, say, aye.

MULTIPLE: Aye.

MUN: We're adjourned. Thank you very much.

SCOLARI: Thanks everybody.

MULTIPLE: Bye. Thank you.

[end of meeting]