

**Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority  
Special Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 23, 2021**

The Board of Directors of the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority met at 9:00 am September 23, 2021. The meeting was properly noticed & posted in compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law.

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## **A. OPENING CEREMONIES**

### **A1. Call to Order**

Chair Bob Lucey called the meeting to order at 9:04.

### **A2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Bob Lucey asked Sparks Mayor Ed Lawson to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **A3. Roll Call**

The Clerk of the Board took roll call.

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#### **Board Members Present:**

Councilwoman Charlene Bybee  
Andy Chapman  
Commissioner Bob Lucey  
Rick Murdock  
Mayor Hillary Schieve  
Jessica Sferrazza  
Ann Silver  
Mark Sterbens

#### **Board Members Absent:**

Shannon Keel

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#### **RSCVA Executive Staff Present:**

Charles Harris, President & CEO  
Michael Larragueta, Vice President of Sales  
Courtney Jaeger, Vice President of Finance  
Christina Erny, Director of Marketing

#### **RSCVA Legal Counsel:**

Ben Kennedy, Dickinson Wright  
Molly Rezac, Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart

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## **B. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR BY THE PUBLIC**

Nicholas Maier spoke to the issue of COVID-19 protocols in the region.

Fred Simon spoke to the issue of homelessness in the region.

Chris Minnes spoke about the Legion Sports Fest at the Reno Sparks Convention Center on October 7-9, 2021.

Ed Lawson, Sparks Mayor, spoke in support of item F3. Performance Review for President/CEO Charles Harris' performance for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

Robert McKay emailed a public comment on September 21, 2021 (see attached).

Dustin Cassidy emailed a public comment on September 21, 2021 (see attached).

Chuck Matter emailed a public comment on September 21, 2021 (see attached).

Richard Vohsing emailed a public comment on September 22, 2021 (see attached).

**C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA OF THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2021, REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Motion:** Move to approve the September 23, 2021 agenda as presented.

**Moved by:** Councilwoman Bybee

**Seconded by:** Mark Sterbens

**Aye:** Member Bybee, Chapman, Lucey, Murdock, Schieve, Sferrazza, Silver and Sterbens

**No:**

**Absent:** Shannon Keel

**Abstain:**

**Vote:** Motion passed unanimously

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2021, SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Motion:** Move to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2021, Special Board of Directors meeting as presented.

**Moved by:** Andy Chapman

**Seconded by:** Ann Silver

**Aye:** Member Bybee, Lucey, Murdock, Schieve, Sferrazza, Silver and Sterbens

**No:**

**Absent:** Member Keel

**Abstain:**

**Vote:** Motion passed unanimously

**E. PRESENTATIONS**

**E1. Review, Brand USA Update**

Chris Thompson, President & CEO, Brand USA, gave the Board of directors on international travel and tourism to the United States.

**E2. City Rivals Esports Presentation**

Adam Rosen, Founder of Rally Cry, and Tom McClimon, Managing Director of the Mayors Esports Network for the US Conference of Mayors, gave a presentation on City Rivals, a city-based corporate esports league.

**E3. Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority CEO Update**

Charles Harris gave the Board of Directors his CEO update.

**F. BOARD MATTERS**

**F1. Facilities Review**

Charles Harris, President & CEO, presented this item. Mr. Harris stated that the current management agreement with ASM Global for the Reno Event Center, Reno Sparks Convention Center, Reno Sparks Livestock Event Center, and the National Bowling Stadium expires on June 1, 2022. He stated that RSCVA staff recommends bringing the management of the four facilities in-house.

After some discussion, the board to the following action:

**Motion:** Move to approve the RSCVA recommendation to assume operations and management of the Reno Event Center, Reno Sparks Convention Center, Reno Sparks Livestock Event Center, and the National Bowling Stadium.

**Moved by:** Councilwoman Charlene Bybee

**Seconded by:**

**Aye:** Member Bybee, Chapman, Lucey, Murdock, Schieve, Sferrazza, Silver and Sterbens

**No:**

**Absent:** Member Keel

**Abstain:**

**Vote:** Motion passed unanimously

## **F2. Increase President/CEO Signature Authority**

Charles Harris, President & CEO, presented this item. Mr. Harris stated that RSCVA staff is asking for approval to increase the signature authority of the President/CEO when entering into contracts with third parties. He added that the existing policy permits the President/CEO to execute contracts involving the expenditure of RSCVA funds of up to Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000). He stated that the board is being asked to approve an increase in the signature authority of up to One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) without the necessity of obtaining Board authorization.

After some discussion, the board to the following action:

**Motion**: Move to approve an increase in the signature authority of the President/CEO when entering into contracts with third parties of up to One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000).

**Moved by**: Mark Sterbens

**Seconded by**: Councilwoman Bybee

**Aye**: Member Bybee, Chapman, Lucey, Murdock, Schieve, Sferrazza, Silver and Sterbens

**No**:

**Absent**: Member Keel

**Abstain**:

**Vote**: Motion passed unanimously

## **F3. Performance Review**

Charles Harris presented this item. Mr. Harris reviewed the information contained in the board packet.

After some discussion, the board to the following action:

**Motion**: Move to award a 10% merit increase in Mr. Harris' annual base salary.

**Moved by**: Ann Silver

**Seconded by**:

**Aye**:

**No**:

**Absent**: Member Keel

**Abstain**: Member Sferrazza

**Vote**: Motion failed on the floor with no second.

**Motion**: Move to award Mr. Harris a bonus in an amount not to exceed Fifty-Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy-Six Dollars (\$57,776).

**Moved by**: Mark Sterbens

**Seconded by**: Andy Chapman

**Aye**: Member Bybee, Chapman, Lucey, Silver, and Sterbens

**No**: Member Murdock and Schieve

**Absent**: Member Keel

**Abstain**: Member Sferrazza

**Vote**: Motion passed with a vote of five in favor, two no's, and one abstention.

## **G BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Member Jessica Sferrazza asked that Special Events Funding come back to the next agenda for discussion.

## **H COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR BY THE PUBLIC**

None

## **I ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 11:59 am.

To view the full meeting recording, please visit the RSCVA Board of Directors Meeting YouTube page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvPXMCrCtmU&t=7732s>

**From:** [Robert McKay](#)  
**To:** [Board Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Comment for: Charles Harris Bonus  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 3:17:01 PM

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Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Hello,

I find it incredibly hypocritical that a person in such a leadership position would have any inclination of receiving any type of bonus while his employees had to take a pay cut? When pay cuts go for all employees and to have the CEO/Manager request a bonus it shows the type of person they are and its a shame that the tax dollars of the City of Reno ever supported such a individual.

Thank you

**From:** [Dustin Cassiday](#)  
**To:** [Board Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** RSCVA Board Meeting Public Comment - For board meeting dated 23-SEP-2021  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 3:35:30 PM

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I am unable to attend the RSCVA board meeting scheduled for 9:00 am on Thursday, September 23, 2021. I wish to have the following public comment entered into the meeting records:

In regard to President/CEO Charles Harris' compensation, the RSCVA board is planning to discuss, consider, and may take possible action to award a bonus up to \$57,776 and/or award a merit increase in Mr. Harris' base salary. I vehemently urge the board to not award a performance bonus or merit increase to Mr. Harris for the following reasons:

In an interview with the Reno Gazette-Journal, published October 14, 2020, Mr. Harris stated time and again that his number one priority as RSCVA President./CEO is to build relationships. Whether it be vendors, coworkers, board members, or the Reno-Sparks community, Mr. Harris made "relationships" a cornerstone of his identity and responsibilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, RSCVA staff and executives were forced to take pay cuts of 10-15%, while the newly-hired Mr. Harris had a contract that excluded him from the pay cuts. As a highly-compensated employee, Mr. Harris could have reduced his exorbitant salary in a show of solidarity, but chose not to. This does not sound like the behavior of a person who strives to build relationships.

In late 2020, after receiving better-than-expected income from tourism in the area, it was suggested by Mayor Scheive that some of RSCVA's eight million dollar budget surplus be used to pay back wages for RSCVA staff that had taken these pay cuts. The total amount of back pay was stated to be \$188,000. Mr. Harris had the opportunity to give this money back to his staff, but made the decision to not add the item into the budget. Again I must state that Mr Harris' actions do not seem to be the actions of someone who claims building relationships with people are his number one priority.

Mr. Harris is already one of the the highest-compensated public officials in Northern Nevada, making more in outright compensation and perks than many high-profile government employees, such as Governor Sisolak. Mr. Harris does not need a merit increase or a bonus, and that money should instead go to the RSCVA employees that make significantly less than he does.

Dustin Cassiday

**From:** [Notta Realname](#)  
**To:** [Board Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for Thurs September 23 Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 3:36:20 PM

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Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Hello,

I would like to submit comment on Items F2 and Items F3 on the RSCVA board of directors meeting on Thursday September 23, 2021.

Item F2: Against. The threshold for purchases requiring board approval should remain at \$50,000 to ensure proper stewardship of tax funds.

Item F3: Against the issuance of a raise or bonus for the RSCVA CEO. The CEO is already grossly overpaid compared to other high level managers in the area paid with public funds. The bonus money should instead go towards back paying RSCVA employees who took a pay cut during the pandemic.

Please read my comments aloud at the meeting as general comment or under the related agenda item.

Thank you,  
Chuck Matter  
Renoite

**From:** [Richard](#)  
**To:** [Board Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Concerns regarding the RSCVA Board Meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 22, 2021 2:23:18 PM

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Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

It is my understanding that the CEO, Charles Harris is asking for a \$57,000 bonus.

I would like to remind the board that Charles is the highest paid government official in Washoe County, despite only 7 months of experience in his role, and being wholly underqualified for his position.

I would also like to remind the board that Charles refused a pay-cut that was mandated for all RSCVA employees.

\$57,000 is approaching the average HOUSEHOLD income for US citizens. Even ignoring that Charles is greatly overcompensated for his position, it is unfathomable that such a bonus would be considered when other RSCVA employees have been living on reduced pay.

There is a growing divide in our country that is heavily driven by extreme income disparities. Please do not contribute to this problem by giving money to somebody who clearly does not deserve it.

Richard