

**Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority
Special Meeting held Thursday, December 8, at 9:00 a.m.
Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority
4065 S. Virginia Street, Board Room, Reno, Nevada**

The Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority Board of Directors met at 9:00 am on Thursday, September 22, 2022. The meeting was properly noticed & posted in compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law.

A. OPENING CEREMONIES

A1. Call to Order

Chair Charlene Bybee called the meeting to order at 9:02 am.

A2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Bybee asked Commissioner Hartung to lead the pledge.

A3. Roll Call

The Clerk of the Board took roll call.

Board Members Present:

Councilwoman Charlene Bybee, RSCVA Chair
Stephan Ascuaga, RSCVA Board Member
Andy Chapman, RSCVA Board Member
Shannon Keel, RSCVA Board Member
Commissioner Vaughn Hartung, RSCVA Board Member
Rick Murdock, RSCVA Board Member
Mayor Hillary Schieve, RSCVA Vice Chair
Jessica Sferrazza, RSCVA Board Member
Ann Silver, RSCVA Board Member

Board Members Absent:

RSCVA Executive Staff Present:

Charles Harris, President & CEO
Trent LaFerriere, Vice President, Facilities
Mike Larragueta, Vice President, Sales
Christina Erny, Vice President, Marketing

RSCVA Legal Counsel:

Benjamin Kennedy, Dickson Wright

Board Clerk:

Lisa Farmer, Executive Assistant to the CEO

B. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR BY THE PUBLIC

C. CONSENT AGENDA:

- 1. Approval of the Agenda of the December 8, 2022, Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors**

2. **Approval of the Minutes of the September 22, 2022, Meeting of the Board of Directors**
3. **Review, Discussion, and Possible Action to Approve Settlement Agreement for that Certain Litigation Captioned Ernest Correo, et al. v. Wild Sheep Foundation, et al**
4. **Approval of the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority Employee Benefit Plans, for Active Employees and Qualifying Retirees, Including the Medical Benefits Plan at a Cost not to Exceed \$1,269,578**

Board Member Sferrazza asked to remove item C4 from the consent agenda.

Motion: Move to approve consent agenda items C1 thru C3 as presented.

Moved by: Board Member Hartung

Seconded by: Board Member Silver

Aye: Board Members: Ascuaga, Bybee, Chapman, Keel, Hartung, Murdock, Schieve, Sferrazza, and Silver

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Vote: Motion passed 9-0-0

Board Member Sferrazza recused herself from item C4, as she has a business relationship with Prominence Health Plan.

Motion: Move to approve consent agenda item C4 as presented.

Moved by: Board Member Hartung

Seconded by: Board Member Ascuaga

Aye: Board Members: Ascuaga, Bybee, Chapman, Keel, Hartung, Murdock, Schieve, and Silver

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain: Sferrazza,

Vote: Motion passed 8-0-1

D. EXECUTIVE UPDATE(S)

D1. Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority CEO Update

President and CEO of the RSCVA, Mr. Charles Harris introduced Brent Bowers, Director of Sales at the National Bowling Stadium. Mr. Harris then provided an update on recent RSCVA activities and reviewed the current marketing and room tax statistics. He shared that the Reno Sparks Convention Center won a silver medal in the Best Convention Center (Far West) category at the 6th Annual Stella Awards by Northstar Meetings Group. RSCVA participated in the Chamber Alliance event with Southwest Airlines. Currently Emerald Exhibitions was in Reno holding their second annual conference. More than 100 meeting and convention bookers are attending. Mr. Harris would be meeting with Emerald leadership and attending some of their events. Mr. Harris then shared some recent travel and tourism news and trends predicted for the next three months.

Discussion followed regarding travel compared to pre-pandemic (2019) numbers and a possible softening of the market due to some sort of anticipated recession and issues with staffing and pilot shortages.

F. PRESENTATIONS

F1. Presentation: Annual Plan Update - RSCVA Marketing Department

Christina Erny, Vice President of Marketing, gave an update on current marketing initiatives. As a reminder, Marketing had created goals based on the following areas in the annual plan: Sales and Marketing, Destination Management, and Destination Alignment. Vice President Erny provided information related to those three pillars in the following areas: Organization and Destination Brand, Visitors, Events, Air Service, and Facilities Plan.

Marketing was working with Destination Analysts and would be bringing their visitor profile study findings to the January Board of Directors meeting. Using the findings from that study, Marketing has redefined their persona definitions and media mix. One of the largest events organized by RSCVA was hosting The Bucket List family.

Board Member Keel asked if the annual plan pillars aligned with the fiscal year budget. Vice President Erny confirmed they are on the same time schedule. Board Member Keel asked if the Board could get an update on the annual plan measures as the fiscal year would be at the midway point through the year. Mr. Harris said there is a trailing effect so it wouldn't be a true six months at the next meeting, but an update could be provided.

Board Member Sferrazza said there were some common themes in the marketing materials. She asked if RSCVA was taking into consideration the Virginia Street corridor study and whether or not RSCVA was participating in the study. Mr. Harris said RSCVA has not been involved but will be contacting them along with other stakeholders before the planned citywide strategic plan RFP is drafted to make sure there is not duplicative work being done. Board Member Sferrazza thought it was imperative to have RSCVA involved in the Virginia Street study.

Mayor Schieve asked if the Customer Advisory Board (CAB) had discussed the importance of the downtown area. She said outdoor recreation, the Truckee River, and the downtown area are some areas that people often find surprising when they visit Reno.

Board Member Ascuaga congratulated the Marketing Department on the success of the influencer initiative with The Bucket List family. He thought this was a very effective form of advertising the area and hoped they would continue such projects with influencers in other realms, like gaming.

Discussion followed on the policy and contracts for paid versus non-paid influencers. Vice President Erny said they only develop contracts with paid influencers and each one is customized to meet the unique following of that influencer.

Board Member Silver was interested in the new marketing looking for dog friendly travel. She asked if RSCVA was working with their partners to take advantage of the opportunities in this submarket. Mr. Harris said many employees were still working remote, which means they will travel with their pets as they can work anywhere. Marketing has some initiatives focusing on that demographic. Mayor Schieve reported that the City of Reno was recognized by Mars Petcare as one of the "Better Cities for Pets".

Discussion followed regarding the efforts of the Western Heritage Center group looking to help with improvements at the Reno-Sparks Livestock Events Center. Mr. Harris said upcoming CEO report contains some information about the venue. Currently there are 55 events booked. There are only two weekends, January thru October, that are not hosting events at the venue.

Board Member Murdock said in regard to the Virginia Street corridor study, said there was a data collected previously in a Harvard Bloomberg report. It was imperative for the RSCVA to have access to that info and participate in the current study. The Row is continually referencing that data when looking at improvements and/or projects. He added that there were federal resources available to fund projects tied to improvements along the corridor. Mayor Schieve asked how the corridor was being prioritized by RSCVA and the Board. She felt it was very important, the Board really needed to be engaged and involved in it. Mayor Schieve asked if the Board would be moving back to monthly meetings. She felt it was time to meet more often as items were being forgotten and not moving forward.

Board Member Sferrazza asked to put moving to monthly meetings on the next agenda. It had been brought up several times. Discussion followed regarding meeting monthly. Legal Counsel Ben Kennedy interjected that the meeting schedule was not on the agenda for discussion. The schedule is set by the RSCVA Board Policies and Procedures. To amend the schedule, it needs to be added to a future agenda to revise the policy.

G. BOARD MATTERS

G1. Review and Possible Approval of the Finance and Facilities Committee's Recommendation to Approve Additional Funding for the Incline Village/Crystal Bay TART Connect Micro-Shuttle Project

Motion: Move to approve the request by the Incline Village/Crystal Bay TART Connect Micro-Shuttle project for additional funding as recommended by the RSCVA Finance and Facilities Committee.

Moved by: Mayor Schieve

Seconded by: Board Member Sferrazza

Board Member Silver asked if the project had the ability to apply for infrastructure funding in the future. Board Member Chapman said they were not able to apply as they needed capital and operating funds. This was the end of the two-year pilot project. Talks had begun about seeking Federal transportation funds and other operational funding opportunities.

Board Member Ascuaga reminded the Board that in September the project was approved for \$250,000 with the caveat that it would be brought back in the future for an additional \$100,000 in funding once the first quarter financials were received. There was a unanimous decision to approve the additional \$100,000 by the Finance and Facilities Committee.

Aye: Board Members: Ascuaga, Bybee, Chapman, Keel, Hartung, Murdock, Schieve, Sferrazza, and Silver

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Vote: Motion passed 9-0-0

G2. Public Hearing Regarding the Approval of Resolution #598 Adopting the Budget Augmentation for the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority for Fiscal Year 2022-23

Vice President of Finance, Courtney Jaeger, gave a presentation outlining the proposed budget augmentation. The budget augmentation was presented to the Finance and Facilities Committee on November 29th and was approved for recommendation to the full RSCVA Board.

Board Member Sferrazza left the meeting at 10:18 am. She returned at 10:24 am.

Vice President Jaeger said Q1 revenues had exceeded the original budget by \$2,437,320. The carry forward resources from the prior year of \$4,089,941 were included in the augmentation to spend during the current fiscal year. The total proposed budget augmentation was \$6,527,261. Of that an increase of \$3,246,000 was being added to Capital Improvements, \$1,873,190 was being added to Community Support: Convention and Tourism Promotion with the largest portion going to the Marketing Department (\$1,433,686). \$630,167 would be added to Facilities Operations and \$597,899 would be added to the General Government budget, this included the original \$250,000 for the micro-shuttle project, and the additional \$100,000 approved in the above agenda item. The apportionment to the Incline Village Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau was increased by \$265,000.

Discussion was held regarding the need to update the legislation around the City of Reno \$2 surcharge as it has been declining and may not be sufficient for the City of Reno to maintain their venues. Legal Counsel Ben Kennedy said there was no statute that required all improvement funding to come from the \$2 surcharge revenues. The RSCVA is not contractually obligated in the agreement with the City of Reno to fund capital improvements at the Reno Events Center or National Bowling Stadium. Per the agreement, the City of Reno is responsible for funding capital improvements at those venues, however, the RSCVA could choose to use their budget to undertake capital improvements at those venues. Board Member Sferrazza thought that discussion was needed. Board Member Ascuaga agreed that it would be good to have a discussion about the City of Reno \$2 surcharge and look possible revisions. However, it was also worth a discussion for the RSCVA to look at improving signage at all the venues, including the signage at the Reno Events Center.

Board Member Ascuaga complimented Mr. Harris and staff for presenting their recommendations for the expenditures tied to the augmentation. It was impressive to see that large of a dollar amount going back into the facilities for capital improvements and upkeep. Mr. Harris agreed that it was time for a discussion about the City of Reno \$2 surcharge. He wanted to remind the Board that with the approval of the RSCVA budget, \$3M was provided to capital expenses. An additional \$2.8M was made available due to grant funding. This augmentation included an additional \$3.2M, which increased the total to \$9M for the fiscal year being invested into the venues. At this time, they can't tackle all the needed projects, but they were taking steps to address issues that were overdue. They are happy to prioritize and rank the needed projects with guidance from the Board. Chair Bybee agreed more communication was needed from the City of Reno \$2 surcharge committee for the capital expenditures for the downtown venues. Board Member Sferrazza also asked to have a report on revenue generation by tax district (zone). Discussion followed and it was also noted that this information was provided on the website monthly and via email to each Board member monthly.

Motion: Move to approve resolution #598, adopting a budget augmentation in the amount of \$6,527,261 for the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority for Fiscal Year 2023.

Moved by: Board Member Murdock

Seconded by: Board Member Hartung

Aye: Board Members: Ascuaga, Bybee, Chapman, Keel, Hartung, Murdock, Schieve, Sferrazza, and Silver

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Vote: Motion passed 9-0-0

G3. Review and Possible Approval of the Special Events Committee's Recommendation to Establish Opportunity Fund Program Considerations to Fund New Events and/or Attract Established Events to the Area

Board Member Chapman thanked the members of the Special Events Committee for their diligent work to establish the Opportunity Fund, a separate funding mechanism from the existing RSCVA Special Events Funding Program. The Committee met to discuss considerations and procedures for the Opportunity Fund. There was discussion about funding opportunities in the current year by the Committee and suggestions to reallocate any end fund balance to the next fiscal year as part of the RSVCA budget.

Board Member Sferrazza added that this program would not require events to be ongoing, did not have the same hotel requirements as the Special Events Funding Program. She was glad to see emphasis would be added to events that would be held during the shoulder season.

Board Member Keel left at 11:00 am. She returned at 11:03 am.

Chair Bybee said this new funding allowed the RSCVA to be flexible and act quickly if needed. Funding could be used for operational expenses not just advertising and marketing. This would help organizers attract events be able to make decisions as needed.

Mayor Schieve left the meeting at 11:15 am. Commissioner Hartung left the meeting at 11:15 am. Commissioner Hartung returned to the meeting at 11:17 am. Mayor Schieve returned to the meeting at 11:18 am.

More discussion followed regarding attracting special events and the need for flexibility.

Board Member Sferrazza left at 11:25 am.

Commissioner Hartung felt more efforts were needed to attract larger special events, but said it would require more money. \$500,000 was a good start, but it would take more funds and that should be revisited in the future.

Board Member Silver asked if there were measurables and outcomes that would be reported back to RSCVA. Mr. Harris said similar to the regular special events process, the Opportunity Fund would have requirements for recipients to provide information to ensure they meet the program considerations.

Board Member Sferrazza left at 11:25am.

Motion: Move to approve the establishment of the Opportunity Fund Program as presented.

Moved by: Board Member Chapman

Seconded by: Board Member Silver

Aye: Board Members: Ascuaga, Bybee, Chapman, Keel, Hartung, Murdock, Schieve, and Silver

Nay:

Absent: Board Member Sferrazza

Abstain:

Vote: Motion passed 8-0-1

G4. RSCVA Board Appointment of the Nevada Resort Association (NRA) Board of Director's seat pursuant to NRS 244A.601(1)(d)(4)

Legal Counsel Ben Kennedy said the appointment as established by NRS expires at the end of December. It is a two-year appointment that would begin January 1, 2023. Per statute, this item can only be voted on by the elected officials.

Chair Bybee said two names has been recommended by the NRA, Mr. Rick Murdock and Mr. Don Goodman.

Motion: Move to re-appoint Rick Murdock at the Nevada Resort Association representative on the RSCVA Board of Directors.

Moved by: Board Member Chapman

Seconded by: Board Member Silver

Aye: Board Members: Bybee, Hartung, and Schieve

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Vote: Motion passed 3-0-0

H. BOARD MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS, AND UPDATES

Board Member Keel asked about the rules for subcommittees. Mr. Kennedy replied that the committee cannot have more than four members, otherwise it becomes a meeting of the whole Board. Currently RSCVA has three committees, Executive and Legislative, Finance and Facilities, and Special Events.

Mayor Schieve asked to have a discussion about RSCVA committees and meeting philosophies. She also asked to talk about the policy for sponsoring non-profit organizations. Direction was given to have the CEO share the policy.

Legal Counsel Ben Kennedy said the CEO and executive staff set the pricing and discounts. He wanted to clarify that the Board was looking for a presentation on what the existing practice is. Mr. Harris said since starting his tenure, he created special pricing and reduced rate policy with the executive team. There is a booking committee that evaluates special requests, outside the established policy, when the venues have openings.

Commissioner Hartung asked for room tax revenue reports by tax district (zone).

Mayor Schieve thanked everyone for hosting NTA Travel Exchange, it was her pleasure to provide a welcome to the attendees. She was happy to hear Emerald was coming to as well. She encouraged RSCVA to attend events and welcome the participants. Mayor Schieve welcomed Mr. Brent Bowers, she had been asking for a position like this at the National Bowling Stadium for

many years.

Board Member Ascuaga reported that the Finance and Facilities Committee had an update from the Western Heritage Center group at their last meeting. They provided a presentation showing their proposal for renovations at the Reno-Sparks Livestock Center. He anticipated there would be a future agenda item brought to the Board once they had met with stakeholders and firmed up their proposal.

I. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR BY THE PUBLIC

There was no public comment.

J. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bybee adjourned the meeting at 11:55 am.

The meeting may be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/VHI54H4MtZI>