

ELKO CONVENTION & VISITORS AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2008
ELKO CONVENTION CENTER
SILVER ROOM
8:00 A.M.

1. Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 a.m. by Board Vice-Chairman, Charlie Myers. Board Chairman, Dave Huckaby and Board member, Jay Elquist were not present at this meeting.

2. Roll call

ECVA Board Present: Charlie Myers
Ruben Abeyta
Gary Morfin

ECVA Staff Present: Don Newman, Executive Director
Tom Lester, Convention & Tourism Manager
Cathie Horn, Marketing & Events Manager
Delynn Jones, Comptroller
Mike Benzie, Facility Maintenance Manager
Juli Nelson, Graphics/Administrative Assistant

Visitors: Denise Baclawski, UNR Fire Science Academy
Connie Campbell, 2009 ECVA Board Member
John Carpenter, State Assemblyman
John Ellison, Elko County Commissioner
Debbie Hoover, Wal-Mart
Stacey Sawyer
Rhonda Zuraff

3. Public Comments

Pursuant to N.R.S 241.020, 2(c) (3), this time is devoted to comments by the general public, if any, and discussion of those comments. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item on the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on a successive agenda and identified to be an action item.

Don Newman presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Rhonda Zuraff for her hard work and dedication to the community of Elko during her tenure as the Elko Daily Free Press publisher.

4. Approval of minutes from Rescheduled Board meeting of September 16, 2008

Gary Morfin made a motion to approve the Board Minutes from the September 16, 2008 meeting. Ruben Abeyta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business at this time.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

6A-1021-08 Presentation by Denise Baclawski, UNR Fire Science Academy, discussion and possible approval of ECVA financial support

Denise Baclawski with the UNR Fire Science Academy made a presentation to the Board outlining the financial status of the facility and the affect that the academy has had on the community of Elko. She pointed out one of the possible measures that the Academy can take to obtain financial stability is to request financial support from state and local entities.

Charlie Myers asked Ms. Baclawski how much financial support through corporate givings have been received.

Ms. Baclawski replied that most corporations have agreed to tax themselves for each student that they send to the Academy and give that excess tax back to the Academy and further stated that approximately \$1.1 million has been received from corporate givings.

Tom Lester inquired if the Fire Science Academy was seeking government funding and what plan for training of future students did the Academy have if government funding was not available.

Ms. Baclawski stated that the Academy is requesting federal funding in place of local or state funding and pointed out that the Academy has entered into an agreement with Texas A&M to help lower the expense of student training. She further pointed out that the Academy has not received any federal funding at this time.

Ruben Abeyta asked how much money per year has the Academy lost since it opened in 2002.

Ms. Baclawski explained that the Fire Science Academy was closed prior to 2002 because it was relocated from Sparks, Nevada to Carlin, Nevada. She pointed out that money was lost during the first five years after relocating due to the lack of student attendance. She further pointed out that the Academy also lost money during 2008 due to lack of federal funding.

Ms. Baclawski explained that the Fire Science Academy is operating under the debt which was incurred during the last 5 years and that it is presently not losing money. She further explained that the Academy is barely breaking even with no available funding to help it grow and the financial funding being requested is to help cover current operating costs along with paying the debt.

Ms. Baclawski stated that the UNR Board of Regents asked previous Governor Guinn to organize a committee to evaluate and assess the FSA situation. This committee in turn hired a consulting firm to analyze the financial options of the Academy. She pointed out that seeking financial support from local area entities was one of the options along with closing the Academy being the last option.

Gary Morfin asked if the partnership with Texas A&M was part of the options that the Academy was given through this evaluation.

Ms. Baclawski explained that UNR President Glick has developed a 3 to 5 year plan and that the partnership with Texas A&M was part of the plan.

Ms. Baclawski stated the committee working on gaining financial support through the community will meet with the president of UNR on October 27, 2008 to seek approval for their plan. The plan will then be taken to the UNR Board of Regents on December 5, 2008 where a vote will be taken on keeping the Academy open. She further pointed out that the president of UNR would like to see the plan non-contingent on federal funding.

Charlie Myers stated that the ECVA could offer financial support to the Fire Science Academy through marketing funds with the option to either pay the Academy directly or create a line budget in the ECVA marketing budget as part of the marketing funds. He stated that he would prefer to pay the Academy directly. He further stated that the one thing lacking in the Academy's plan was to have the Elko County Commissioners meet with state officials.

Ms. Baclawski stated that a request for federal funding is being made which includes support from both local and state government officials.

Charlie Myers stated that the Elko community could not afford to lose the Fire Science Academy and pointed out that the local room tax revenue would be greatly affected along with the economy of the area. He stated that Elko County needed to do all that it could to help the Academy stay open.

Further discussion of the importance of keeping the Fire Science Academy open took place at this time.

John Carpenter asked about the original bond which the Fire Science Academy received and what the cost per each UNR student was for paying that bond.

Ms. Baclawski stated that each UNR student pays approximately \$6.50 per credit hour or \$195.00 for those carrying full credit in addition to their tuition costs.

John Ellison stated that he agreed with Charlie Myers on the fact that closing the Fire Science Academy would have a tremendous negative impact on the Elko area pointing out that the airline flights coming into Elko would cease and that over 10,000 lodging rooms per year would be lost.

Gary Morfin agreed that the Elko lodging community would be greatly affected by the closure of the Academy.

Further discussion of the impact on the Elko community of closing the Fire Science Academy took place at this time.

Ruben Abeyta stated he was in favor of the ECVA helping the Fire Science Academy through marketing funds.

Gary Morfin stated that he felt it would be more beneficial to give the Fire Science Academy a percentage of the room tax revenue which the ECVA receives from the City of Elko.

Don Newman stated that he agrees with Mr. Morfin that funding for the Fire Science Academy should be based on a percentage of the overage of the 1% facility expansion room tax revenue from the City of Elko which first is used to pay the Elko Airport debt. He pointed out that the ECVA received \$88,000 through this overage last year and has budgeted for \$127,000 for the upcoming year. He stated that he is willing to appear before the City Council to suggest drafting a new ordinance which would earmark 20% of the ECVA's facility expansion room tax revenue to the Fire Science Academy. He pointed out that the dollar amount would be approximately \$25,000 calculated on the current room tax revenue being collected. He reviewed several calculations of amounts available depending on the decline in room tax revenue and stated that a substantial amount would still go the Fire Science Academy during declining years.

Charlie Myers stated that the ECVA percentage plan is based on speculation and does not give the Fire Science Academy a definite dollar amount to take back to the president of UNR on October 27, 2008.

Ms. Baclawski stated that an intention to support is sufficient enough to take back to both the meetings with the president of the Fire Science Academy and the UNR Board of Regents.

Gary Morfin stated that he felt 27.5% would be a concrete percentage to give to the Fire Science Academy.

Don Newman stated that the Fire Science Academy help to generate room tax revenue through the lodging of students and that the ECVA would be willing to return a percentage of those funds back to the Academy.

John Ellison stated that he was in favor of taking all the financial commitments from the Elko area back to the president of UNR based on a 3 year plan.

John Carpenter stated that he agreed with rewriting the City room tax ordinance that would give a percentage of the ECVA facility expansion room tax revenue equivalent to \$25,000 per year for the next 3 years.

Ruben Abeyta pointed out that a firm number needed to be assessed to take back to the UNR President and the UNR Board of Regents and stated that he was in agreement with giving a percentage of the ECVA room tax revenue.

Delynn Jones pointed out that the ECVA could give a percentage ceiling of 25% of the overage from the 1% room tax revenue received from the City of Elko with a minimum of \$25,000 per year going to the Fire Science Academy.

Don Newman pointed out that the plan to give a percentage of the of the ECVA overage of the 1% room tax revenue was still contingent on approval of the Elko City Council.

Charlie Myers pointed out that the funds going to the Fire Science Academy should be earmarked for marketing although the funds would come from the ECVA facility expansion room tax revenue.

Gary Morfin made a motion to commit 25% of the Elko Airport overage from the City of Elko 1% room tax revenue with no less than \$25,000 earmarked for marketing of the Fire Science Academy. Ruben Abeyta seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

6B-1021-08 **Discussion and possible approval of \$5,000 ECVA Marketing fund support for the 2009 Elko Motorcycle Jamboree as approved by the ECVA Marketing Committee**

Don Newman stated that the ECVA has budgeted for marketing support to the Elko Motorcycle Jamboree in its fiscal budget and that the ECVA Marketing Committee approved support of a \$5,000 request to help market the event.

Ruben Abeyta made a motion to approve \$5,000 ECVA marketing fund support for the 2009 Elko Motorcylce Jamboree as approved by the ECVA Marketing Committee. Gary Morfin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6C-1021-08 **Discussion and possible approval of \$1,000 ECVA marketing fund support for the Nevada USBC Women’s Bowling Association State Tournament as approved by the ECVA Marketing Committee**

Don Newman stated the ECVA Marketing Committee approved a request for \$1,000 ECVA marketing fund support for the Nevada USBC Women’s Bowling Association State Tournament. He explained that the event would bring in 200-250 lodging night per weekend during the six weeks of the event. He further explained that the ECVA could help market the event by creating a “Save the Date” postcard and posters which would specifically target bowlers coming to Elko.

Ruben Abeyta made a motion to approve \$1,000 ECVA marketing fund support for the Nevada USBC Women’s Bowling Association State Tournament as approved by the ECVA Marketing Committee. Gary Morfin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6D-1021-08 **Discussion and possible approval of \$1,200 ECVA Marketing fund support for NDOT road signs at the California Trails Interpretive Center as approved by the ECVA Marketing Committee.**

Don Newman stated that the ECVA Marketing Committee approved marketing fund support for two road signs at the California Trails Interpretive Center at the cost of \$600 per sign with the total of \$1,200. He explained that the road signs would identify the center and specify an opening date of the Center. He showed a sample of the road signs to the Board.

John Carpenter stated that local support for the signs was needed to show good will support to NDOT.

Mr. Newman stated that the ECVA has received 8 applications for the Facility I Maintenance position and interviews have been conducted. He further stated that the position will be filled this week.

Mr. Newman reported that he visited with Dawn Stout from the City of Elko in regards to the current economic conditions and the affect these conditions are having on the Elko area. He stated that he will continue to monitor room tax revenue collections and adjust the ECVA budget accordingly.

Mr. Newman reported that room tax collected for August 2008 was \$267,917 with a rev par of 4.13. He pointed out the actual room tax collected was slightly down from August 2007 but the rev par had increased over August 2007.

Mr. Newman reported that October events being held at the Elko Convention Center were 19 events over 26 days and November events were 16 events over 23 days.

7B-1021-08

Convention & Tourism Report - Non-Action Item

Tom Lester reviewed his Convention & Tourism Report included in the packet.

Mr. Lester reported that the Cowboy Poetry Media FAM tour held on September 17-20, 2008 was very successful. The tour had 15 total attendees with 2 from Germany and articles were written in Travel Savvy News and on GoNOMAD.com featuring Elko as a travel destination.

Mr. Lester stated that Bryan Wignall with PBS Productions filmed several communities throughout the Cowboy Country Territory highlighting Elko. He further stated that his film will be a part of the Wonders of the West series starting in November on PBS.

Mr. Lester stated that he attended a meeting in Ely on October 14, 2008 with Ed Spears and Susan Sutton to put together itinerary tours for the Best of Northern Nevada. He also stated that these itineraries will be used to promote the areas of Elko, Ely and Virginia City at NTA, Go-West Summit, ABA and International Pow Wow.

Mr. Lester reported that he attended the Idaho Snowmobile Show in Boise, Idaho on September 25-28, 2008 and received 76 leads for the ECVA database. He further stated that he will be attending the Intermountain Snowmobile Show in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 23-27, 2008 and will add the leads he receives from that show to the database. He stated that following his return from the show in Salt Lake City that a mailing of the Ride Elko postcards will be done to promote Elko as a snowmobile destination and to promote the RMSHA Hill Climb

Mr. Lester reviewed the lead report on Visitor Guides request with the Board.

Mr. Lester stated that he held a Cowboy Country Territory meeting at the ECVA on October 16, 2008 and that the organization will be revamping the look of their website by adding a new look, a quarterly newsletter, web based marketing and featuring a different destination within the territory each month.

Mr. Lester reviewed upcoming conventions and meetings being held at the Convention Center and conventions and meetings he is working to bring to Elko.

Charlie Myers made a suggestion that the ECVA give a presentation to update the City of Elko on the ECVA 5 Year Marketing Plan and what direction it is taking.

7C-1021-08

Marketing & Events Report

Cathie Horn reviewed her Marketing & Events Report included in the packet.

Ms. Horn stated that advertising ads promoting Elko and Elko area events continue to run in various magazines.

Ms. Horn reported that she is working on updating information on the ECVA website and is recruiting new photos to place on the website. She further reported that the ECVA is considering a photo contest for individuals to submit their amateur photos of the Elko area. The ECVA would then select the top 6 to 8 photos and have them placed on the home page of the ECVA website in a scrolling gallery.

Ms. Horn reported that the Special Events Calendar is in production with a delivery date of December 8, 2008.

Ms. Horn stated that the ECVA is in the initial planning stages for the 2008 Festival of Trees and following the selection of charity partners by the Board a meeting will be scheduled with the charity partners to discuss their role in the event and to provide them with a calling list to solicit auction items.

Ms. Horn stated that she has been appointed a member of the Elko Motorcycle Jamboree Board of Directors and has been selected to be the PR & Communications Chair, The Event Merchandise Chair and the event website administrator.

Ms. Horn reported that she attended the Las Vegas Bike Rally with Brandie Notestine from the Elko Motorcycle Jamboree Board on October 2-5, 2008. She reported that numerous contacts were made with attendees, sponsors, event promoters and event entertainers.

Ms. Horn reported that she and Don Newman attended the Las Vegas MineExpo on September 22-24, 2008 and were able to make several new contacts as far as vendors and attendees were concerned. She pointed out that attending this show gave the ECVA the opportunity to show support to the Nevada Mining Industry and their endeavors to the mining industry.

Charlie Myers asked if the charity partners for the Festival of Trees would be presenting their organization during the business night of the event.

Cathie Horn stated that the charity partners would be presenting their organizations during the business night of Festival of Trees as in previous years.

Don Newman suggested that the charity partners create a list of potential families that need a donated tree.

Cathie Horn stated that another press release would be done prior to the Festival of Trees stating that items other than trees need to be donated.

7D-1021-08

Comptroller's Report/Approval of August Expenditures

Delynn Jones reviewed her Comptroller Report & September Expenditures included in the Packet.

Ms. Jones stated that the July 2008 general fund room tax revenues received from the City in September decreased \$4,602 or 7.6% from July 2007.

Ms. Jones reported that the July 2008 special marketing fund room tax received from the City in September decreased \$3,404 or 7.6% from July 2007.

Ms. Jones further reported that the August Ad Valorem tax from the County was received in September and reflected an increase of \$579 over August 2007 revenue or .8%.

Ms. Jones stated that total claims for September 2008 were \$205,891.42 pointing out that \$88,203.69 was a transfer from checking to savings. She stated that total claims for September 2007 were \$103,832 with the difference being due to the cash transfer, increased expenses for the TV Event Video, consumer shows and travel expenses.

Gary Morfin made motion to approve the September expenditures in the amount of \$205,891.42. Ruben Abeyta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Jones added that financial statements from the auditors were done and that she will have them available for the Board to review at the next meeting.

8. Board Comments

No comments were made at this time

9. Adjournment

Gary Morfin made a motion to adjourn the October 21, 2008 Board meeting. Ruben Abeyta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m.