

# Minutes

## NEW MEXICO TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

La Fonda on the Plaza  
100 E. San Francisco Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501  
Tuesday, January 29, 2019 – 12:00 p.m.

Chairman Stagg welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.

### ➤ **Roll Call**

#### **Commissioners present:**

Interim Chairman Chris Stagg  
Commissioner John Garcia  
Commissioner George A. Brooks  
Commissioner Scott Hutton

#### **Commissioners not present:**

Commissioner Emerson R. Vallo  
Commissioner Jennifer Kimball  
Commissioner Belia Alvarez

Chairman Stagg told the group that there is some debate as to whether we have a quorum this morning, or not. There are two commissioners whose positions have expired – John Garcia and Belia Alvarez. Sec. Schroer will be working with the governor's office to make nominations to fill these seats.

### ➤ **Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Stagg proposed to make a slight modification to the agenda to take the reports from Tourism Industry Partners first. Commissioner Hutton moved to approve the agenda as amended, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Brooks. The motion passed unanimously.

### ➤ **Tourism Industry Partners: Policy Priorities**

#### • ***Carol Wight, CEO, New Mexico Restaurant Association***

Ms. Wight discussed concerns regarding currently pending legislation (HB-31), which is a minimum wage bill that could significantly affect rural areas. She advised that those who would like to know more about the issue should text the word "TIPS" to 52886 or visit the website [www.saveourtipsnm.org](http://www.saveourtipsnm.org).

#### • ***Kathy Komoll, CEO of the New Mexico Hospitality Association***

Legislative agenda items – they are monitoring more than 80 items on wages, workplace issues, water rights, and economic development dollars. In particular, Ms. Komoll discussed SB 106 (relating to exemptions for alternative accommodations like Airbnb, vacation rentals, short-term rentals, etc.), HB 139 (relating to aligning New Mexico with national hotel & lodging policies), and SB 7 (relating to additional fees to alternative lodging rentals).

- ***Kerrie Romero, Executive Director of the NM Council of Outfitters & Guides***

Ms. Romero thanked Sec. Schroer and Chairman Stagg for inviting her to speak today. She explained that the Council is an advocacy organization in the hunting & fishing industry that advocates specifically for the outfitter segment of the hunting & fishing industry, consisting of about 260 outfitters - the business owners, guides, or employees of the outfitter. She advised that 95% of the clientele is nonresident, yet all hunting & fishing dollars that come into the state are considered tourism, both resident & non-resident. The Council is following 50 legislative bills this year and opposing approximately 20 that are contrary to industry interests. One in particular that she discussed is SB 382 (relating to an increase of license fees), which the Council is opposing.

- ***Tania Armenta, President and CEO of VISIT ABQ***

Tania said they're looking at a strong 2019, off to a good start with convention business - a couple city-wide conventions booked in January, one being American Booksellers convention, with 1200 attendees slated to have 600 people on a peak-room night, and came in 200-room-nights stronger for the high-end booksellers. She also mentioned the indoor track season at the convention center, and tournaments on weekends for different sports, as well as the National Senior Games - eleven days in June with 12,000 athletes attending, along with their guests.

➤ **Introduction of Guests:** Chairman Stagg asked everyone attending the meeting to introduce themselves and to state the district or organization they represent.

➤ **Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Chairman Stagg to approve the November 9, 2018 meeting minutes. It was seconded by Commissioner Brooks, and passed unanimously.

➤ **NM Tourism Department: Program & Budget Update – Cabinet Secretary Designate Jen Schroer**

- TD is requesting \$6M from the legislature for the executive budget, and 78% of that goes to marketing and promotion
- Presentation to HAFC – to emphasize that tourism creates jobs and has increased jobs by 8.8% since last year. LFC had only expected a 3% job growth. Visitation growth to New Mexico has outpaced the country. Sec. Schroer said TD has another chance to request support for the budget increase and requested those in support to attend the hearing.
- TD is working to strengthen the great partnerships among the volunteer ambassadors of the Regional Marketing Board
- TD is assessing the co-op marketing program and has hired outside consultants to interview stakeholders and improve the program to grow tourism.
- New Mexico True Certified Program – it's a magnetic brand that's delivering results, currently on 250 products being shipped in-state and out of state. TD is working on a creative refresh and to push out the program to all areas of the state.
- Outdoor Recreation – TD is looking to help expand and create the demand, but expanding business will go under Economic Development.

➤ **Reports from Commission Members**

- Commissioner Hutton said he was so glad to have Sec. Schroer as Cabinet Secretary. Upcoming events are the Taos Wine Festival; Wine Tasting at El Monte Sagrado next weekend, Music on the Mountain, and Restaurant Week upcoming next month.

- Chairman Stagg said they had a 10% increase in snowfall, and they have the best numbers in the last 10 years. February reservations are very strong. The new Taos Airline is very successful: 78% loaded in Dec., 77% in Jan.; they booked out the season at 55%, so they're looking to expand summer service, possibly to Houston or San Diego. Regarding the avalanche – they had 2 skier fatalities. Hundreds of skiers helped with rescue efforts. They met with the family members, had an outpouring of community and legislative support, as well as in-house grief counseling.
- Commissioner Garcia said he was grateful to have served on the commission. On Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> there is to be the HB-320 hearing on the ski and sports teams, still a controversial issue, but please come support it. The ski team were national champions in 2004, and the current NM ski team is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the U.S. He thanked Jenny Kimball and Ed Pulsifer for the consistently warm hospitality at La Fonda. Chairman Stagg thanked John for his service on the Commission, as well as his service as former cabinet secretary of tourism and of economic development.

➤ **Next Meeting**

Chairman Stagg said he expects the next quarter's meeting to be in conjunction with the Governor's Conference.

➤ **Public Comment**

The operations manager at the Acoma Pueblo discussed the importance of the cultural center and reported that Chef John Paul Hollywood from the U.K. came out to cook local foods in a competition, with national and international media coverage (which the tourism department supported). They were very proud of the interest. He reported that the cultural center has had the best year ever, and the best year in traffic flow, but Acoma needs support to continue to improve visitor traffic.

➤ **Adjournment**

Chairman Stagg will accept a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hutton so moved, and Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. *Meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.*

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Interim Chairman, Chris Stagg