

**CARSON CITY VISITORS BUREAU  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 19, 2016**

The regular meeting of the Carson City Visitors Bureau was held Monday, January 19, 2016 at the Carson City Community Center, 851 E. William Street, Sierra Room, Carson City, Nevada beginning at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Jonathan Boulware, Chairman  
Stan Jones, Vice Chairman  
Karen Abowd  
Renee Plain

STAFF PRESENT: Joel Dunn, Executive Director  
Chris McQueary, Executive Assistant  
Linda Macauley, Administrative Assistant  
Kyle Horvath, Social Media Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Linda Barnett, Wyndham Garden Hotel  
Judy Lepire, Comstock RV Park  
Gene Lepire, Owner Comstock RV Park  
Dwight Millard, Plaza Hotel  
Selina Clark, Courtyard Marriott

**Call to Order.**

**Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.**

**Mr. Boulware** led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –  
PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION (FIVE MINUTE TIME LIMIT)**

None.

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –  
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**Mr. Jones** made the motion to adopt the agenda.

Second – **Ms. Abowd**                      Approved – Unanimously

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –  
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 14, 2015 BOARD MEETING**

**Ms. Abowd** made a motion to approve the minutes of December 14, 2015 Board Meeting as published.

Second – **Mr. Jones**                      Approved – Unanimously

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD’S ATTENTION –  
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL OF THE ADJUSTED FY16 BUDGET REPORT**

**Mr. Dunn** gave the overview of the master budget report for accounting period through November 30, 2015.

**Ms. Abowd** moved to approve the adjusted FY16 budget report as presented through November 30, 2015.

Second – **Mr. Jones**                      Approved – Unanimously

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD’S ATTENTION –  
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: RATIFICATION OF MONTHLY BILLS FOR NOVEMBER, 2015**

**Mr. Dunn** reviewed the monthly bills information with the Board. **Mr. Jones** asked if the \$6,500 is our total fee for the Divine 9? Yes, and it is for CCVB and the Carson Valley Visitors Bureau. We are significantly changing the make-up of how Divine 9 works.

**Ms. Abowd** made the motion to approve ratification of the CCVB monthly bills through November 30, 2015.

Second – **Mr. Jones**                      Approved – Unanimously

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD’S ATTENTION –  
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL TO RECOMMEND THE CARSON CITY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVE  
AN INCREASE TO THE CARSON CITY TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY OF ONE PERCENT PROVIDING THE FUNDING  
FOR AN EXECUTIVE POSITION AND OPERATIONAL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
CARSON CITY ARTS AND CULTURAL MASTER PLAN.**

**Mr. Dunn** gave his report to the board outlining an increase to the Carson City Transient Occupancy of one percent providing the funding for an executive position and operational costs associated with the implementation of Carson City Arts and Culture Master Plan information. **Ms. Abowd** clarified that the Cultural Commission and the CCVB would work together on the job description for this contract position; and there is a template to work from for this job description. **Mr. Jones** commented that there will need to be two people working on this new job, not just an Executive Director. The timeframe for this to get established is probably from now until July by the time we get a budget, job descriptions, advertising, on and on. He asked **Mr. Dunn** if the intent is for this new funding to sunset at the five-year mark? **Mr. Dunn** said ‘No’ and talked about achieving the measurable goals, is there a return on investment, did we reach the master plan goals, and then we can assess to see if this is a worthwhile investment. Then, we can address this as an “ongoing” item. **Mr. Jones** then asked if **Mr. Dunn** had made any further attempt to contact these other properties besides the 5 or 6 top ones? **Mr. Dunn** replied there were at least three e-mails inviting them to the meeting a week ago Monday. He stated that the properties see their numbers as being back to the pre-recession time.

**Ms. Macauley** stated to the Chairman that **board member Renee Plain** is now in attendance.

**Mr. Boulware** asked if there were any public comments.

**Ms. Barnett** - "For the record, Linda Barnett, Wyndham Garden Hotel. I have a petition signed by 12 properties that says they do not want any increase. I have talked to all of those people; I've been to their properties and one of the reasons that they cannot come here is because most of them are handling the desk. It's "Mom and Pops" and they can't get away at 4:00. So to say that we're all in support of this is patently untrue."

"This is a Question 18 situation. It is a Quality of Life. And I suggest that if you want to do this, that we tax all of the restaurants – put a dollar on every single tab and see how they squeak. Every time you want an increase you come to the hotels. The restaurants do not pay anything into the CVB; they get all the benefit for all of our work of bringing people into this community. And it's time that the rest of the people pay. If you want money, it's Question 18. That should be the funding source. And we are not in agreement of an increase. I have 12 people; I have two more commitments that say that they will sign this petition not to increase the rate."

**Mr. Dunn** - "Well, I guess I would, having an opportunity or a lack of opportunity to see your list, I'd love to have a copy of your list because..." "OK"

**Ms. Barnett** stated "Motel 6, America's Best, Super 8, Mill House, Roadway, Roundhouse, Royal Inn, Days Inn, City Center, Comstock Country, Hardman House, and the Wyndham Garden Hotel."

**Mr. Boulware** – "OK. Just, just for the record, I mean all those folks that you mention other than yourself, none of them have attended the meetings. None of them have..."

**Ms. Barnett** - "They can't Jonathan." "You're not... don't have the ability to."

**Mr. Boulware** – "Let me finish my point. Let me, let me finish ... Let me finish my point. They may not be able to come to the meeting, but they can reach out on their own to let us know how... let me finish my point please. We let you finish yours; let me finish mine. None of them have had, none of them have had the opportunity to hear – for whatever the reason is – none of them have had the opportunity to hear the master plan. None of them had the opportunity to speak to Joel Dunn about what he plans to do to continue the success we've had. Are we questioning the legitimacy of people saying 'no' to room tax on how it was presented by someone who is against the room tax? Was it a biased presentation? Um, so, those, those..."

**Ms. Barnett** - "He took the plan over to them Jonathan."

**Mr. Boulware** stated he would like to hear when we have these lodging meetings, "I would like to hear from those folks as well." Because everyone that's in attendance, including yourself, said this was a good master plan. And..."

**Ms. Barnett** - "If it was not funded by, if it was not funded by room tax – that was exactly what I said."

**Mr. Boulware** said we just have not had the opportunity to speak to those – I’m not sure how it was presented to them about room tax. Was it simply saying, ‘Are you in favor of room tax?’ Joel doesn’t know how it was presented. So I’ll hopefully hear from some of them today, that Joel has had a chance to talk to since we had a very effective meeting and got a lot of good feedback from the lodging properties. Mr. Boulware stated to Mr. Dunn, correct me if I’m wrong – you had an opportunity to go back and talk to the major properties that were there. And we’re all in support – because they had a chance to hear it.

**Ms. Barnett** - “Jonathan, a lot of these owners are operators; they cannot come. And not only that, they’re afraid. You’re talking, you’re saying that only the large properties have the ability to do this - that’s not fair. It’s for everybody.”

**Mr. Boulware** – “That’s not what I said. What I said is they haven’t had, they haven’t had the opportunity to hear...”

**Ms. Barnett** - “They can’t come. You’re talking about meetings that these people can’t come to. And I’m surprised that, you know that the CVB hasn’t been out to talk to all these people. You know, to say that, you know, that we’ve contacted all these people, when in fact we have not... and I have visited every single one of them and shown them the plan and shown them what, you know, they want to do. What, you know. Where do we go from here? Are you saying that only 5 properties can decide?”

**Mr. Boulware** – That’s not what I said. What I said was the properties that you listed on your list – for whatever reason they have not heard the presentation in a fair/unbiased way from Joel, from the meetings that we’ve had. They have not heard it that way. They’ve heard from you, and you know unfortunately I’m not sure what kind of spin you put on it when you...

**Ms. Barnett** - “And I can’t do anything unbiased? I can’t go to somebody and show them a program and say ‘are you for this’? Are you saying that everything that I do is biased? Is that what you’re saying?”

**Mr. Boulware** – “What I’m saying is I question, I question the presentation at the properties that signed this because they only heard it from one side.”

**Ms. Barnett** - “Really? ‘Cuz I, I question the thing that, you know, it’s all that, you know, it’s just all good and there’s no, no detraction from this. I don’t think that’s an unbiased one either.”

**Mr. Boulware** – “Anything to add to this Joel?”

**Mr. Dunn** stated that the only thing he would add to it would be that he is confident if having the opportunity to discuss with the properties based on the growing trends in cultural tourism, what their return on the investment is based on where we are with our current ADR room tax revenues, I would be confident that I would have the same result from the properties if presented in the right manner with the exception of Wyndham.

**Mr. Boulware** stated we have no problem doing a road show – going out and talking to these folks that can’t come to the meetings. I have no issues there. My opinion, as long as you’ve heard both sides – you’ve heard

the arguments against and you hear the arguments for, then make up your mind. But if you just get one side of it, either way, then that's biased. So, I would say that we go out, talk to these folks, it is our responsibility to make sure that they are completely – not just about this – about anything that we consider. Because we don't leave anybody out just because they are major properties that's not what we're saying. But I think it's important – you tell me if you disagree Joel – that we go out and talk to these folks.

**Mr. Dunn** stated that he agrees. He thinks having an opportunity to reach them and to identify the best opportunity to get their involvement in these meetings. Mr. Dunn stated that the agenda has been posted in all the posting areas and on the Carson.org website and the Visitors Bureau website. There is certainly a complete awareness of where and when these lodging meetings have been. We want their involvement, we want their feedback and certainly would not think that any property would ever be afraid to call and talk to him. Some properties may not be able to be in attendance, but I've had phone conversations through this process with a few of the properties that had voiced concern at the beginning; and after having an opportunity to hear the new direction, they had voiced their support. And if there are properties that cannot attend they can call. Mr. Dunn stated that he would love to have the list shared and to have an opportunity to follow up with the 12 properties to look at the validity of the list and tell them exactly what the plan is and what the measure of return back is to their property.

**Mr. Boulware** stated that he thinks meeting with the properties would be good and we should follow up and do that unless there is any disagreement from the Board.

**Mr. Dunn** stated that he agrees.

**Ms. Lepier** stated pros and cons and asked the Board to consider waiting 2-3 years to implement this. She brought up raising funds before asking for this agenda item to be passed.

**Mr. Lepier** stated that this should be up for a vote from the property owners.

**Ms. Barnett** returned to the podium. "I would just like to ask one other question. The ADR has increased, and what has the CVB done to increase the ADR here?"

**Mr. Dunn** stated that from day one a complete rebranding has happened from going out and marketing completely differently and creating a social media campaign. The properties all understand the significant changes that have happened in this community. And if you're the exception, I am not sure why.

**Ms. Barnett** - "Well, I can tell you Joel that I raised my ADR by \$54 and it had nothing to do with anything that the CCVB did. I just raised my rates. So, you know, I think that without digging down into the numbers and finding out which hotels are doing what, and why we're doing it, and how we got there. I mean, you have called me once in the entire time practically that you've ever been there. And you keep saying "all hotels." So, you know, you don't ask questions, we don't dig down into the 'whys' and the 'wherefores,' and unless we know where we've come, we don't know where we're going. And I think that's a major failure of what we're doing here. I mean you, you know, you told everybody that Nevada Day was better this year than it was last year. Well I can tell you that hotels were down 28-35% in occupancy on Nevada Day. And I've got data to prove it. So, you know, to to to say that, you know, that we're doing better than we did before – yeah, but

certain people that raise their rates so much that you've had nothing to do with. So, you know, I think you really need to dig down and to, you know, all the properties and find out what they're doing.

And Jonathan, I really really do not like the way you talked to me. I didn't like the way you threatened me a long time ago, and I don't like this now."

**Mr. Millard** asked if this can be funded without raising the tax? Or perhaps be funded incrementally. We need to figure out how to make Carson City a destination. And if you do approve to raise the tax, can there be a "sunset" on it of 3-5 years?

**Ms. Clark** stated that she is speaking on behalf of the Marriott in support of this item passing.

**Mr. Boulware** asked for Board comments. **Mr. Jones** thanked Mr. Millard for the comment about the tax being a "pass on" and it isn't paid for out of anybody's pocket. He also supports a "sunset" which would be a five-year limit. **Mr. Boulware** agreed with that suggestion. He also addressed Ms. Lepier's question and stated that he had asked the Brewery Arts Center if they had an interest in overseeing this whole Arts and Culture Master Plan and they said 'no.' He believes it needs to be more than one position to accommodate all that needs to be done, and feels these two positions will likely take the bulk of the tax, with not a lot leftover for "art."

**Mr. Jones** stated that Kendell Hardin (Phoenix) implied that these positions should generate a lot of money after a five-year period with national and local companies' donations. I'm comfortable with doing a five-year program and with it 'sunsetting.' **Mr. Boulware** stated it is important to diversify, and we have a responsibility to go after various markets that will help this economy. He wholly supports this item.

**Ms. Abowd** said that this is how this kind of program has started in other communities is by room tax; then other grants and funding have come in to play. This is an untapped market for us. We have waited too long actually, for this. Fallon and other surrounding areas have public arts programs already in place. She does want all other properties to have this information presented to them.

**Ms. Plain** thanked all those who made comments on this item. She agrees with Ms. Abowd that all the other properties need to be talked to. And she likes the 'sunset' idea. She said that, for instance, with the Epic Ride coming up this summer that brings people to our community. And as a younger citizen with two young children she wants to see more arts and culture, and she does not see this as being a "losing situation" for our community.

**Mr. Dunn** commented that if this passes, it will take 2-3 successful events based on cultural tourism to show a return on investment.

**Ms. Abowd** made the motion for a 1% increase in room tax which will bring an estimated \$100-120k and be dedicated to hire an executive position and cover operational costs associated with the implementation of a Carson City Arts and Culture Master Plan. The position working out of the CCVB will advance the programs, policies, and initiatives outlined in the Carson City Arts and culture Master Plan in addition to assisting in the development of a cultural tourism campaign. The position will report directly to the Executive Director of the

CCVB, with the job description and performance measures set by the Executive Director of the CCVB and by the Cultural Commission, and approved by the Carson City Visitors Bureau Board of Directors. The position will report to the CCVB Board of Directors and the Carson City Cultural Commission with monthly program progress and quarterly data analysis to the Carson City Board of Supervisors. This funding will sunset in five years.

**Mr. Jones** stated he would like to change the last sentence to say the program will be evaluated by the CCVB and the CC Cultural Commission for consideration of sunset in five years.

**Ms. Abowd** accepted that change to her motion.

**Ms. Lepier** asked for clarification about the sunset wording and intent when and if this funds itself.

**Ms. Abowd** replied that the last sentence to her motion states that: "This tax will sunset in five years."

**Ms. Lepier** replied, "Good. That's perfect."

**Ms. Abowd** made the motion for a 1% increase in room tax which will bring an estimated \$100-120k and be dedicated to hire an executive position and cover operational costs associated with the implementation of a Carson City Arts and Culture Master Plan. The position working out of the CCVB will advance the programs, policies, and initiatives outlined in the Carson City Arts and Culture Master Plan in addition to assisting in the development of a cultural tourism campaign. The position will report directly to the Executive Director of the CCVB, with the job description and performance measures set by the Executive Director of the CCVB and by the Cultural Commission, and approved by the Carson City Visitors Bureau Board of Directors. The position will report to the CCVB Board of Directors and the Carson City Cultural Commission with monthly program progress and quarterly data analysis to the Carson City Board of Supervisors. This funding will sunset in five years.

**Mr. Jones** would like to change the last sentence to say the program will be evaluated by the CCVB and the CC Cultural Commission for consideration of sunset in five years. **Ms. Abowd** accepted that change to her motion.

Second - **Mr. Jones**

Approved – Unanimously

#### **MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION – NON-ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. **Executive Directors Report** – **Mr. Dunn** reviewed the Transient Lodging Report, and other.

**Mr. Dunn** asked Mr. Horvath to explain the Business Alliance Network (BAN) meeting and changes.

**Mr. Horvath** gave the overview on the agenda with speakers and change in date to Thursday, January 21 (6:00 at the Brewery Arts Center). The keynote speaker is Connie Aguilar with the Abbi Agency.

**Mr. Jones** thanked John Barrett for his journalism and reporting in the community.

**Mr. Dunn** continued reviewing the lodging reports.

Trailing 12 report

✓ \$15,867,953.71 (up 11.05% from 2014)

Year-to-Date Room Revenue

✓ \$13,997,425.52 (up 10.12% from 2014)

Room Tax Revenue

- ✓ Top 5: \$922,020.79 (up 18.1% from 2014)
- ✓ Top 13: \$1,276,906.14 (up 18.3% from 2014)
- ✓ RV: \$29,226.95 (up 36.2% from 2014)
- ✓ Remaining: \$18,570.74 (down 58% from 2014)

Average Daily Rate

- ✓ Top 5: \$92.95 (up 12.6% from 2014)
- ✓ Top 13: \$71.60 (up 9.6% from 2014)
- ✓ RV: \$48.47 (up 57% from 2014)
- ✓ Remaining: \$42.30 (up 48.6% from 2014)

Occupancy Rate

- ✓ Top 5: 63.7% (52.6% in 2014)
- ✓ Top 13: 51.9% (47.8% in 2014)
- ✓ RV: 11.6% (7.9% in 2014)
- ✓ Remaining: 13.7% (10.8% in 2014)
- ✓ 28+ day: Total rooms occupied were 15,767.

Room Revenue in Region (YTD)

- ✓ Reno: \$126,273,484.00 (2014=\$109,885,562.00) - (up 14.9%)
- ✓ Carson City: \$13,997,425.52 (2014=\$12,711,077.26) - (up 10.1%)
- ✓ Virginia City: \$83,941.15 (2014=\$77,271.96) – (up 8.6%)
- ✓ Douglas/Tahoe: \$44,681,473.00 (2014=\$41,619,608.00) – (up 7.36%)
- ✓ Douglas/Valley: \$7,651,623.00 (2014=\$7,387,595.00) – (up 3.57%)

**b. Marketing report – Mr. Dunn** gave statistics about the data collection. Business travelers make up 71% of our visitors. He also gave information about mobile app usage, and that James Salanoa (of the CCVB) will be giving a short overview on the app and Push Notifications at the BAN meeting. **Mr. Horvath** added that another newsletter has been sent out to 13,000 recipients. **Ms. Abowd** commented that the article on residents, or “Faces of Carson City,” was a nice feature. **Mr. Horvath** stated that the “Ski and Stay” packages ads are also out. He listed the upcoming travel shows.

**c. February meeting – 02/08/16**

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –  
PUBLIC COMMENT (five minute time limit)**

None.

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –  
BOARD COMMENTS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS: TOPICS NOT RELATING TO CURRENT AGENDA**

None.

**MR. BOULWARE BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE BOARD'S ATTENTION –  
FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: TO ADJOURN**

**Mr. Jones** made a motion to adjourn at 5:35 p.m.

Second – **Ms. Abowd**

Approved – Unanimously

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Jonathan Boulware, Chairman**

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Stan Jones, Vice Chairman**

Tapes of this meeting are available at the office of the Carson City Visitors Bureau,  
716 North Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada 89701.

/lkh