

**Elko Convention & Visitors Authority
Lodging Committee Meeting
Red Lion Hotel & Casino – Ruby Valley Room
2065 E. Idaho St.
Elko, NV 89801
Wednesday, September 27, 2017
6:00 PM.
MINUTES**

Committee Members Present: Barry Bhakta, Rodeway Inn
Missy Fowler, Gold Country Inn
Kristi Hansen, Red Lion
Toni Jewell, Red Lion
Marcia Bogner, Red Lion
Larry Woolf, Red Lion
Marcus Suan, Red Lion
Jolene Stone, LedgeStone Hotel
Matt McCarty, Marriott Townplace Suites/ECVA
Michelle Moto, Comfort Inn
Dan Bhakta, Holiday Motel
Mahendra Bhakta, Budget Inn
Alen Doman, Best Western Elko Inn
Paul Bhakta, Mid- Town Motel
Bob Bhakta, Esquire Inn
Chuck Bhakta, Days Inn

ECVA Staff Present: Don Newman, Executive Director
Erin Myers, Events Coordinator
Amber Merz, Administrative Assistant
Juli Nelson, Marketing Coordinator

Visitors Present: Christopher Esposito, Rise Broadband

1. **Welcome & Introductions;** Barry Bhakta, Chairman

Lodging Committee Chairman, Mr. Barry Bhakta, called the meeting to order at 5:59 p.m. Introductions were made around the room.

2. **Public Comments** – Non-Action Item

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.

None at this time.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the July 26, 2017 meeting – **Action Item (public comment)**

Mr. Mike Bhakta made a motion to approve the July 26, 2017 Lodging Committee Minutes, Mrs. Jolene Stone seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously

4. Discussion of the City of Elko 28 day tax exemption policy – **Non Action Item**

Mr. Newman stated that at the July Lodging Meeting he found that there is a lot of confusion regarding the 28 day room tax exemption between the different properties. He reached out to the City for some clarification on the matter the response that he received created even more confusion. He stated that he feels they should take it back to the city for further clarification. Mr. Newman then stated that Mr. McCarty will be spearheading this.

Mr. McCarty stated that he feels that it would be best if the Lodging Committee could determine what areas of the code they need clarified. He stated that he doesn't think that they need to rewrite the code but that if they go to City Council with a clear idea of the areas that are being interpreted differently by different properties it will be easier to clear things up. He stated that he has done research and there doesn't seem to be a NRS statute regarding the issue and that each county has their code written differently.

Mr. Newman stated that it was up to the Committee to decide if they wanted to “open this can of worms”. He stated that it was never his intention to this, he was just hoping to receive clarification from the city in the first place.

Mr. McCarty stated that he does not mind being the one “open the can of worms” as he understands that Mr. Newman must remain neutral due to his position as Direction of the ECVA.

Further discussion took place.

The Lodging Committee decided to move forward and ask the City for further clarification on the 28 day Room Tax Exemption.

5. Review of ECVA Activities and Room Tax Update - **Non-Action Item**

Mr. Newman explained that the Room Tax revenue spreadsheet in the packet is based on the general fund and marketing fund revenues that the ECVA receives. He stated that the occupancy reports that the ECVA receives are not accurate as they are reported on a voluntary basis. He then stated that room taxes are up 9% over July of last year. Mr. Newman then stated that he would be going to St. George with Mr. Lester and a few other to meet with Sky West and discuss air service to Elko.

Mr. Newman then showed ads the ECVA has produced for Convention Center and Elko area events.

Further discussion took place.

6. Review of ECVA Marketing Activities – **Non-Action Item**

Mrs. Juli Nelson passed around various marketing materials and ads she has been working on. We are getting ready to do our photo hunt for the 2018 Calendar as well as requesting events submissions. We will be promoting those on social media, Radio, TV and various print ads. She stated that we started the Storytelling campaign with Madden Media in July and already reached over half of our targeted impressions. She then stated that she is currently working on revamping the Nevada Ghost Towns brochure.

Further discussion took place.

7. Review of ECVA Event Activities – **Non-Action Item**

Mrs. Erin Myers stated that the Car Show took place at the beginning of the month. It was a very successful event for us. We had 229 registered cars with participants coming from 7 different states, 132 of them being from the Elko area. This year we had a special vendor section for nonprofits. There were 3 that participated and had booths, we are hoping to have more next year. The Best of Show winner was Byson Collins from Kuna Idaho with his Chevy Bel Air. She stated that she is working with Juli on the 2018 Elko Events Calendar and will be compiling events and photos for that as they come in. Mrs. Myers then stated that the next big event for the ECVA is the Festival of Trees. The theme for the 2018 Festival of Trees is Enchanted Forest. She has mailed out the letters to the local nonprofits to invite them to apply to be charity partners. She tried to broaden the scope this year and mailed the letter to over 40 charities so she hopes to get some new applicants. The deadline for Charity Partner applications is this Friday, September the 29th.

Further discussion took place.

8. Review of ECVA Convention and Tourism Activities – **Non-Action Item**

Mr. Newman stated that Mr. Lester is traveling but his report is included for their review.

9. Discussion of lodging related opportunities or issues – **Non-Action Item**

Mr. Chris Esposito introduced himself and stated that he is the Regional Manager of Rise Broadband over Idaho, Utah and Nevada. . Mr. Esposito passed around information sheets explaining who Rise Broadband is and what they do. He stated that they are the largest provider of fixed wireless technology in the nation. He explained that they use microwave technology to broadcast dedicated symmetrical fiber wire speeds to businesses and residences. He stated that it is incredible how large the companies in Elko have grown without sufficient internet. There are some of the largest companies in the world here and they have managed to grow with incredibly slow speeds. He stated that he has been working with a lot of different companies here in town to try and get them up and running with faster more reliable internet. He stated that Rise Broadband is a large enough company that they are able to invest in the community. They've been upgrading and adding new towers, upgraded backhauled to support the additional bandwidth and they

have brought on an additional field team so that the community can have the support that they need. Rise understands the need for reliable customer service and support 24/7, 365 days a year.

Further discussion regarding internet service took place.

Mr. McCarty stated that Lodging Taxes are due by the 15th at 5:00 pm. If they are even a minute late they will be charged a 15% late fee, no exceptions. They should be receiving a letter about it. Mr. McCarty stated that on the ECVA Board recently approved the purchase of STR reports. Combined with what they get from the city they are seeing conflicting numbers. He would like to go to the city and ask for mandatory reporting of occupancy. He feels this would give us important information regarding our numbers and how vacancy and room tax exemptions affect them.

Mr. Bhakta stated that he thought they tried that previously and the City said no.

Further discussion took place.

Mr. Newman stated that we can approach this at a later time after Mr. McCarty and the Committee has had more time to look into the matter.

Mrs. Toni Jewel stated that the Youman Tour Bus is coming through this weekend and then they are done for the season.

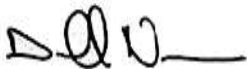
Mr. Larry Woolf stated that they are looking for new ways to pull people off of the freeway and into town.

Further discussion took place.

10. Next Lodging Committee meeting: **November 22, 2017 – Location TBD**

11. **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:27 pm.



Don Newman
Executive Director