

NEVADA COMMISSION FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE V&T RAILWAY
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A regular meeting of the Nevada Commission for the reconstruction of the V&T Railway was held at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, in the Community Center Robert “Bob” Crowell Boardroom, 851 East William Street, Carson City, Nevada.

The meeting video is available on Carson City’s website by clicking on the link below:
https://carsoncity.granicus.com/player/clip/2384?view_id=2&redirect=true

PRESENT: Chairperson David Peterson
Vice Chair Clay Mitchell (joined at 9:10 a.m. via WebEx)
Treasurer Leah Kruse
Secretary Stephanie Hicks
Commissioner Michelle Schmitter

STAFF: Mihaela Neagos, Deputy District Attorney
Cherrie Bailey, Executive Assistant
Tamar Warren, Senior Deputy Clerk

1 – 3. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(9:02:40) – Chairperson Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Roll was called and a quorum was present. Chairperson Peterson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

(9:03:43) – Chairperson Peterson entertained public comments; however, none were forthcoming.

5. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 24, 2024, MEETING

(9:04:03) – Chairperson Peterson introduced the item and entertained comments or edits to the minutes.

(9:04:16) – MOTION: Secretary Hicks moved to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2024 meeting. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Kruse and carried 4-0-0.

6. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE V&T COMMISSION’S STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CHECKS PAID JANUARY 1-31, 2024.

(9:04:37) – Chairperson Peterson introduced the item and noted that item 7 would be pulled from the agenda. He also referenced the Staff Report which is incorporated into the record, and entertained questions or a motion.

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(9:05:30) – MOTION: Treasurer Kruse moved to approve the payable checks for January 1-31, 2024 as recommended. The motion was seconded by Secretary Hicks and carried 4-0-0.

7. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE ADJUSTED V&T COMMISSION’S FISCAL YEAR (“FY”) 2023/2024 BUDGET REPORTS, PERIOD ENDED JANUARY 1-31, 2024.

This item was pulled from the agenda.

8. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING A PROPOSED TRAIN EVENT AGREEMENT WITH RAIL EVENTS, INC. (“REI”) ON BEHALF OF ITSELF AND OF WARNER BROS. CONSUMER PRODUCTS INC. FOR THE HOSTING AND CONDUCTING OF A THEMED EVENT NAMED THE POLAR EXPRESS (“THE AGREEMENT”), UNDER THE SAME TERMS AND CONDITIONS AS THE EVENT AGREEMENT ENTERED INTO ON JUNE 24, 2021 FOR THE TERM BEGINNING NOVEMBER 1, 2021 AND ENDING JANUARY 15, 2024, WITH POSSIBLE EXPIRATION DATES THROUGH 2029, AND DESIGNATING THE V&T COMMISSION’S CHAIR AS ITS AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE TO FURTHER NEGOTIATE THE AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE V&T COMMISSION.

(9:05:58) – Chairperson Peterson introduced the item and noted that the discussion would be based on the late material which is posted online with the other agenda materials and incorporated into the record. Rail Events, Inc. (REI) Senior Vice President and General Manager Gerald Ireland called the agreement, which is incorporated into the record, an extension instead of a new agreement. REI Licensing Manager Ed Rozycki described the survey which determines the riders’ experience and stated that the V&T had received one of the highest scores (73), with 55 being the national average. Vice Chair Mitchell joined the meeting at 9:10 a.m. Secretary Hicks inquired about the termination clause in the contract and Mr. Ireland explained that the Commission could not forgo the Polar Express Event and replace it with another event; however, should the Commission not hold the event altogether, and not have another event instead, there would be no penalties, citing the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020. There were no additional comments; therefore, Chairperson Peterson entertained a motion.

(9:17:42) – MOTION: Secretary Hicks moved to award the agreement to REI for a term ending on January 15, 2030, and to designate [Chairperson] David Peterson, the Commission’s authorized representative, to further negotiate the agreement on behalf of the Commission. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Kruse and carried 5-0-0.

9. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING A PROPOSED MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT PLAN THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2024.

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(9:19:35) – Chairperson Peterson introduced the item. Aumada Marketing representative Regina Flores reviewed the proposed social media, public relations, and e-mail marketing plans, incorporated into the record, and responded to clarifying questions. Chairperson Peterson wished to ensure that the Mark Twain Days, which would coincide with the opening Mother’s Day weekend, is well coordinated with Visit Carson City and the Virginia City Tourism Commission (VCTC).

(9:25:45) – Deitz Media/Marketing’s Melissa Deitz explained that she was coordinating the marketing efforts with Ms. Flores, Visit Carson City, and the Virginia City marketing team, especially for Mark Twain Days. She also reviewed the proposed marketing plan portion of the overall plan, incorporated into the record. Chairperson Peterson entertained questions and when none were forthcoming, a motion.

(9:35:44) – MOTION: Secretary Hicks moved to approve the proposed plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schmitter and carried 5-0-0.

10. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING A PROPOSED CALENDAR YEAR 2024 TRAIN SCHEDULE.

(9:50:03) – Chairperson Peterson introduced the item. Vice Chair Mitchell gave background and highlighted the schedule changes from last year. He also presented the proposed schedule, incorporated into the record as late material, and responded to clarifying questions. Vice Chair Mitchell recommended, at the advice of Thomas Gray, Manager and owner of Virginia and Truckee Railroad (VTRR), to end the runs on October 27, 2024, to ensure adequate time to prepare for the Polar Express Event. He also proposed keeping the fare at its current price and recommended having child pricing for family-oriented events. Discussion ensued regarding a Mark Twain-themed evening train and Treasurer Kruse wished to ensure it was advertised appropriately as a Carson City train that would not extend to Virginia City. Commissioner Schmitter inquired about the process to identify and provide a “local discount.” Chair Peterson cautioned against discussing pricing as it was not agendaized at this time.

(10:07:08) – Treasurer Kruse pointed out that the Camel Races on Labor Day Weekend were always sold out and highlighted the parking issues. It was agreed to explore running the trains to alleviate those issues and provide the train experience to the visitors. Vice Chair Mitchell recommended to tentatively plan on running the Sunday train as normal and run the Saturday trains with a modified schedule for the Camel Races. Secretary Hicks suggested that should not all events be accommodated, dropping the evening events from four to two for this calendar year and at least consider running the Mark Twain Days ones. She also supported the Mystery Train and the Camel Races rides; however, she was not in favor of the July 4th and Labor Day weekend schedules. Treasurer Kruse inquired about the Nevada Day Train and Ms. Duncan stated that they had omitted that last year. Vice Chair Mitchell proposed not serving alcohol during the Saturday Mark Train Days train. Chair Peterson entertained a motion.

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(10:19:37) – MOTION: Vice Chair Mitchell moved to adopt the Calendar Year 2024 and FY 2024/2425 Train Schedule as discussed on the record. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schmitter and carried 5-0-0.

11. FOR DISCUSSION ONLY:

MONTHLY NON-ACTION ITEMS:

a. EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT UPDATE

(9:36:50) – Ms. Bailey stated that she had no additional updates. Commissioner Schmitter thanked Ms. Bailey for coordinating the retreat.

b. OPERATIONS/TRAINS REPORT

(9:37:53) – V&T Railroad (VTRR) Sales and Marketing Coordinator Candy Duncan thanked the Commission for including her in the retreat and inquired whether it was her role to produce the printed brochure and “a better ticket” discussed at the retreat. She noted the importance of finalizing the train schedule to be ready for online ticketing and was pleased to hear the high Polar Express Event survey scores. Ms. Duncan also wished to understand her role in the upcoming Mark Twain Days and Mother’s Day special event trains and Chairperson Peterson encouraged her to work with Ms. Baily. The Chair believed that a short handout placed on the seats could be produced by the graphic designer used by Visit Carson City with the expenses split between this and the next fiscal years. It was agreed to agendize the design and content information for the March meeting. Ms. Duncan advised including a route map and suggested itineraries for Virginia City and Carson City.

c. UPCOMING MEETINGS:

1. COMMISSION MEETING ON MARCH 27, 2024 at 9:00 AM.

(9:49:50) – Chairperson Peterson read the upcoming meeting date into the record.

12. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION.

(10:24:50) – Treasurer Kruse announced a Mark Twain Days Committee to plan for the trains coming into Virginia City that weekend. She also stated that the VCTC was planning to source at least two buses to accommodate the four train cars that weekend. Secretary Hicks recommended rescheduling the September Commission meeting to avoid the conflict with the Nevada Association of Counties conference hosted by Carson City.

CLOSED NON-MEETING TO CONFER WITH OPERATIONS MANAGER AND COUNSEL.

This item did not take place.

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13. PUBLIC COMMENT

(10:26:40) – Chairperson Peterson entertained final public comments; however, none were forthcoming.

14. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: TO ADJOURN

(10:27:03) – Chairperson Peterson adjourned the meeting at 10:27 a.m.

The Minutes of February 28, 2024, Nevada Commission for the Reconstruction of the V&T Railway meeting are so approved this 27th day of March 2024.

STEPHANIE HICKS, Secretary