

**VIRGINIA CITY CONVENTION & TOURISM AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, September 4, 2008, 8:30 am

**Delta Saloon Ballroom
18 South C Street, Virginia City, NV**

Call to Order: Angelo Petrini called the VCCTA meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Roll Call:

Chairman: Angelo Petrini
Board Members: Shara Bouvier (excused absence)
Carol Fain
Joe Curtis
John Flanagan

Staff: Susan Sutton/Executive Director
Cory Wood/Executive Assistant
Dawn Neamo/VCCTA bookkeeper
Patrick Gilmore/Convention Services

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Fain moved to approve the September 4, 2008 agenda. Flanagan seconded and motion passed unanimously

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR AUGUST 7, 2008: Curtis clarified he did not state “truth in lending should pertain to truth in advertising” and not relevant to the Horsethief Canyon Desperado discussion. Curtis requested dates for the Firemen’s Muster be changed to August 13, 14 & 15, 2009. Fain moved to approve the August 7, 2008 minutes as amended. Curtis seconded, motion passed unanimously

PUBLIC COMMENT: Izabella Hunt-Jones, Comstock Civil War Re-enactors and coordinator for Virginia City Civil War days reported difficulty working with a Storey County official to find a suitable place for their encampment. Jones reported losing over 100 volunteer re-enactors and requested help from the board and Storey County to assist finding a location for their 2009 encampment. The board recommended Sutton write a letter to Storey County Commissioners to find a solution and/or location for the 2009 Civil War event. Jones and the board discussed the importance of the event to Virginia City, types of grass used in the park and requested in finding another location for the 2009 event. Sutton reported she will also write a letter of apology to the volunteers who were turned away from participating in the event.

Jim Lohse, friend of the restoration efforts of the V & T, reported the Commission to Reconstruct the V & T Railway does not have improvement plans or agenda items which include Virginia City. Lohse invited any interested parties to attend the next Commission meeting in Carson City.

Flanagan reported an energy company is planning to install 70 or more windmills on the Virginia Range that would be visible from many locations. Flanagan requested letters be written by all concerned if they oppose the project.

Reno Sparks Convention & Visitor Authority (RSCVA)/Economic importance of familiarization tours (FAM): Mary Reno, Silver Legacy Sales Manager, reported how economically important familiarization tours are to our region. Reno said tour operators and travel agents who participate in a FAM tour become our extended sales force all over the world. Reno reported costs of familiarization tours are evaluated every year. Reno continued the RSCVA has FAM tours yearly that include invited guests from Expedia, Orbitz, American Airlines, Southwest Airlines and other major companies that sell our region. Reno reported 200 AAA agents coming to Reno, Lake Tahoe and Virginia City in October for a familiarization tour. Reno completed her presentation thanking Sutton for her help and making it easy to sell our destination. Bevin Anaker, event coordinator for RSCVA, thanked Sutton for the continued partnership and support. Anaker presented surveys from the Summer Golf Adventure FAM noting most comments were very positive. Sutton reported this was the VCCTA's fourth year partnering with the RSCVA for the Summer Adventure Golf FAM.

SESQUICENTENNIAL UPDATE: Sutton presented the board with a progress report from Don Ayer, Sesquicentennial Project Manager. Sutton reported her concern with the projected \$50,000.00 budget. Sutton continued Storey County has committed \$20,000.00 for the event. A rural grant request was denied but a second request has been submitted for the second cycle. The board recommended scheduling a public meeting to discuss the Sesquicentennial Celebration.

Event Ideas: James Clark, Virginia City citizen, presented his ideas on events which would include western film festivals, single action shooting society events and hand car races. Clark reported he has personal connection with old west film stars and directors that could increase attendance for existing or new events in Virginia City.

American Automobile Association (AAA)/RSCVA Familiarization Tour

Request for Funding: Sutton reported two groups (100 each) of top selling travel agents from AAA in Washington, Oregon and Idaho will visit Virginia City, October 10 and 13. Sutton reported costs are estimated at \$6,000.00 to showcase Virginia City which will include trolley, museum visits, V & T Railroad, dinner and entertainment. Sutton continued Nevada Commission on Tourism committed \$3,000 if the VCCTA can match that amount. Curtis moved to approve \$3,000.00 for the October 10 & 13 American Automobile Association familiarization tour. Flanagan seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Ad Co-op Event Coordinator/Request for Funding: Petrini recommended hiring an event coordinator to increase the quality and quantity of Virginia City events. The board discussed candidate qualifications, experience, salary, job description and private contractor job status. The board recommended advertising for the position. Sutton will write job description for Event Coordinator position and schedule a special board meeting.

Railway Reflections Request for Funding: Stephen Saylor, representing Northern Nevada Railway Foundation and Railway Reflections presented the board with their 2008 International Art Expo catalog. Saylor reported he is seeking potential sponsors and funding for Railway Reflections 2009 catalog. Saylor requested \$50,000.00 from the VCCTA which would be used for marketing the catalog with full reporting and accountability. The board tabled the request based on budget consideration.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Sutton reported on the following subjects:

- Silver Line Express Tickets: 3,258 A tickets sold = 13,032 accumulated hours spent in Virginia City, 1,064 B tickets sold = 7,448 accumulated hours spent in Virginia City and

1,100 C tickets = 26,400 accumulated hours spent in Virginia City which includes overnight stay

- Updated board on possible purchase of B Street property
- Developing partnership with Cabela's Sporting Goods Store in Reno
- VCCTA submitting rural grants to Nevada Commission on Tourism
- Sutton will attend Certified Destination Management Executive Classes (CDME) in November
- VCCTA partnership with Elko CVB at National Tour Association's convention in November
- American Bus Association Tour Operator show January 7-12. Elko paid registration fee
- Gilmore will attend Quartzite, 29th Annual Sports, Vacation & RV Show, January 17-25 Nevada Commission on Tourism funding the booth
- Sutton to attend Travel Industry Association (TIA) Marketing Forum – October 26-30
- Carolyn Eichin, B Street House Bed & Breakfast, submitted an application to the National Trust for Historic Preservation for a 2009-Dozen Distinctive Destination award
- Carson City CVB will apply for "Sisters in History" brochure rural grant
- VCCTA purchased a U.S. Postage Logo indicia to promote the Sesquicentennial

Convention Services Report: Gilmore reported on the following:

- Virginia City hosted 60 top travel agents from Southwest Airlines Vacations in August
- The DuPont Company and Conoco/Phillips brought clients to Virginia City September 10 & 12
- Fiskars Scrapemaking group will bring 100 people to the Ramada in November.
- The VCCTA will participate in the Dayton Valley Golf & Country Club's Wedding Exposition on November 9, 2008
- Bus tour bookings are contacting the VCCTA for Silver Line Express tickets and group tour information
- VCCTA hosted SKALS (professional marketing organization) dinner/meeting at Seven Mile Canyon Ranch. Attending were professional sales & marketing executives from Atlantis Hotel & Casino, Peppermill Hotel, Grand Sierra Resort, Amador Stage Lines and Western Discovery Tours

CORRESPONDENCE: Gilmore presented the board with the following correspondence:

- Copy of letter to Ad Co-op letter members and lodging partners
- Thank you letter from Community Chest for participating in the Comstock Youth Works program
- Complaint letter from visitor regarding poor treatment at the Silver Queen Hotel
- Copy of *Las Vegas Review Journal* travel article on Virginia City

Financials: Nemo presented financials to the board but do not include all room tax properties. Nemo reported the budget will need to be augmented if new requests for funding are approved. Nemo continued some funds can be moved to another category without augmenting but VCCTA is required to augment after the audit to get ending fund balance. Flanagan moved to approve financials. Fain seconded, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Isabella Hunt Jones reported she would help with Christmas on the Comstock events this year if volunteers do not come forward.

Steve Ayer, Virginia City citizen, addressed the issue of sod and recommended contacting Storey County to get the right kind of grass.

ADJOURNMENT: 10:35 am