



Minutes

New Mexico State Fair Commission  
Regular Meeting- June 28, 2024  
African American Performing Arts Center  
300 San Pedro NE – NM State Fairgrounds  
Albuquerque, NM

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**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Serna at 11:00 a.m.

**Roll Call:** Michele Clement called the roll.

The following Commissioners were present:

Chairman Eric Serna  
Commissioner Benny Roybal  
Commissioner Carol Cloer  
Commissioner Tony Casados  
Commissioner Walter Adams  
Commissioner Larry Chavez (arrived at 11:45 am)

The following Staff were present:

Dan Mourning, General Manager  
Joseph Holloway, Deputy Manager  
Chris Machin, General Counsel  
Cara Smouse, CFO

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Cloer New Mexico State Flag Pledge: The New Mexico State Flag pledge was led by Commissioner Cloer.

**Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved on a motion from Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Roybal, all voted in the affirmative.

**Approval of Minutes of January 8, 2024 Regular Meeting:** The minutes from the January 8, 2024 regular meeting were approved on a motion from Commissioner Adams, seconded by Commissioner Roybal, all voted in the affirmative.

**Introduction of Guests:**

J.J. Griego- Beasley, Mitchell and Company

**Public Comment:** None at this time

## **State Fair Management Report:**

### **A. Financial Report:**

1. Audit Report- Report from J.J. Griego, representative of Beasley, Mitchell and Company.

Mr. Griego stated that he would like to begin his report by stating that Expo NM/New Mexico State Fair has been given an “Unmodified” opinion as a result of the audit and added that this is the best result an Agency can get from an audit review.

Commissioner Chavez asked about the balance of the total lease payments and was the Downs at Albuquerque current with their lease payments. General Manager Mourning stated that the Downs at Albuquerque was current on the lease payments.

Mr. Griego added that on page 15 of the Audit report there was detailed information regarding the lease revenue.

Commissioner Chavez stated that he had a suggestion regarding the internal financial statements. He suggested that Expo NM should estimate depreciation each month/quarterly/semi-annually to match the audit report.

Chairman Serna stated that Commissioner Chavez should work with staff internally on his suggestion.

Commissioner Chavez stated that he had a comment regarding line item “Other Professional Services” on page 15 of the Audit report. Commissioner Chavez stated that he would like a breakdown of the bigger items in this category. Mr. Griego stated that this category was usually kept at a broad and internal level.

Commissioner Chavez asked if the Audit team had looked at internal controls and completed an analyses of purchasing processes, and contract procedures. Mr. Griego stated that yes, the audit team had reviewed internal controls, purchasing processes and contract procedures. Mr. Griego added that the commission could see that information in the report on page 16 and 17 regarding cash flow procedures, page 38 regarding capital assets reporting and page 55 regarding compliance and internal controls report.

Mr. Griego continued his report by stating that there had been one finding in the Audit report which had to do with meeting the deadlines set by the State Auditors’ office for submitting the Audit report.

Mr. Griego stated that the finding was the fault of the audit company, Beasley, Mitchell and Company and was so stated in the report.

Commissioner Chavez asked if Expo NM had given any thought to contingencies for potential lawsuits? General Manager Mourning stated that Expo NM has a plan in place to address that possibility.

2. Contracts- no discussion at this time.

## **B. Manager's Report:**

General Manager Dan Mourning stated that he would like to present his management report at this time to include what was happening year-round at Expo NM and what was upcoming for the 2024 New Mexico State Fair. General Manager Mourning began his report with the following information about Expo NM:

### 1. Expo New Mexico- year-round

Community Outreach and Support: We've been proud to identify opportunities to be a resource for our community and state.

- We recently participated in a great meeting with the San Pedro Revitalization Partnership Inc (RSSP). The RSSP is a non-profit corporation whose mission is to work with the adjoining neighborhood associations, businesses and community partners to facilitate opportunities for improvement, growth, preservation, and promotion of the San Pedro Drive Corridor between I-40 and Central Avenue in Albuquerque. We had productive discussions and agreed to identify opportunities to work together to address concerns including crime and disrepair of area buildings.
- With the wildfires in the Ruidoso & Mescalero area, we've offered space and facilities for whatever is needed to assist evacuees. So far working with the Downs at Albuquerque, we've taken in approximately 70 displaced racehorses from Ruidoso Downs. We will continue to offer resources and assistance in whatever capacity it is needed for the duration of this emergency situation, in order to be of service to our neighbors in Southern New Mexico.

Commissioner Casados asked if we knew how the fire started in Ruidoso. General Manager Mourning stated that there was no official word yet.

Commissioner Roybal asked if Expo NM had experienced a lot of homelessness on or around the grounds. Commissioner Roybal asked if there was security around the clock? General Manager Mourning stated that Expo NM worked closely with our Security contractor, our internal Rovers and with State Police to ensure the grounds were safe and free from the homelessness that is so prevalent along Central Avenue.

Commissioner Casados asked if General Manager Mourning had heard what is happening at other fairs? General Manager Mourning stated that he had heard of shootings at other Fairs but again assured the commission that Expo NM has coordinated efforts for security of our grounds.

Events: As for our regular operations, it was an extremely busy Spring with Graduations and other events that have attracted enthusiastic crowds.

Since we last met, we've hosted:

- Oddities & Curiosities,

- Southwest Chocolate & Coffee Festival,
- Gathering of Nations and many other popular, well attended events.
- Boxing – ESPN televised

Commissioner Casados asked if the Gathering of Nations is restricted by space? General Manager Mourning stated that the Gathering of Nations event covers most of campus and through the years has adjusted their event footprint to fit their needs.

Flea Market:

- in coordination with NMDA and Houston Auto, we're pleased to have launched a donation drive to benefit Ruidoso and Mescalero residents who've been displaced from their homes due to the wildfires.
- Starting on June 22, to incentivize folks to bring donations of needed items, we've offered free entry into the flea market for those who make a contribution. The drive is going well and Albuquerque area community members have been grateful to have a central location to donate to the cause.

Signage & Honors:

- Darlene Telles: We're finalizing details on efforts to honor Darlene including a memorial bench sponsored by the dog shows as well as a plaque in Villa Hispana which will convey how much Darlene has meant to EXPO NM and our customers.
- Debbie Martinez "La Chicanita": We're moving forward with the placement of a New Mexico Historic Women's Marker in Villa Hispana to honor Ms. Martinez which will happen after the Fair.

Master Planning:

- We are conducting extensive research about processes and options in pursuit of a comprehensive Master Plan.
- We are working in coordination with the New Mexico General Services Department's Purchasing Division which provides guidance concerning large scale RFP projects.
- We have begun efforts to make potentially qualified businesses and companies aware of the upcoming opportunity to bid.
- We are grateful for the funding from the legislature for this project which we believe to be extremely important and impactful for EXPO New Mexico's future.

Property Improvements:

- Swine Barn- new pens have been put in place.
- Agriculture Courtyard- a new structure has been built which will increase the usability of this space year-round.
- Gate 8 (Louisiana) entrance: We've made tremendous progress and improvements at Gate 8, which now has a new sidewalk and retaining wall,

and we have installed a permanent ticket booth. The entry looks much more appealing and is now more consistent with the set up at Gate 3.

### Special Projects:

#### National Guard Youth ChalleNGe

- Youth Challenge construction is progressing with the South Dorm fire suppression and security system rough in nearing completion, as well as new shower pans installed in south dorm bathrooms. New stairs, railings and elevators are nearing completion in the dormitory courtyard.
- In the Youth Hall itself the installation of new dampers and running ducts in new penetrations is in process as well as further rough in and installation of new security conduit.
- Finally, a new grease interceptor has been installed in the Youth Hall Kitchen. These upgrades will improve the housing experience for this year's 4H participants.

The project is on track for completion in Fall of 2024 and we are looking forward to hosting the first group of challenge participants in 2025. Playing a role in the expansion of this program has been very rewarding and we believe it will serve a great community need.

### Security systems:

A-COM Technologies has been contracted for EXPO's security camera project. We are on track to have the state-of-the-art security camera system operational in time for the state fair event.

- All four mobile camera trailers have arrived and are in the process of configuring the servers and storage server. All cameras are on site in storage.
- Most of the Tingley Coliseum cameras are installed as well as the Manuel Lujan Jr. Complex cameras.
- The Department of Information Technology should have our network configuration complete by Monday June 24<sup>th</sup>. Once this is done we can start bringing the cameras online and continue to bring them online as they are installed.
- Our ability to link systems within campus as well as to city public safety systems will be a game changer for EXPO NM.

Additionally, we continue to utilize the new Evolv detection system for our bigger events, including graduations. The system has been extremely accurate and reliable and will be a tremendous safety asset for the upcoming state fair.

Commissioner Casados asked if there is a budget item for security? General Manager Mourning stated that Expo NM hired a Security company through the RFP process and that Expo NM also has a team of internal Rovers to assure the grounds are secure.

Commissioner Roybal asked if the new I.T. building was complete? General Manager Mourning stated that yes that building was completed and added that the I.T. department was working on the campus wide camera project which should be completed by Fair time.

Tingley – Seating Project:

We are very excited about the major upgrades taking place in Tingley Coliseum. The installation of new, modern seating in the arena will begin after this year's fair.

- While seating capacity will decrease slightly, the new seating will create a modern arena experience and provide additional room and comfort that attendees have been requesting for years.
- Based on research, we've incorporated a unique color scheme which is similar to seating at Utah State University Arena with a pleasant visual aesthetic as well as the impression of more people in the audience.

General Manager Mourning continued his management report with the following 2024 State Fair planning updates:

2. State Fair – September 5-15, 2024

Concert & Ticket Sales/Special Promotions:

- We are making tickets available for purchase earlier than ever before which has resulted in some great momentum for concerts and admission tickets.
- Pre-sales for gate admission is at 3,044 tickets sold, with the majority of the sales fueled primarily by recent promotional flash sales.
- We've recently made mega pass tickets (which allows ticket holders admission to the fair and unlimited midway rides for any one day of the event) available for purchase and sales have been strong. Almost 400 mega passes have been sold to date.

Park & Ride:

- We're pleased to report that we've secured a Park and Ride contract with Herrera Coaches. Fair goers can purchase a ticket for the park and ride which will include admissions.
- Park & Ride will create a new source of revenue, help to mediate traffic concerns, and will be a great benefit to our customers.

Commissioner Roybal asked about the cost of a Park and Ride ticket. General Manager Mourning stated that he would have to get back with commission with answer to the question.

### Sponsorship:

- We are excited to announce that Ford is the official vehicle sponsor of the Rodeo, representing all dealers across state.
- We have secured Chevron as the rodeo & presenting sponsor for an additional three years.

### Theme Days & Miscellaneous events:

- Main street is full for both law enforcement and military days, and the other theme days are filling up quickly.
- We are excited for Navy Week to return as part of the 2024 fair, including lots of musical performances and other attractions.
- We have a full lineup of restaurant participants for the Green Chile Cheeseburger Challenge and a waitlist of interested restaurants. We will have great representation from different areas of the state.
- USA powerlifting will once again hold their power lifting competition.
- Happy hours by NMDA every day around 3 PM will feature local wines and beer.
- We have over two dozen applications for the parade and interest in school days is picking up with 25 applications so far.
- It is the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Smokey Bear and there will be some cool activities planned for the kids.

### Volunteers:

- We are well ahead on hiring volunteers with groups such as Rotary and Rio Grande Credit Union offering workers.
- We expect 200 student volunteers for weekend days.
- Both Goodwill and the Salvation Army have expressed interest in supporting the fair as well. We may be able to work out a partnership to work with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation students as well, whose workforce funding is supported by the state.

### Sensory Station: The sensory station is back and promises to be better than ever.

- The team is creating a special map to give families an impression of what to expect from their state fair experience as well as other tools to ensure a better visit.
- Families can rent headphones, gloves and other items to minimize sensory concerns.
- The organizers have expressed their interest in demonstrating how the fair is a model for other events.

General Manager Mourning stated that his report was complete and opened the floor for questions and comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Roybal asked about the Theme for the 2024 New Mexico State Fair. General Manager Mourning stated that the Theme was “Generations of Fun”.

General Manager Mourning added that there will be a promotion during the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend which will be “4 for 4” - 4 admission tickets for \$4 dollars. We look forward to this promotion and others to create interest in the upcoming Fair.

Commissioner Roybal asked about the Grand Marshall for the parade. General Manager Mourning stated that the team was still working on a Grand Marshal for the parade and would be happy to take any suggestions that the commission might have.

Commissioner Cloer stated that the grounds looked beautiful and she was very proud to be a part of Expo NM and the State Fair. Commissioner Cloer added that she appreciates all of the effort going into creating a space for the National Guard program.

Commissioner Cloer then asked about how the Evolv security system worked. General Manager Mourning stated that the system works much like the system at the airport which can identify objects. General Manager Mourning added that Evolv also has the ability to learn through Artificial Intelligence to identify additional objects as they are introduced.

Commissioner Chavez stated that it is important for Expo NM to be a resource during disasters. General Manager Mourning stated that he agreed with Commissioner Chavez and that is why he is proud of Expo NM’s community involvement.

**Discussion Items:** None at this time.

**Discussion of Meeting Calendar:**

**Discussion of Agenda Items for Next Meeting:** Chairman Serna asked the commissioners to submit any agenda items to him prior to the next commission meeting.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm on a motion from Commissioner Adams, seconded by Commissioner Roybal, all voted in the affirmative.