



Minutes

State Fair Commission Regular Meeting
February 17, 2023
African American Performing Arts Center
300 San Pedro NE – NM State Fairgrounds
Albuquerque, NM
2:30 P.M.- 4:00 P.M.

2:30 PM

Call to Order: the meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm

Roll Call: Michele Clement called the roll.

The following Commissioners were present:

Chairman Eric Serna
Commissioner Benny Roybal
Commissioner Carol Cloer
Commissioner Larry Chavez

The following staff was present:

Dan Mourning, General Manager
Joseph Holloway, Deputy Manager

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 Roybal and seconded by Commissioner Cloer, all voted in the affirmative.

Approval of Minutes of January 9, 2023 Regular Meeting: the minutes for the January 9, 2023 regular meeting were approved on a motion from Commissioner Roybal, seconded by Commissioner Cloer, all voted in the affirmative.

Executive Session- Closed Executive Session: to discuss those matters listed on the agenda as closed, pursuant to section 10-15-1 (H).

Matters pertaining to threatened or pending litigation-
New Mexico State Fair Arabian Horse Show

Commissioner Roybal made a motion that the Commission go into closed executive session to discuss only those matters listed on the agenda as closed, pursuant to section 10-15-1 (H). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chavez.

Commissioner Roybal stated that the Commission is back in open session and affirmed that the Commission discussed only the matters specified in the motion to close the meeting in accordance with Section 10-15-1 (J). Chairman Serna called for a vote from the Commission: Commissioner Cloer- voted in the affirmative, Commissioner Chavez- voted in the affirmative, Commissioner Roybal voted in the affirmative, Chairman Serna voted in the affirmative.

Introduction of Guests:

The following guests were present:

Victor Reyes, Duke City Gladiators

Cornelia Lange, AHANM

Laura Cunico, AHANM

Mariah Wilson, AHANM via Zoom

Public Comment:

Mr. Reyes stated that he recently started to work for the Duke City Gladiators who are a professional Indoor Arena football team. Mr. Reyes added that the Gladiators used to have presence in Tingley coliseum and they looking forward to exploring the possibility of returning to Tingley Coliseum and working together with Expo NM to create entertainment opportunities for City of Albuquerque and the State of New Mexico. Mr. Reyes added that he is looking forward to having conversations with everyone soon.

Chairman Serna asked Mr. Holloway to make sure to follow up with Mr. Reyes because it seems having the Gladiators return to Tingley Coliseum would be a very appropriate venue for the Gladiators.

Chairman Serna stated that the Gladiators had been in Tingley Coliseum before and asked what had happened. Mr. Reyes stated that during the Pandemic, the Coliseum was used for a vaccination site and then after that purpose was done, for some reason the partnership was not continued.

Mr. Holloway stated that he could provide some clarification as to why the Gladiators chose to not return to Tingley. Mr. Holloway continued by stating that during the Pandemic, Expo NM was not open for public events and per their contract with their league, the Gladiators were required to hold games by a certain date which he believes was around June 30th/July 1st of that year. At that time Expo NM had not been formally re-opened by the Governor's office and could not hold any public events. The Gladiators had to move to another location in order to keep their contract with their league.

Chairman Serna stated that he wanted clarification for record that Mr. Holloway would follow up with Mr. Reyes and will report back to the commission at the next meeting.

Mr. Holloway stated that he would follow up with Mr. Reyes and report back to the commission. Chairman Serna then stated that Mr. Reyes may want to come back to give a formal presentation to commission at the next meeting.

Chairman Serna asked if Cornelia Lange and Laura Cunico had a statement on behalf of the Arabian Horse Show Association since Mrs. Wilson was not able to connect to the meeting via zoom at this time.

Commissioner Roybal asked if Mrs. Wilson had provided them with a presentation or statement. Laura Cunico stated that they had not received anything from Mrs. Wilson as far as a statement or presentation.

Cornelia Lange stated that she had a general statement to make about the issue she had noticed regarding the lack of communication between the staff and the Commission and thought that that could be worked on to make it better.

Chairman Serna stated that the Commission and staff had a discussion and there is an effort being made to deal with the issues brought to the attention of the Commission, cooperatively, to come up with a proposed recommendation that hopefully will resolve some of the financial considerations in a fashion that will be equitable.

Chairman Serna added that Mr. Holloway will convey to Mrs. Wilson what was discussed and the hope is that everyone can move forward in a fashion that is acceptable and get beyond the contentious debate that has been ongoing.

Chairman Serna stated that Ms. Theresa Casados, a representative from the Governor's office was present at the meeting and that the Governor herself is very supportive of the Arabian Horse Association and their efforts at providing the activities that they do for the people of New Mexico, not only during the fair but year-round.

Mrs. Wilson was able at this time to join the meeting via zoom at this time.

Chairman Serna again stated that progress has been made and a resolution will be presented to Mrs. Wilson upon her return to New Mexico, which he hopes will resolve some of the concerns she has raised.

Chairman Serna then asked if Mrs. Wilson had a statement to make at this time.

Mrs. Wilson stated that she would like to know the points of resolution the Chairman had mentioned.

Mr. Holloway stated that the resolution will be a way of finding common ground but did not have any specifics to share at this time. Mr. Holloway stated that he will be in contact with Mrs. Wilson upon her return to New Mexico next week.

Cornelia Lang repeated to Mrs. Wilson that there was a representative from Governor's office, and that the Governor supports the Arabian Horse Show of NM.

Mrs. Wilson stated that she thought it was good to have a representative of the Governor's office at the meeting. Mrs. Wilson added that she had made multiple requests to the Governor's office for a meeting and it would be good to have some communication from Governor's office.

Mrs. Wilson continued by stating that a resolution is all well and fine but that there is only one resolution she is interested in and that is getting the Arabian Horse Association taken care of financially. Mrs. Wilson added that for the upcoming 2023 State Fair Horse Show, if the other issues with the horse show management were not resolved the National Arabian Horse Show Association may not allow this show to be held under New Mexico State Fair's purview given the gross mismanagement that has happened over the last couple of years.

Chairman Serna stated that in previous meeting Mrs. Wilson was under the impression that the contract with Carolyn Dobbins, Horse Show Manager had been renewed. Chairman Serna stated that Fair management had confirmed that this particular contract had not been renewed.

Mrs. Wilson stated that that was good to hear, but since Ms. Dobbins had put the New Mexico State Fair dates on her social media the perception of the horse community was that she will be returning for the State Fair Horse Show in 2023. Mrs. Wilson stated that she did not know how it could be done but this should be remedied by Fair management.

Mrs. Wilson added that she would like to know about the procedure that will be implemented to allow someone else to apply for the Horse Show Manager position. Mrs. Wilson added that it may already be too late in the year to find a manager and the many of the judges may already be booked.

Commissioner Roybal thanked Mrs. Wilson for her statement and stated that upon her return to New Mexico Mr. Holloway will get in touch and will work with her to come to a resolution.

Mrs. Wilson thanked the Commissioner for their time.

Chairman Serna also thanked Mrs. Wilson for her time and hoped that everyone could move forward positively.

Chairman's Agenda:

Commission Committee Reports- None at this time

Finance Committee Report- None at this time

Livestock Committee Report- None at this time

Arena and Rodeo Committee Report- None at this time

Entertainment Committee Report- None at this time

Arts Committee Report- None at this time

Farm and Agriculture Committee Report- Commissioner Cloer

Commissioner Cloer stated that she wanted to follow up on the discussion in previous meetings about getting the Counties to be represented at the Fair.

Mr. Holloway stated that he had met with Craig Vencill, Theme Day coordinator about County participation and Mr. Vencill had stated that he works with them every year and has learned that many cannot attend because funds are not available.

Commissioner Cloer stated that she had heard they could be reimbursed for their expenses. Mr. Holloway stated that the Counties were the ones who could reimburse them and many of them did not approve of reimbursement for travel.

Mr. Holloway added that perhaps Commissioner Cloer can help by contacting them herself, to demonstrate the value of being at the New Mexico State Fair.

Commissioner Cloer stated that she would be happy to do just that, just let her know what to say.

Chairman Serna stated that there is an Association of Counties and they have an annual meeting. Chairman Serna added that maybe we could send a representative to that meeting to talk with them about the State Fair.

State Fair Management Report:

Financial Report- None at this time.

Mr. Holloway stated that the previous CFO, Mr. Nordin had retired and the new CFO, Cara Smouse, was not prepared to give the financial report at this meeting.

Chairman Serna asked if Mr. Holloway could provide a report for Ms. Casados from the Governor's office.

Mr. Holloway stated that he did not feel he could provide a financial report at this time as this was not his area of expertise.

Managers' Report-

Legislative Update

Budget: Request:

Mr. Holloway stated that Expo NM had submitted a budget request in the amount of \$14+ million dollars for FY23. Both the LFC and DFA made recommendations for very similar amounts during the 2023 legislative budget hearings. Mr. Holloway added that they had also approved a budget of \$350 thousand dollars for the African American Performing Arts Foundation which is included in the Expo NM budget. Mr. Holloway stated that the total budget recommendation was \$14,763.1 million.

Commissioner Roybal asked if the fair had received any inquiries from Legislators regarding renovations to Villa Hispana. Commissioner Roybal added that he had been contacted by several legislators who were interested in sponsoring legislation for renovations to Villa Hispana.

Mr. Holloway stated that Expo NM had not received any inquiries but would love for that to happen and added that it would be great if Commissioner Roybal would encourage those legislators to continue their efforts to improve Villa Hispana at the fairgrounds.

Commissioner Cloer stated that she had attended all the legislative hearings during the current legislative session and added that Mr. Mourning and staff had done a great job addressing any questions that the legislative committee members had.

Commissioner Roybal asked for an update on the Capital Outlay request submitted during the current legislative session.

Capital Outlay:

Mr. Holloway stated that the ICIP was submitted with five priorities listed:

Electrical upgrades- \$3 million

Paving and Concrete- \$3 million,

Renovation to the Public Safety Building- \$2.7 million,

Renovations to the Lujan Building- \$3 million dollars.

Discussion of Meeting Calendar: Chairman Serna asked the commission to let him know their availability for the next meeting.

Discussion of Agenda Items of Next Meeting: Chairman Serna stated that if the commissioners had any items, they would like to be put on the agenda to contact him.

Adjournment: the meeting was adjourned at 4:53 PM on a motion from Commissioner Roybal, seconded by Commissioner Cloer, all voted in the affirmative.