

**NEW MEXICO STATE FAIR COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2016**  
**AFRICAN AMERICAN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**  
**300 SAN PEDRO NE**  
**ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO**  
**11:00 A.M.**

**Call to Order** by Chairman Kennedy at approximately 11:00 a.m.

**Commission Roll Call** – Commissioners present:

Chairman, Larry Kennedy  
Secretary-Treasurer, David “Hossie” Sanchez  
Commissioner Charles “Chuck” Brown  
Commissioner William “Bill” Lee

**Pledge of Allegiance**: led by Dan Mourning

**Staff present:**

Dan Mourning, General Manager  
Erin Thompson, Deputy Manager  
Lisa Liegeot, General Counsel  
Bill Nordin, Chief Financial Officer  
Sally Mayer, Senior Manager  
Carlos Beserra, Sponsorship Director  
Candace Sena, Digital Media Specialist

**Guests:**

Val Cole  
Ron Moore

Chairman Kennedy started the meeting with the introduction of guests.

**ACTION ITEM:** Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Commissioner Lee, with all present voting in favor.

**ACTION ITEM:** Commissioner Lee made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2015 New Mexico State Fair Commission meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Brown, with all present voting in favor.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Val Cole provided comments on behalf of the New Mexico Horse Council. Ms. Cole commended the fair for the 2015 horse shows which she indicated were particularly clean and we were fortunate to have sun most days. Ms. Cole indicated that the Excel Management group did a great job. She went on to say that the shows do have down time and she wants to work with the fair to present more horse events. Mr. Mourning was very receptive to working with the council to fill some of the time and said to come by to visit with him. Mr. Mourning agreed that this was a great idea and stated that anyone who wants to help is a welcome addition to the fair. The chair expressed his thanks and stated that it is good to hear when we are doing a good job - kudos to Mr. Mourning and Sally (Mayer) for hiring Excel as it has been a home run so far.

**ACTION ITEM:** Chairman Kennedy asked for consideration of the 2016 Open Meetings Resolution as proposed. Commissioner Sanchez made a motion for approval of the resolution with Commissioner Brown seconding the motion, and all present voting in favor.

**ACTION ITEM:** Election of Officers

Chairman Kennedy asked for a motion to consider nominations for Chairman. Commissioner Lee made the motion with a second from Commission Sanchez with all voting in favor. Commissioner Lee nominated Larry Kennedy, which was seconded by Commissioner Sanchez. With no other nominations, Commissioner Brown made the motion to close nominations which was seconded by Commissioner Lee, and all present voted in favor. Commissioner Brown made the motion to elect Larry Kennedy as chair, with a second by Commissioner Sanchez, with all commissioners present voting in favor.

Chairman Kennedy made the motion to open nominations for the position of Secretary/Treasurer of the New Mexico State Fair Commission, which Commissioner Brown seconded and all voted in favor. Commissioner Kennedy made the motion to nominate Hossie Sanchez, with a second by Commissioner Lee and all voting in favor. Commissioner Brown moved to close nominations with a second by Commissioner Sanchez and all voting in favor. All voted in favor of Commissioner Sanchez for Secretary/Treasurer.

Committee reports: Racing Committee

Commissioner Sanchez stated that stall rentals were going well and that all trainers had moved in on the north side. Commissioner Sanchez asked Mr. Mourning if he heard any feedback on the stall rentals. Mr. Mourning expressed congratulations to Chairman Kennedy and Commissioner Sanchez for their election. He said he hasn't heard anything but it is his understanding that it's working very well. We are doing an enormous amount of construction back there. We are also redoing the intersection nearby with concrete which is much better for drainage and considering the amount of vehicles that drive the area, so we don't have to replace asphalt. The horsemen have been great and it is working very well. Commissioner Sanchez stated that the horsemen are committed to doing this right. He made mention of the renovation at the grand stand. Mr. Mourning responded that they have made unbelievable progress with the construction and we had a good story with Ch. 7 about the complete renovation of the facility. We are hopeful that they will be done by May. It will be a state of the art, brand new facility. Mr. Mourning commended the Downs at Albuquerque for the money they have invested into the facility with no state fair money involved. They are doing what they should according to the lease which has resulted in better communication and we are working together better. It was a tough transition but has recently been a better experience. Commissioner Sanchez said he's only heard positive feedback and people really want to know what is going on but it has all been very positive.

Commissioner Lee asked about the anticipated grand opening and ribbon cutting and requested that commissioners be kept in the loop to be in attendance. Mr. Mourning said he will have Erin (Thompson) keep them apprised as well as send out construction updates and we are now meeting regularly with the Downs. (Bill) Nordin has been coordinating those efforts and we will have a better idea in the next month of where they are with construction.

Chairman Kennedy asked if there were other committee suggestions – he advised that there has been interest to form a committee to work on redevelopment efforts and asked Commissioner Lee to head the committee and engage the commission through meetings. Commissioner Lee stated that it would be his honor to serve and chair the committee and that he would be looking to Mr. Mourning and staff to provide valuable input. He knows it is challenging to find dollars but is happy to serve. Chairman Kennedy advised to be aware of open meetings' requirements and Commissioner Lee replied that he is aware and will make sure he does it by the book.

#### Fair Management Report

Mr. Mourning thanked Chairman Kennedy and Commissioner Sanchez for all they have done in the last several years in providing guidance and leadership and stated it has been a wonderful experience to work with all the commissioners. He addressed Expo first and said a lot of projects are in the cue including a new sign project going out to bid in the next week or so with a complete renovation of the two corners at Louisiana and Lomas and San Pedro and Lomas. We want to make sure people understand that we are proud of our facilities and love this place. We are redoing the Lomas wall as well as the Louisiana paint job to brighten it up. There has been much debate about ART (Albuquerque Rapid Transit) but if it goes through, we've met with the city and have a plan as it relates to the fairgrounds. The city's plan puts a stop light at Tower and makes it more beneficial for us including a turn decel lane off gate 1 into the parking lot. We will keep you informed but it's a good project which helps with redesign of the interior for an open air market. We are working with Dale Dekker at Dekker/Perich/Sabatini who is an advocate of the fair, state and city. It didn't cost us anything but he provided conceptualls for redesign. We are encouraged and it is time to put life into the flea market. While in Las Vegas, we visited their flea market with staff and came back with great ideas for a redesign which coincides with development at the Downs. We will update when we are at a place to start the project and would love to sit down with Commissioner Lee as it relates to the new committee. The good news is lots of infrastructure projects are underway such as sewer lines being replaced, addressing electrical problems, we did trenching in midway lot to hide cables. We are shoring up and adding a few more trenches, adding transformers at Gate 3 and placing a person at gates now to serve in guest relations function to welcome patrons and keep track of who comes in and out. We have two new tenants and worked with GSD (state General Services Department) to develop leases, providing new revenue for the fair. We welcome the state Office of African American Affairs and the Martin Luther King Jr. Commission and the current tenant African American Performing Arts foundation is still operating the theater with new leases. Mr. Mourning thanked Bill (Nordin) for his hard work.

Mr. Mourning advised that upcoming events include Shrine Circus in February as well as Monster Jam which added an extra day because it was so successful last year. We have the home show this weekend, which is a great remodeling show. Most venues are regularly booked. While we are doing well getting people into facilities, the challenge is we are still not necessarily competitive. Recently the city of Albuquerque put \$20 million into their facilities. We are working to put a fiber loop in because shows require that type of communication link. We are in touch with UFC as they are interested in coming

back this year. Although they haven't set a time yet, it is exciting that they were very happy with their experience and we get lots of calls for participation.

Mr. Mourning talked about the ERA (Elite Rodeo Athletes) nationally televised rodeo which plans to come to Tingley with all world champion participants; the best of the best competing which will be nationally televised on Fox Sports 1. We have found ways to get around our challenges. Not a lot of other venues are having nationally televised events. Mr. Mourning said imagine how much better it will be when we are state of the art. Mr. Mourning said he has been approached by folks interested in redevelopment after losing the Arabian show. He went on to say that Super Looper is coming up which is a big roping show and a couple of other things are in the works including potentially big shows. We've replaced the footing in the horse arena thanks to Sally (Mayer) and the operations team – the footing is going to be excellent. We have grown our shows and things are starting to turn around. Mr. Mourning said we have been approached about what it would take to make our facilities better, and we are hearing about draft legislation to fund a 15,000 seat (or more) arena. Albuquerque is the only city of our size that doesn't have that type of multipurpose event center/arena. Adding bleacher seats at the city (convention center) isn't sufficient. It is very clear that people don't want to go all the way to Santa Ana and there is the question of why we cannot do more with Tingley which has the best ingress/egress. Mr. Mourning has been approached by consultants and it is clear that we are the buzz around the country now that the economy is starting to turn. They think we are a hot prospect. We talk to live nation representatives often and have asked them if they would come and they said because we are ten hours from Dallas/Phoenix and we could fill that one stop and look at being a partner. The iron is hot and the time is right to step up. We are doing a lot of work with the rest of the facility -- let's keep it going with a needed renovation of the Lujan complex. People love our location but we are not quite adequate for bigger shows.

Mr. Mourning noted that it was already mentioned that we have a new general counsel with Lisa Liegeot and we are pleased to have a full time general counsel. Lisa served as our cabinet director previously. She has extensive legal and Santa Fe knowledge, as well as real estate law and we welcome Lisa. Carlos (Beserra) is our sponsorship guru now which means he get us money. Since joining Expo, Carlos has rolled up his sleeves and is tearing it up. He is also a welcome addition to our team and has already been able to glean big money including via the WisePies Kids Zone. WisePies also purchased cows etc. at the livestock show. Since Val (Cole) and Ron (Moore) are here, we should note that we set up a meeting with the horse community which was attended by approximately 40 people during the 2 day event and the nuts and bolts of what we want to do for 2016 was discussed, with good input from participants. Mr. Mourning said that we are looking forward to working on that for next year in order to grow shows and not let them squander.

Mr. Mourning advised that we are booking the fair now. He emphasized that 460,000 people attended the 2015 fair, with a day less and still up 2.5% in revenues. Our audit is finished but not released yet. It was a great job by the accounting team – we used to have 13 or 14 findings and now really only have 1 with another which is non material (total of 2). Mr. Mourning gave credit to Bill (Nordin), Antoinette (Kulinna) as well as Julie (Jones) for doing an amazing job of cleaning up the financials, especially considering the challenge with transition to the state's SHARE system which doesn't fit our model. He also credited Department of Finance and Administration for their willingness to work with us. Mr. Mourning advised that we would get a financial report to commissioners soon.

Mr. Mourning indicated that the last time the commission met, we spoke about things we do outside of typical fair events, such as folks that took oath of citizenship, free flu shots which were administered and

community outreach, which is what the fair is all about. We have the survey done every year and we got the results done by the UNM School of Business. Mr. Mourning thanked Candace (Sena) who coordinates that effort. This year we had 3 surveys done for the midway, liquor, and entertainment. We are proud to report that 93 percent of attendees said the cost of admission is worth the entertainment value. Our state fair parade is the largest in the state and we are already working on a theme. We hire spectaculars and this year we are asking them to be in the parade. Other spectaculars for 2016 include a pogo group which is like pogo on steroids – they will be part of the parade as well as the street drum corps. We will have a new magician also. The parade is more important than some might believe because for some people it's the closest they come to the fair and therefore it is important to maximize entertainment at the parade. Mr. Mourning thanked Commissioner Brown for being an advocate for the parade. The state fair is not just concerts and corndogs but is an integral part of the community. 93 percent of fair attendees said entertainment was awesome or I like it. 98% gave high marks for cleanliness. 99% said they felt safe. Mr. Mourning commended the state police, homeland security Bernalillo County, Albuquerque Police Department and all the law enforcement agencies which provide support during the event and said that Larry Trujillo also does great job. State Police working on the exterior did a great job – they helped people across the street and were engaged with fair patrons. Mr. Mourning commended Lt. Jeff Rey who he said did a magnificent job. The Carnival was more popular than ever. We are the buzz around the country for putting out a legitimate process and getting one of the best carnival operators in the world. It has made a night and day difference and we commend Rick Reithoffer.

Mr. Mourning conveyed that animal exhibits are very popular on the north end as well as animal attractions. Duck races will be coming back, as well as pig races, cowboy adventure in the dairy barn and we will be shifting to ranch horse rodeo. Sea lions were great and will be back in 2017 as they had another obligation for this year. We have booked a magnificent horse show for 2016 called Cavalia which is a big top event/first class venue with trick riding horsemanship demonstrations and seating for 700 to 800 people. We are bringing dock dogs which will allow members of the public to bring their dogs and give them a run. People also enjoyed seeing the dancers from Indian Village when they performed out on the street and we plan to have different dancing in the street again, as well as car shows and theme days. Barbara Hubbard from NMSU will be doing all our booking this year for Tingley. She is a legend in the business. We have offers out with Trace Adkins and Dwight Yoakam. Trace is working with the Wounded Warrior Project. Mr. Mourning indicated that our rodeo was the talk of the country in terms of the entertainment we provide which is getting people's attention. Boyd (Polhamus) is our announcer and has been named announcer of the year. Our outreach efforts including the cowboys going out to hospitals along with the queen was very well received. We are well into the planning process. Please bring us your suggestions. We are further along than ever and have booked two new concessionaires already. Our state fair is getting national recognition that we haven't had in the past and we are on the radar with international fair conventions. Other fairs are calling us about the beer which was wildly successful and was the talk of the California convention with other fairs interested in how to get it done.

Mr. Mourning offered to stand for questions – Commissioner Lee referenced the discussion about renovation and the need for putting together a plan. He stated that yesterday he was before the House Appropriations and Finance Committee and pointed out to the legislative body that our staff is doing a great job keeping up the grounds and that we are very busy though it is becoming increasingly difficult. Commissioner Lee said it hurts us to lose shows. He has conversations with legislators telling them it's time to make things happen and he looks forward to working with staff to build a strong committee to

find dollars to do so. He looks forward to seeing what we can do to be more competitive in the market place.

Chairman Kennedy said he hears positive comments on how good the wall on San Pedro looks and that it is so much nicer. He has had interested parties ask to get involved with the rodeo and he put them in touch with Ken (Salazar) who will make sure they are part of the rodeo committee. Their interest bodes well for us and shows a positive influence in the community and throughout the state. He commended Mr. Mourning, as well as his fellow state fair commissioners. While it hasn't always been that way over the five years, it has been good to see attitudes changed for the better.

Mr. Mourning emphasized that it is important to put our best face forward to the community and state. We have to take pride in what we do if we want others to be invested. We have been contacted by the Environmental Protection Agency and we are now the poster child for compliance with requests for data in order to apply similar efforts in New Orleans for storm water issues. Mr. Mourning said it is a big deal to be recognized. Now we don't have any fly complaints and have cleaned up and made it user friendly. He thanked Commissioner Lee for attending the House Appropriations and Finance Committee as it is important for them to see the commission's participation.

Chairman Kennedy added that the EPA issues occurred before some commissioners were here and it was a huge undertaking that came out of the blue with regard to notice of violations, which were due to the previous administration's management. This administration jumped in and proactively addressed the issue and it is magnificent compared to what it was before. EPA obviously loves it as it is a big deal that they are using us as an example. The chair said that all our work mitigated the fine that we could have gotten.

Commissioner Brown indicated that there are some areas of the state in which youth cattle shows are lowering the age for entry and they have seen a jump in participation. He asked if anyone had brought that issue to our fair's attention. Mr. Mourning said they had not but we will get with Beverly (Zastrow) to review the option. Mr. Mourning said we are bringing Erin Dorsey back and that is great information we did not previously have. Commissioner Brown responded that he knows that it has increased participation but he doesn't know if there is a down side or up side. Commissioner Brown said that several years ago there was a disruption of vendors due to fire code enforcement and asked if that had been settled. Mr. Mourning said that the fire marshal is a regulatory body and we have had issues here and there but we have resolved them.

Commissioner Lee asked if they can get a copy of the surveys. Mr. Mourning advised that Erin will get that to them as well as copies of the annual report.

### Legislative Update

Mr. Mourning advised that the social calendar is included in the commissioners' packets. Chairman Kennedy requested that staff please email them the social calendar. He also indicated that if management wants commissioners present at committee meetings to just ask. Commissioner Sanchez and Commissioner Lee have attended hearings in support of the fair. Please let them know what they can do (make phone calls, etc.) to further our cause and if there is anything on the horizon to let them know about, please do. Mr. Mourning advised that Carlos (Beserra) is also working on the legislative social calendar and he has experience in Santa Fe as well as ties to legislators, etc. Chairman Kennedy said he has attended Ag Fest in the past and it is always a good event.

## Meeting Calendar

Chairman Kennedy indicated that we should consider having some meetings outside of Albuquerque and suggested holding the April meeting in Las Cruces. He indicated that commissioners should look at the first week of April and get back with Erin about scheduling availability. He asked that Erin find a space in Las Cruces. Commissioner Lee said that Tuesdays and Wednesdays are best for his calendar (although not for that particular week), and it was suggested that we could do a Saturday meeting as well. Commissioner Brown mentioned APS spring break and Commissioner Lee advised that we may want to allow time near the weekend for those traveling. Chairman Kennedy stated that possibly a Friday would work best. He asked Erin to email commissioners to kick around dates. Commissioner Sanchez recommended that we talk to Commissioner Jurado to get ideas and better insight on options. Chairman Kennedy suggested leaving dates open and coordinating with our attorney general. Susan (Sullivan) advised that she goes in between as she has several commissions that she works with and has a Land Grant Council meeting on that Friday. Chairman Kennedy said we may need to look at April 15<sup>th</sup>. He also asked commissioners to let him know about agenda items for the next meeting.

Commissioner Lee stated that he thinks moving to other areas is a great idea. Chairman Kennedy responded that we should consider going to Gallup for the July meeting.

There was a motion by Commissioner Sanchez to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Brown with all present voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm.