

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LODGERS' TAX ADVISORY BOARD OF THE
CITY OF CARLSBAD, NEW MEXICO, HELD IN THE JANELL WHITLOCK
MUNICIPAL ANNEX, 114 S. HALAGUENO ST., CARLSBAD, NM
TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024, AT 7:30 A.M.**

Voting Members Present: Dale Balzano, Acting Chairman (before Dr. Dara arrived)
Elizabeth Licklitter
Milan Patel
Dr. S.S. Dara, Chairman (arrived at 7:45 a.m.)

Voting Members Absent: Amit Bhakta

Also Present:

Angie Barrios-Testa	Director of Grant Programs
Jessica Ponce	Budget/Grants Analyst
Joy Springer	Carlsbad Automotive Restoration Society (CARS)
Carol Belski	Friends of the Living Desert
Veronica Barnhart	Friends of the Living Desert
Braden Ryan	Drylands Student Conference
Chad Ingram	Chamber of Commerce
Jill Barkley	Chamber of Commerce
Dave Thomas	Carlsbad Community of Hope
Michele Robertson	Milton's Brewing
Kat Davis	Carlsbad MainStreet
Damien Capello	Red Rocket
Stephanie Ybaben	Carlsbad Community Concerts
Monique Pickens	Carlsbad Gem & Mineral Society
Paul Cox	Carlsbad Community Theatre

1. CALL TO ORDER

Dale Balzano, Acting Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL OF VOTING MEMBERS AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Dale Balzano called roll and it was determined there was a Quorum of the Voting Members.

Present: Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

Absent: Dr. S.S. Dara and Amit Bhakta

3. APPROVAL OF MARCH 5, 2024 AGENDA

The motion to approve the March 5, 2024, meeting Agenda was made by Elizabeth Licklitter and seconded by Milan Patel.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

4. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LODGERS' TAX ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 6, 2024

The motion was made by Milan Patel and seconded by Elizabeth Lickliter to approve the February 6, 2024, meeting minutes.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Lickliter, and Milan Patel

No: None

5. PRESENTATION OF THE SUMMARY LIST OF REQUESTS

Ms. Angie Barrios-Testa presented the summary list of requests. Ms. Barrios-Testa went over the information presented for every meeting to list all of the requests that have been vetted by the City before being brought forth to the Lodgers' Tax Board for approval. It was noted that there are three City Department requests from the Carlsbad Museum, the Executive Department for City and Mayor Events, and one for the Carlsbad Public Library. Ms. Barrios-Testa indicated that there was an error in the original list for Carlsbad MainStreet in the recommended section which noted that the logo and reserve funds were eligible; however, these are not eligible items. There are \$1,177,100 in requests for FY25 and \$72,485.81 for those events scheduled within FY24. No further discussion.

No vote is required for this item.

6. CONSIDER APPROVAL FOR FUNDING FOR DRYLANDS STUDENT CONFERENCE 2ND ANNUAL YEAR EVENT FROM DRYLANDS STUDENT CONFERENCE

Mr. Braden Ryan presented the request for \$25,000 in funds for the Drylands Student Conference 2nd Annual Year Event. This year's event itself will be free and the only cost for participants will be hotel and lodging. Five (5) groups from out of town including two from Lubbock, one from Plainview, and two from El Paso have committed with each of the groups bringing 25-50 students. The participants will be given time to visit other amenities in the community. The motion was made by Elizabeth Lickliter and seconded by Milan Patel to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Lickliter, and Milan Patel

No: None

7. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR CAR-A-FAIR 2024 FROM THE CARLSBAD AUTOMOTIVE RESTORATION SOCIETY (CARS)

Ms. Joy Springer presented the request for \$26,300 in funds for the Carlsbad Automotive Restoration Society's (CARS) Car-A-Fair 2024. This event has been held for over 25 years and many participants and visitors come in from out of town. Participants also tend to bring their family and friends. Approximately 30% are projected to be coming in from out of town. The motion was made by Elizabeth Lickliter and seconded by Milan Patel to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Lickliter, and Milan Patel

No: None

8. CONSIDER APPROVAL FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR CARLSBAD COMMUNITY THEATRE TOURISM CAMPAIGN FROM THE CARLSBAD COMMUNITY THEATRE

No representative was present for this item so Ms. Barrios-Testa presented the request for \$3,000 for funding from the Carlsbad Community Theatre (CCT) for their Tourism Campaign. The CCT request is a small and reasonable amount. The motion was made by Elizabeth Lickliter and seconded by Milan Patel to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Lickliter, and Milan Patel

No: None

9. CONSIDER APPROVAL FOR FUNDING FOR JERICHO WALK AND BIKE RUN FOR CARLSBAD COMMUNITY OF HOPE CENTER

Mr. Dave Thomas presented the \$24,000 request for funding the Jericho Walk and Bike Run from the Carlsbad Community of Hope Center. The Jericho Walk and Bike Run is an annual two-day event. The event includes performers on Friday, as well as a walk down on C-Hill and a bike run on Saturday. There are activities offered for kids in the community. The motion was made by Milan Patel and seconded by Elizabeth Licklitter to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

10. CONSIDER APPROVAL FOR FUNDING FOR SEPTEMBER FEST FROM MILTON'S BREWING

Ms. Michele Robertson presented the \$6,900 request in funding for the September Fest from Milton's Brewing. This is the third year requesting funding to advertise and promote the September Fest in downtown Carlsbad. Mr. Balzano and Ms. Licklitter raised concerns about Milton's being a private business and provided the recommendation for Milton's to invite other breweries and distilleries to participate. It was determined by the City that the request is allowable as it promotes an event in Carlsbad. Elizabeth Licklitter motioned approval with the condition of including other Carlsbad breweries or distilleries and was seconded by Milan Patel to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

11. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR CAVERN CITY RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL FROM CAVERN CITY EVENTS, LLC

There were no representatives from Cavern City Events. Ms. Barrios-Testa briefly discussed the \$80,000 request in funding for the Cavern City Renaissance Festival from Cavern City Events, LLC. The motion was made by Dale Balzano and seconded by Milan Patel to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dr. S.S.Dara, Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

12. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR FUNDING FRIENDS OF THE LIVING DESERT: TRAIL TO DISCOVERY FROM FRIENDS OF THE LIVING DESERT

Ms. Carol Beski presented the \$32,200 request for funding for the Friends of the Living Desert: Trail to Discovery annual campaign. Ms. Beski discussed their promotion plans for the year and Ms. Barnhart reported that the front desk collects a list of visitor information regularly and they find that most of the people are out-of-state visitors. There was additional discussion regarding entry cost increases from \$5 to \$10 based on recent public input and analysis. Ms. Beski mentioned the friends of the Living Desert are looking to purchase a vertical banner. Ms. Barrios-Testa mentioned that the banner would need to advertise the specific event to qualify for Carlsbad Lodgers' Tax. The motion was made by Dale Balzano and seconded by Milan Patel to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dr. S.S. Dara, Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

13. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR FUNDING CARLSBAD MAINSTREET EVENTS AND TOURISM FROM CARLSBAD MAINSTREET

Ms. Kat Davis presented the \$200,000 request for funding for the Carlsbad MainStreet Events and Tourism annual campaign. This year, MainStreet is combining CavernFest and other hosted events including the Farmer's Market. The plan is to add the Saturday Farmer's Market, as well as for it to run

longer this coming year. Ms. Davis reported that this year's title sponsor for CavernFest is Chevron. Ms. Davis clarified that the event is called Farmer's and Maker's Market in response to Dr. Dara's request to change the name. The motion was made by Dale Balzano and seconded by Elizabeth Licklitter to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dr. S.S. Dara, Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

14. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR LOCAL EVENT PROMOTION/SOCIAL MEDIA AD BUY FROM RED ROCKET MEDIA, LLC

Mr. Damien Capello presented the \$60,000 request for funding for the Annual Local Event Promotional/Social Media Buy provided as requested by the City of Carlsbad from Red Rocket Media, LLC. Mr. Capello explained how promotion and advertising services complement the City and other event advertising to allow longer-reaching advertisement that expands markets not reached by traditional advertising. Lodgers' Tax members were concerned that the request duplicates the efforts from what others were also receiving in Lodgers' Tax funding. Ms. Barrios-Testa explained the difference and how this allows for the advertisements to be pushed further out. Lodgers' Tax members recommend this type of request be added to the City request. The motion was made by Elizabeth Licklitter and seconded by Milan Patel to approve the request. This item failed to be approved.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Elizabeth Licklitter and Milan Patel

No: Dale Balzano and Dr. S.S. Dara

15. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR CARLSBAD GEM & MINERAL SHOW FROM THE CARLSBAD GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

Ms. Monique Pickens presented the \$19,185.81 request for funding on behalf of the Gem & Mineral Society for their upcoming show planned in June 2024. Ms. Pickens described the promotion plan for the 3-day event held at the Living Desert location. The event brings vendors and participants from Texas, Arizona, and California. The motion was made by Dr. S.S. Dara and seconded by Elizabeth Licklitter to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dr. S.S. Dara, Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

16. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR CARLSBAD COMMUNITY CONCERT ASSOCIATION 2024/2025 FROM THE CARLSBAD COMMUNITY CONCERT ASSOCIATION

Ms. Stephanie Ybaben presented the \$55,000 request for funding for the Carlsbad Community Concert Association 2024/2025. Ms. Ybaben described the concert association's advertising and promotion plan in and out of Carlsbad communities. In addition to four concerts per year, the organizers also include youth outreach by the musicians and performers. Ms. Ybaben explained that the Lodgers' Tax request is only used for advertising. The organization uses other donor contributions to cover the cost of the performers. The motion was made by Dale Balzano and seconded by Elizabeth Licklitter to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dr. S.S. Dara, Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

17. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR CHRISTMAS ON THE PECOS FROM THE CARLSBAD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ms. Jill Barkley presented the \$88,000 request for funding for the Christmas on the Pecos annual event. Ms. Barkley explained the promotion and advertising plan for the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce

(Chamber). This is the Chamber's 33rd year of holding this event and each year they attempt to grow and elevate the event. Using analytics the Chamber can determine that approximately 70% of attendees are non-local visitors. As many as 44,000 people were in the area during the event dates and times.

Lodgers' Tax members were concerned that the hotels were slower than in years past. Ms. Barkley mentioned that on opening weekend, the event was sold out and it stayed sold out. Ms. Barkley mentioned that this year the Chamber is hoping to partner with restaurants so that they can offer discounts or other perks with proof of purchase depending on how the restaurants want to participate. The Chamber already partners with the hotels and they call or visit most of the hotels every year. The motion was made by Dale Balzano and seconded by Elizabeth Licklitter to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dr. S.S. Dara, Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

18. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR CARLSBAD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE-CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU FROM THE CARLSBAD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr. Chad Ingram presented the \$330,000 request for funding for the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce-Convention & Visitors Bureau annual campaign. Mr. Ingram described the Chamber's mission of promoting Carlsbad in the tourism area. Over the last three years, the footprint has grown due to their marketing strategies. Social media impressions results show 250,000 impressions on Instagram and 200,000 on Facebook. Of these, there was over 30% engagement rate. The Chamber explained that they are being intentional about where they are advertising such as in movie theaters. Additionally, over the last three years, there has been successful outreach in Colorado, Arizona, and Dallas, as well as with the Chamber's attendance at Balloon Fiesta held in Albuquerque. The Balloon Fiesta can reach upwards of one million people and result in many individuals coming to Christmas on the Pecos. The motion was made by Dale Balzano and seconded by Elizabeth Licklitter to approve the request.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dr. S.S. Dara, Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None

19. ADJOURN

Being no further business the motion to adjourn was made by Dale Balzano and seconded by Elizabeth Licklitter.

The vote was as follows:

Yes: Dr. S.S. Dara, Dale Balzano, Elizabeth Licklitter, and Milan Patel

No: None



Chairman