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3 The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the **Las Cruces Economic**
4 **Recovery Ad Hoc Board** on June 18, 2020. The meeting was held via Zoom.

5
6 **Members Present:**

7 Chris Schaljo, Chairman
8 Debbi Moore, Vice Chair
9 Michael Harris, Member
10 Doug Cowan, Member
11 Jolene Martinez, Member
12 Sharon Thomas, Member
13 Veronica Archuleta, Member
14 Jane Bloom, Member
15 George Miller, Member
16 Brooke Montgomery, Member
17 Ron Fitzherbert, Member
18

19 **Staff Present:**

20 Griselda Martinez, Economic Development Director
21 Francisco Pallares, Economic Development Deputy Director
22 Paul Dahlgren, Director of Marketing & Communications, Visit Las Cruces
23 Mandy Guss, Business Development Administrator
24 David Maestas, Interim City Manager
25

26 **Others Present:**

27 Jo Ann Garay
28

29 **I. Call to Order:** Chairman Schaljo called the meeting to order at 10am.
30

31 **II. Conflict of Interest:** There was none.
32

33 **III. Acceptance of the Agenda:** Board Member Moore moved to accept the agenda,
34 second by Board Member Harris. Motion passes.
35

36 **IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Not applicable for this meeting.
37

38 **V. Discussion:**

39 **1. NM Safe Practices Promise:** Mr. Dahlgren, Marketing Director at Visit Las
40 Cruces presented. New Mexico Safe Promise is an initiative open to all
41 businesses and individuals in New Mexico who want to demonstrate their
42 personal commitment to following COVID safe practices. Developed by
43 New Mexico Hospitality Association to encouraged COVID safe practices,
44 help unify the state, and build consumer confidence. This would include
45 using face covering in public, six-foot distance with other people, remaining

1 home when sick, washing hands frequently, following recommending
2 hygiene practices, participating in any COVID-19 related training made
3 available at the workplace. These are based on guidance from New Mexico
4 Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control. This helps build
5 a sense of community and self-accountability. 79% of Americans who claim
6 to take a trip or getaway will research the location and how it is managing
7 the COVID situation, which is showing consumers are interested in safety
8 precautions are being taken. Better than half the travelers will be carrying
9 hand sanitizer, following social distancing guidelines, avoiding crowds, and
10 wearing a face mask. All destinations are involved in this effort in the state.
11 Advertising via digital display, video, social medial, word of mouth, news
12 releases, op-eds, interviews, other earned media. Initiative launched on
13 June 8th, upward of 20,000 website visits and almost three-quarters were
14 referred to the website through the referral links specific to Visit Las Cruces.
15 *(Video ad currently running in the state was shown.)* Best way to get
16 involved is make the promise, encourage other to make the promise, get
17 the word out on sharing on social media, website, store fronts. Really
18 discuss what the promise means with community members, staff, and
19 customers.
20

21 Another initiative just launched as of Monday, geared specifically toward
22 hospitality related businesses, hotel and lodging, restaurants, golf courses,
23 tour operators, retail, spas, and salons. Free on demand series of trainings
24 for owners and managers that aligns with COVID safe practices issues by
25 the State. NMsafecertified.org for more information. Other modules will be
26 added for other industries. Difference between NM Safe Certified Program
27 and NM Safe Promise are that the NM Safe Promise is really open to
28 anyone within any industry who wants to show their commitment to safety,
29 and the Certified Program is currently open to only those hospitality related
30 businesses and additional layer of accountability associated with the
31 certification process.
32

33 Chairman Schaljo asked about Destination Analyst, and if the information
34 was national or state specific. Mr. Dahlgren stated that information was
35 from the State, but it was a national study. Board Member Cowan asked if
36 there was data on what people are researching. Mr. Dahlgren stated he
37 can request that information from the State and try and get more of the full
38 study. Board Member Miller on the New Mexico State Promise, would it
39 help to have teeth to it, like the New Mexico Safe Certification does. Mr.
40 Dahlgren stated the site will give graphics for use to upload. Board Member
41 Harris asked about a directory of businesses with Promises and
42 Certifications. Mr. Dahlgren will check for that. Board Member Moore
43 stated the Chamber is doing to try to do some directory type information of
44 the Certifications.
45

- 46 **2. Current Business Development Initiatives During COVID-19:** Ms.
47 Guss, the City's Business Development Administrator discussed list of
48 initiatives, collaborative partners, communications ongoing with

1 businesses, CE Labs did a flash assessment technical assistance program
2 launching for microloans, and overall contact information to help
3 businesses. City received a phone call with many of the resource partners
4 including Chambers, SVDC, and Arrowhead, New Mexico Economic
5 Development Department. Different programs have been launched with
6 each. Greater Chamber launched Zoom Fridays; City is helping promote.
7 SVDC used as a referral source. Arrowhead put a two-minute video talking
8 about things to adjust to COVID and what they are doing now for recovery.
9 New Mexico Economic Development Department launched "Buy for
10 Tomorrow Today" website and the City helped promote that. Idea was to
11 leverage all resources, be sure businesses knew what resources were
12 there, and referrals to help them through the issues. The City has a new
13 software program for business registration that requires an e-mail which has
14 helped in disseminating information. The LiftFund will help 50 businesses
15 and 20 of them should receive loans which will be totalling approximately
16 \$500,000. This is hoping 20 businesses are retained that might have gone
17 out of business without it, or able to expand and grow, and 20 jobs will be
18 retained in the community.

19
20 Board Member Harris asked the average amount of the microloans in
21 partnering with LiftFund. Ms. Guss stated it depends on what the need is.
22 Ms. Martinez stated the loans range from \$2,000 up to \$100,000. Ms.
23 Garay what are the specific requirements businesses need to meet to
24 qualify of a loan. Ms. Guss stated those program details have not been
25 figured out yet. Board Member Harris asked if there was any forgiveness
26 part of the program if they used it for PPE or certain metrics. Are they low
27 interest loans with a long payback period or any more details? Ms. Guss
28 stated that LiftFund will be the technical advisor with the details. Chairman
29 Schaljo asked the timeframe doing the assistance, what is the longevity and
30 is it sustainable to continue to do this in the long run. Ms. Guss stated they
31 had started to look at program for this assistance prior to the COVID but not
32 off the ground yet. The agreement with a six-month pilot program with
33 COVID recovery as the focus. Ms. Martinez stated the reason they
34 partnered with LiftFund is that part of their mission is to do loans that may
35 not be as profitable as a traditional loan. Also gain traction for other
36 opportunities to continue this partnership and expand to other potential
37 funding sources. Board Member Harris asked specifically what kinds of
38 technical assistance, doing businesses that are self-proprietorship or not
39 focused on the financial aspects and helping them, bookkeeping etc. Ms.
40 Guss stated business coaching, business plan, but more importantly how
41 does that look financially.

42
43 Chair Schaljo asked about contacting NMSU Small Business Development
44 Center and having them assist with this. Board Member Miller stated start
45 getting down to small businesses and to get them fully functional, back up
46 and running. And asked about nonprofits, and not being able to rehire many
47 people. Board Member Miller suggested something like Workforce
48 solutions that pays for salaries as people are interning until the company

1 takes over and if there was something like that in the works. Ms. Guss
2 explained that right now there is not something like that in place. Board
3 Member Thomas stated that Workforce Connections and Workforce Talent
4 Collaborative are in the process of doing business roundtables and sector
5 strategies and see what the actual jobs and what kinds of employees they
6 need. Being sure the training programs actually fit jobs that are available in
7 these communities. Workforce Talent Collaborate has done Arrowhead,
8 and next will be International Business, health. Board Member Thomas also
9 asked about more information on the institution the City is working with as
10 she works with public banking. Ms. Guss stated it is LiftFund and they have
11 recently expanded into our region, and she will send out information to the
12 whole group. Ms. Martinez they are working with Arrowhead and a program
13 that was launched for business accelerators. A big component to the
14 business accelerator was with COVID in mind was to find new markets and
15 expand e-commerce. Working with them to partner for Las Cruces specific
16 business accelerator. Board Member Montgomery stated they have various
17 accelerators that are five to six weeks long and pivoted them to address the
18 needs of COVID for small businesses and entrepreneurs. These were in
19 place before, the difference is now they have some professionals in the
20 community along with us doing one-on-one consulting on how businesses
21 can pivot or how to address the needs of their clientele and bringing in
22 revenues on time. Focusing on having one just in Las Cruces for small
23 businesses.

24
25 Board Member Moore believes this Board needs to think about how to
26 connect those employees with the job opportunities within the community,
27 and for the long term. She suggested that might not know who is
28 unemployed truly until July 31st. Businesses and employees both need to
29 be kept in mind. Ms. Garay stated that many small businesses do not know
30 how to use the PPP and the EIDL port, and others did not feel they need it.
31 It would help with 24 weeks as after July 31st be able to hire some
32 employees back. Need to educate the businesses on how to leverage that
33 PPP to make a profit for the business but also get the employees back.
34 Board Member Miller stated opportunity missing is job creation, new jobs.

35
36 Ms. Garay, Center Director for Small Business Development Center at
37 Doña Ana Community College. They are one of 18 centers across the state
38 who help persons to start or expand their businesses. They are offering live
39 webinar trainings through the State office and with New Mexico Small
40 Business Development Center at NMSBDC.org. Offering the different
41 trainings and do not keep them recorded as there are different changes that
42 are happening on a daily basis. They are offering consultations through
43 phone and Zoom. And helping small businesses to walk through the EIDL.
44 PPP flexibility act and changed from 75/25 which 75% to be used for payroll
45 and 25% for payment on mortgage or rents, utilities, and interested on any
46 loan that was incurred before February 20th. That changed it is now 60/40,
47 so 60% can now be used for payroll. The 75% was hard to match.
48 Extended forgiveness from eight weeks to 24 weeks especially for small

1 businesses that could not open; gyms, spas, restaurants. The portion not
2 forgivable will turn into a 1% loan and extended from two years to five years
3 and also help small business owner. Right now their biggest push is to get
4 back to small business owners and help them apply for these loans to help
5 them hopefully make a profit or stay open and bring employees back.
6 Contact 527-7676 or sbdcinfo@nmsu.edu. Also stressing contingency
7 plans for small businesses. Board Member Montgomery at the Arrowhead
8 Center are entrepreneurship incubators.
9

- 10 **3. Public Confidence During COVID-19:** Board Member Cowan mentioned
11 an article in the Las Cruces Bulletin that was helpful in sharing COVID data
12 in population, infections, recovery, and then fatalities. The recovery rate
13 and non-infection rate are high (90+ percentile) and this can be used to
14 help. Don't minimize the real risk but maximize the successes. Board
15 Member Martinez stated her concern is also to acknowledge some of the
16 statistics and how they are disproportionately affecting people of color,
17 people in poverty, people with diabetes, people with greater risk of illness.
18 Also have to have a safety plan for families who are most at risk for
19 exposure. So not only businesses are reopening, but also businesses have
20 alternative plans for people most at risk. Board Member Harris mentioned
21 people not in survival mode but who will not be accessing these services
22 for other reasons; 30-70% will transition to telework, therefore less out to
23 lunch. Believes there will be a big pivot in what kinds of businesses
24 providing and kinds of services. Believes COVID is longer term at 24-36
25 months, and at least 14 months for a vaccine.
26

27 Chairman Schaljo stated this whole discussion topic is more so to make
28 people feel comfortable going out. Let them know what business and
29 industry is doing that is positive to help them feel more comfortable; entering
30 with a mask, having sanitizing stations set up, talking about best practices
31 and safe practices. Be sure to inform people. Board Member Cowan stated
32 the purpose is an economic recovery. There are entities ensuring folks are
33 educated to keep safe, the PPE, etc. We want to reiterate we are utilizing
34 those and offering alternatives. He has invested a lot on technology for
35 people to attend services.
36

37 Board Member Cowan believes that to help those with less resources, need
38 to make sure that those with some resources are able to get things moving.
39 Board Member Moore stated for future presentations, MVEDA, Daven
40 Lopez, did a consumer study. Maybe a presentation from the Health
41 Department. Do a presentation from Tracy Bryan on the training piece.
42 Board Member Montgomery being safe at church and noticed baptism was
43 not addressed. Chairman Schaljo e-mailed a one page on the hospitality
44 industry and what they are doing to make patrons comfortable. Board
45 Member Harris asked if the City or County Health Department have ability
46 to do enforcement or give rating to businesses which might help boost
47 confidence. Mr. Pallares stated the City of Las Cruces does not have a
48 Health Department; it would be the county. Chairman Schaljo stated the

1 Environment Department which is the State only is over things that deal with
2 food and beverage and public sanitation or health, so no office buildings or
3 a park etc. Board Member Moore stated the Certification with the state was
4 to align with that and might help people feel safer and they receive a badge
5 for the window. Suggested put cleaning schedule or what the business is
6 doing up in writing so customers can see it. Board Member Thomas stated
7 that in terms of wearing masks the County passed an ordinance that they
8 were going to enforce, the City did not. Maybe ask the City for a
9 certification. Ms. Martinez stated the only way to enforce something would
10 be for it to become a piece of law through regulation. There was an
11 extensive discussion behind the face covering in the form of an ordinance
12 or resolution and based on that discussion it would be a great confrontation
13 with the public and police would be the only enforcement. The certificate
14 right now is only for hospitality related businesses. We need to create our
15 own and making a broad effort including nonprofit and others have
16 customers and clients.

17
18 Board Member Cowan asked for clarification, this Board is not implementing
19 cumbersome regulatory actions from State entities. He thought the mission
20 was to help with economic recovery and to make recommendations to the
21 City Council to help businesses recover. Board Member Moore stated her
22 preference would be to get governments and agencies on a grass roots
23 campaign about being safe in our City. Should enforce ourselves, peer
24 pressure is a powerful tool. Chairman Schaljo agreed. Board is more about
25 economic recovery not putting burdens on the economy. Board Member
26 Miller agrees with the campaign, wonderful idea for marketing, but if not a
27 consistent buy-in from the community. Be careful with social compliance
28 for the safety features recommended by the Health Department. Board
29 Member Montgomery stated in moving forward defining when we want
30 something to be regulatory mandated or if just suggesting to do something
31 for the feeling of safety and to increase safety of our community. Chair
32 Schaljo stated this is not a regulatory Board, more of an informational
33 Board, brainstorming to give recommendations to the City Council and the
34 Mayor on best ways to invigorate and reopen the economy. As far as Health
35 Department, Environmental Department, sanitation and regulatory provided
36 by the State and by the Governor, those are implemented. Need to focus
37 on what to do in Las Cruces to build the economy back and make people
38 feel comfortable about going out. Ms. Martinez confirmed the purpose the
39 tis Board is to advise Mayor and City Council on the reopening of the
40 economy. Board Member Martinez believes worker protections are a big
41 part of consumer confidence, advising the City on how to support worker
42 protections, like buying small businesses PPE or providing tax incentives
43 for businesses who operate with safe practices, these would be ways to
44 protect workers and families. Chairman Schaljo stated the State Health
45 Department can be contacted for PPE gear if a business is unable to
46 provide that. Board Member Thomas suggested discussing a certification
47 via the City. Chairman Schaljo stated a certification would be totally
48 different for each business, i.e. food and beverage, nonprofit, etc. See if

1 there are certifications the City could piggyback off of. Board Member
2 Thomas was looking at a broad campaign of working with the City promise
3 and encourage businesses. Letting the public know we are working on this,
4 working together, keeping each other informed. Mr. Dahlgren noted the
5 idea behind NMHA sort of doing it for the entire state would be that it sort of
6 has that unifying effect for not just the City but the actual entire state. The
7 Promise is a bit more broad and no strict accountability associated with it.
8 Board Member Cowan stated already have an organization that businesses
9 can sign on to, we could recommend as available. Making
10 recommendations for businesses as part of a team. He loves the idea of a
11 slogan to the campaign. Catchy slogan help people to buy into this thought
12 and a positive thought would help folks looking at the successes to start
13 focusing in on. Board Member Moore stated the certification videos are in
14 place, and perhaps consider really identify Las Cruces Safe, or something
15 that is very down to us or Las Cruces Promise.

16
17 **VI. Future Discussion:**

- 18 **1. Topics to be discussed:** Chairman Schaljo stated transportation to be one
19 of next weeks discussion points. Continue public confidence, and Las
20 Cruces Promise. Board Member Harris suggested a discussion on how
21 businesses can leverage the PPE and EIDL loans and getting that
22 information to the community. Mr. Pallares stated the City has echoed the
23 message from our partners, and the Chamber has been pushing for the
24 loans and doing webinars etc. Board Member Moore stated the Chamber
25 will continue to do more information. So far they have done 12 seminars on
26 COVID.

27
28 Chairman Schaljo mentioned a report to the Council from this Board. Mr.
29 Pallares stated the report could be sequential to the City Manager and then
30 the City Manager can provide it to the Mayor and City Council. Believes
31 that since this is finite Board, constant communication on findings would be
32 beneficial. Board Member Cowan believes meeting together in a public
33 place would be a huge plus. Chairman Schaljo summarized topics:

- 34 **a.** Transportation.
35 **b.** Public confidence and Las Cruces Promise, with certificate for door.
36 **c.** Worker's support and protections.

37 Board Member Moore moves topics of transportation, continuation of safe
38 practices and consumer confidence, and worker's support and protections,
39 and Board Member Harris seconded. Motion passes.

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41 **VII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:14 p.m. Board**
42 **Member Martinez motioned to adjourn.**

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47 Christopher Schaljo
48 Chairperson

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Approved: Christopher Schalzo