



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

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

Members Present:

- Chris Schaljo, Chairman
- Debbi Moore, Vice Chair
- Michael Harris, Member
- Doug Cowan, Member
- George Miller, Member (departed 11:00am)
- Susan Greenwald, Member
- Brooke Montgomery, Member
- Ron Fitzherbert, Member (departed 10:56am)
- Jolene Martinez, Member
- Darleen Lopez, Member (arrived 10:07am)
- Sharon Thomas, Member (arrived 10:25am)

Members Absent:

- Veronica Archuleta, Member

Staff Present:

- David Maestas, Interim City Manager
- Francisco Pallares, Economic Development Deputy Director
- Cynthia Villanueva, Administrative Assistant
- Dominic Aragon, Digital Media Coordinator

- I. Call to Order:** Chair Schaljo called the meeting to order at 10:00am.
- II. Conflict of Interest:** There was none.
- III. Acceptance of the Agenda:** Motion to accept the agenda by Board Member Fitzherbert, seconded by Board Member Harris. Motion passes.
- IV. Minutes for Approval:**
 - 1. Minutes for Meeting on August 20, 2020:** Motion to accept the minutes from August 20, 2020 by Board Member Harris, seconded by Board Member Moore. Motion passes, Board Member Greenwald abstained.
- V. Discussion:**
 - 1. Childcare:** Board Member Moore stated there are two issues, childcare as it directly relates to just school, virtual school, etc, and then the other is more of the long term of the accessibility to childcare, financial burden, affecting

1 parents within the community. She received a flier from NMPED, *Looking*
2 *for Childcare?* This will be mailed to the Board for their review. It has some
3 links on it to search by county/zip, search within radius from your address,
4 school district. Also how do I pay for childcare, visit am I eligible, which is
5 for childcare assistance. She knows there is a committee that Dr. Trujillo is
6 working with her staff on in making certain there are opportunities for our
7 parents here in Las Cruces to access some type of childcare. Boys and
8 Girls Club has expanded some of their timeframes to have kids there with
9 virtual all day. She is hoping Dr. Trujillo can address some items next week.

10
11 Board Member Montgomery stated they really need to think outside the box.
12 She has a lot of ideas about kiddos. Regulating or mandating anything and
13 there may be too many barriers within the governmental systems. On the
14 flier when it stated, "Interested in becoming a temporary friends, family and
15 neighbor childcare provider?", does that mean a parent can become a
16 childcare provider, or send our kids to our friends during a day when the
17 adult is working so that people can work? She stated in various discussions
18 hybrid is not going to happen any time soon, although this is not confirmed.
19 She suggested that they assume hybrid is not going to happen and the kids
20 will be home until December. And also make recommendations of what if
21 they are home for the entire school year, because that is what parents are
22 hearing. The unknown is more stressful. She suggested assuming virtual
23 learning and make plans outside the box on who can watch the kids so that
24 parents can work. Board Member Moore stated Dr. Trujillo would be the
25 person to answer the questions thoroughly. She does know from a state
26 level in her conversations with PED and the Early Childhood as well as the
27 Governor's office. Talked about the alternatives and options regarding
28 supervision care; a parent getting licensed very quickly so they could do a
29 virtual learning center. The decision on virtual learning/hybrid will be each
30 individual district decides. She believes the hybrid would have more
31 complexities to the business community than 100% virtual. Last week the
32 City Council added funds to childcare for the provider and assistance in
33 paying for it. Board Member Montgomery stated it could correlate with the
34 businesses. There are businesses that are struggling because of the
35 remote learning, mainly for the younger children, the older kids are doing
36 okay. She asked if schools could register as virtual learning centers or
37 childcare, using the gym and doing work even with the children separated.
38 Board Member Moore stated these ideas have been brought up, but the
39 complexity is the schools are "shut down." She recommended contacting
40 Dr. Trujillo with some ideas. Also look at the facilities under youth COVID
41 practices, Boys and Girls Club is already licensed. There could be
42 complexities with regard to future funding sources, the legalities of the
43 schools. Also looked at empty buildings to potentially do the virtual learning
44 center. She believes these will be answered if the decision to go 100%
45 virtual through the end of December. She believes the parents should talk
46 to the schools. This is impacting the workforce, business owners. She
47 suggested getting information on what is really needed. People did not
48 respond to the survey like they needed to. She does not know how the

1 schools are following up with the parents to find out what their struggles are.
2 She has heard the struggles are mostly for under 6th grade. She has read
3 information on Facebook and Twitter and knows parents are frustrated but
4 need to start narrowing it down to assist the schools to make the right
5 decision in the future based on the science, of course everyone healthy,
6 and how address the mental health and all the things that go with that. Also
7 think about the teachers, and the teachers that have children.
8

9 Board Member Miller stated Councilwoman Gandara challenged this Board
10 to bring something before the Council. He recommends something to
11 forward to the Council, maybe just the brochure. Some type of funding
12 would also be beneficial. Board Member Moore stated she has childcare
13 centers that are struggling to get open again and getting staffed, and how
14 do we facilitate that. The Chamber is the administrator for Doña Ana County
15 grants, CARES Act at a little over \$3 million. The City of Las Cruces is
16 separate. She thinks that how they recommend and what they recommend
17 in addition to just the dollars, is the tools to help the childcares get open
18 immediately, hire the right people, keep the employees employed, but at the
19 same time knowing some cannot afford the daycare, they need to work, the
20 Cliff Effect. Recommendation would be the long term, how to get childcare
21 centers back functioning.
22

23 Board Member Harris agrees the information needs to be disseminated. He
24 asked if the Economic Development Department could send that brochure
25 shared earlier out. Board Member Moore stated she will send the brochure
26 out to her list from the Chamber. And her members will send it out to their
27 lists.
28

29 Mr. Pallares stated the state government made available \$150 million for
30 the municipalities that were outside of Albuquerque, because Albuquerque
31 was able to get the CARES grant funding first because of their population.
32 Of the \$150 million, \$100 million were dedicated to the local portion for the
33 CARES Act which is the portion that has this childcare component. The
34 other \$50 million goes for the business continuity grant. They are currently
35 establishing all the guidelines that are associated to be able to deploy the
36 funds, Council input, legal input. They are trying to streamline the
37 processes and as soon as they have clear guidelines they will send e-blasts.
38 There is budget just for marketing. They are currently compiling a list of all
39 the people and will send out so they have a chance to apply.
40

41 Board Member Cowan asked about the difference in safety, virtual learning
42 centers in a room, computers, supervision, how is that any more safe than
43 a regular classroom with one teacher, maybe reduced size. He believes
44 the Las Cruces public school system gets over \$350 million. They are
45 paying staff. But couldn't some of the funds be diverted to create virtual
46 centers in the facilities of the schools that are shut down. You could put
47 substantially fewer children, spread them out, keep safe in say a high school
48 gym. This would be the same they are recommending for these virtual

1 centers anyway. What is the difference between a school and a virtual
2 learning center? Board Member Moore stated that is why there are no
3 "virtual learning centers" created is there is a lot of discussion. Right now
4 looking more toward places already licensed, Boys and Girls Club, but the
5 question is not answered yet. Virtual learning centers are more in theory
6 than reality. Board Member Cowan asked if the Board could ask the Council
7 to seek those answers. The principals are actually in charge of the facilities
8 themselves. Board Member Moore thinks it could be a call to action but
9 there would be a writ involved, but believes the concept of a virtual learning
10 center would have to be approved by PED and would have to follow the
11 COVID Best Practices. Board Member Cowan stating the Boys and Girls
12 Club are implementing a virtual learning center of sorts. It might be able to
13 expand with the right resources. Board Member Moore asked to hold off
14 until next week when she can get Ashley Echeveria to speak. She would
15 like for Ashley to share her steps.

16
17 Board Member Miller stated there is a private school, Mesilla Valley
18 Christian is in a hybrid model doing an afterschool program. Board Member
19 Greenwald stated the issue of communication and communicating the
20 resources that are available. She stated she did some online searching and
21 it would be difficult to figure out what sort of resources were available, where
22 to get them, what she needed to do. She suggested the there might be
23 duplication of services. An actionable item could be some kind of community
24 list of services that incorporates nonprofits, City government, and other
25 government sources, easy to navigate. Suggested may communicating
26 with people isn't as effective as we think it is. Stated Facebook is where the
27 people are and is where to get information out really quickly. E-mail also
28 works. Board Member Moore stated getting the resources out and there
29 still is a disconnect. Still hoping for a one-stop-shop resource.

30
31 Board Member Montgomery actionable items will need to wait to hear from
32 Ashley and Dr. Trujillo in a week. Depending on what they say there is
33 some actionable items to address but they do not have all the information
34 yet. In the discussion of buildings for virtual learning centers, if the schools
35 can't use their facilities, can the City look for empty buildings and are the
36 regulations different from the state and the PED are saying compared to
37 what the City and the Mayor and City Council can do. Asked if City can
38 open up buildings but each bring their own PPE, do it like daycare. Her four
39 kids are all doing different things and it is a huge load on her. She stated
40 the Mesilla Valley Christian is doing great, built a wall in their gym. Sylvan
41 learning center is licensed as education and could not do a virtual learning
42 center right away. Education business license could not apparently be a
43 virtual learning center and some had to reregister to be childcare. How to
44 remove barriers for licensing for privatized education or tutoring centers.
45 She believes the Mesilla Valley Christian already had after school childcare
46 license including their education license. Board Member Moore stated it
47 goes back to the licensing, how safe practices fits in all this model. The \$50
48 million mentioned by Mr. Pallares is for businesses. It was her

1 understanding that City Council at a special meeting on August 27th
2 distributed some money to childcare users and childcare businesses
3 somehow. She is asking where is that distribution as it impacts childcare.
4 There are barriers and concern about liability. She asked to put this back
5 on the agenda and she will confirm with Dr. Trujillo, try to get Ashley, and
6 try and get someone from NMPED or Early Childhood to be on the call
7 sometime in the future.

8
9 Board Member Cowan stated for a private school to operate in New Mexico
10 they are not under the guidelines of the Department of Education, therefore
11 anybody can open up a private school and operate accordingly, they just
12 have to operate under the guidelines of the Department of Health and follow
13 some other guidelines with attendance laws and immunizations and things
14 like that. Important to understand this. He is not sure if there is anything
15 prohibiting something like this from using the Las Cruces Public Schools
16 curriculum if it is provided.

17
18 Board Member Moore motioned to re-include childcare to next week's
19 agenda, including getting Dr. Trujillo, Ashley, and someone from NMPED,
20 seconded by Board Member Montgomery. Motion passes.

21
22 **2. Economic Development PRC - Business Impact Survey:** Mr. Pallares
23 this survey was done June 24, 2020 and closed July 22, 2020. A slide was
24 shared showing the unemployment of only the City of Las Cruces rate
25 through January 2019 through June 2020. Also a chart of payroll
26 employment for all of Doña Ana County and it substantially decreased.
27 SNAP cases in Doña Ana County have increased and the peak was in June.
28 Also shown were business registrations and renewals. There were 95
29 responses to the survey. Next slide showed weekly revenues since the
30 pandemic and most responded with a decrease, 14% remained constant,
31 and some had increased. Next question related to how the payroll and/or
32 workforce was handled. Next question asked about percentage of
33 workforce working remotely, half stated all of their staff is working on site,
34 18% stated all of the staff was working remotely. Next question, if partially
35 open or temporarily closed, what resources were needed to relaunch
36 phased restart, most mentioned needing assistance with payroll capital and
37 grants, online access. Next question dealt with acquiring a loan from U.S.
38 Small Business Administration, most went to Payroll Protection Program.
39 Next question was about how long the business can remain viable, third
40 would be more than a year, but then 1 of 10 mentioned they would not be
41 viable for a month. Next was the top three concerns for the next 12 months,
42 and that was a second wave of COVID-19 business closures, low consumer
43 confidence/spending, next is global recession, and then employee stress.
44 Next they were asked when they believe the revenues will recover to pre-
45 COVID levels, half mentioned more than 12 months, 5% stated they had
46 increased. An open ended question of what was most valued from the City
47 of Las Cruces, concern about maintaining health was the top, then concise
48 rules, financial relief, easing restrictions, loans and grants assistance,

1 buying local, social media, concerns with minimum wage, business
2 friendliness/reducing burden on businesses.

3
4 Board Member Cowan asked if there were percentages for the last slide
5 concerning the open ended question. Mr. Pallares stated he could get it but
6 it was a write in type of answer and he condensed it. Board Member Harris
7 stated maybe a second round of surveys for when somebody says reduce
8 the burden on business, that is not something to recommend to the Council,
9 would need something more concrete as in "In what way is your business
10 burdened and what can we recommend that the City actually do."
11 Chairman Schaljo stated they need to know the burden on the businesses,
12 which the survey did give some of that. He asked if Board Member Moore
13 had heard anything in her networks to help with that. The Department of
14 Health and the Environment Department now are doing virtual checks with
15 restaurants. He asked if there is something else that the Board can put forth
16 to Council, even County to help Las Cruces and Doña Ana County
17 businesses. Board Member Moore her assumption of the burden would be
18 regulations, regulatory restraints and it would depend on the industry. The
19 Board could list fees that impact businesses, and some other cities and/or
20 counties have put some of these fees on hold for a time period for small
21 business. Maybe have a presentation from the City regarding what fees
22 directly impact businesses as a whole and see how the Board can address
23 that. Chairman Schaljo stated maybe just information what licensures are
24 out there and fees, but maybe not a full presentation. Board Member Harris
25 added a request for also, a fee that impacts a certain sector, how many
26 businesses are in that sector and how many people might be impacted. Mr.
27 Pallares stated on the schedule of fees he believes is relatively easy to get,
28 on the industries that might be a bit more difficult and he will check on it.
29 Chair Schaljo stated get that e-mailed to the Board and they can digest it
30 personally and then bring it to the Board with ideas on fee structures and
31 what they might be able to do as far as that goes.

32
33 **VI. Future Discussion:**

- 34
35 **1. Workforce Connections Scholarship:**
36 **2. Topics to be Discussed:**

37
38 Board Member Lopez stated that they should have a lot more insight, she
39 and Mr. Pallares met, they have a concept developing, questions have been
40 answered. For next week they will be ready to give an update to everyone
41 and be able to shine some light on where we are and the feasibility.

42
43 Chairman Schaljo stated that in the meantime if there are any drafts that
44 stated the target audience, what looking at, this is what we want to achieve,
45 should get that out to the Board, the sooner the better to be digested. He
46 believes the issue is they are not digesting things in the off time outside of
47 the Board meeting.

1 Chairman Schaljo stated there are three discussion items for next week,
2 first is re-discuss and continue childcare with Boys and Girls Club and Dr.
3 Karen Trujillo with LCPS; look at fee schedule for licensure fees and
4 business fees with the City of Las Cruces and go over those see if there is
5 anything to suggest to City Council to help business in this time; and also
6 going to have an update on the Workforce Connections Scholarship.
7

8 Board Member Cowan asked if Mr. Pallares could get the percentage on
9 those last points on the last slide on the survey. Mr. Pallares reminded the
10 Board Members to take the Las Cruces Safe Promise. Board Member
11 Montgomery stated it was hard to know what the promises were when she
12 looked on the website, until they clicked on the training. She thought it might
13 be easier to see what it is first before they register a business.
14

15 **VII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:42 a.m. Board**
16 **Member Harris motioned to adjourn; Board Member Moore seconded.**
17

18
19
20
21 Christopher Schaljo

22 Chairperson
23

24
25
26 Approved: *Christopher Schaljo*