



SANDOVAL COUNTY LODGERS TAX ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Sandoval County Lodgers Tax Advisory Board will held its quarterly meeting on March 2, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was a rescheduled meeting due to technical difficulties at the February 9th meeting. In compliance with COVID-19 public meeting practices, the meeting was hosted virtually and accessible by webinar, which included a phone link for anyone interested in attending. The local call meeting access phone number provided was 1-346-248-7799. The call meeting access number - 880 8758 7575, passcode 986361. The meeting agenda, noted below was also made available in advance of the meeting on the agenda section of the Sandoval County website:

<https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/departments/economicdevelopment/lodgers-tax-advisory-board/>

Individuals with a disability in need of special assistance to participate in the meeting by contacting the County Tourism Office at (505) 867-7599 at least one week prior the meeting for the county to make the required accommodations.

Submission of public comments and access to this and past meeting agendas and minutes are available on the County's website under Economic Development Department. For questions or assistance, please contact Dora Dominguez, Tourism Director, at (505) 404-5825 or email ddominguez@sandovalcountynm.gov.

MINUTES

Attendees: K. Berry, D. Dominguez, M. Hotton, S. Montoya, L. O'Hanlon

- I. Introductions
- II. Lodgers' Tax Financial Report
 - a. FY22 Current Budget & Prior year carryover
 - i. FY22 Budget - \$7,500; As of March 2, 2022 revenues were at \$8,392.47. FY21 Carryover amount is \$12,829.79. As allowed up to 50% can be allocated to staff support. Year-to-date staff support (part-time salaries) \$2,762.00
 - b. M. Hotton provided a recap of past year revenue and expenditures plus an update on Short-term rental compliance. Note: entire lodger's tax revenue for this fiscal year is STR only. Revenue to date \$8,392.47. Revenue for second quarter \$2,716.36. Exceeded projected annual revenue by \$892.47 with two quarters remaining in the fiscal year.
- III. Open Board Seats – Update
 - a. Discussion: Staff provide information on where to locate Lodgers' Tax Best Practices Handbook online at <https://newmexicohospitality.org/>. The Guide includes information on board seats and industry sectors to be represented on a five-member advisory board (Lodgers' Tax Act 3-83-13 through 3-38-24 NMSA 1978). Per State Statute the lodgers' board must consists of: two members who are owners or operators of lodging establishment and subject to the Occupancy (Lodger' Tax) Tax, two members who are owners or operators of industries that primarily provide services or products to visitors/tourists; and, one member who is a resident and

represents of the general public. For the Sandoval County Lodger's Tax Board - Larry O'Hanlon represents the Lodging Industry; Mary Street, represents the tourist/visitor-related industry; Richard Spence, represents general public and Ruth Bouldes, represents the general public. Remaining open seat is one owner operator subject to lodgers' tax and one owner or operator of tourism-related industry.

- i. Discussion – Larry O'Hanlon might have an STR owner. He has a neighbor that runs an STR. He will visit to see if they are interested. Other suggestion was also brought up were owners of 505 Distillery in Placitas. 505 Distillery is also listed on NM True website as one of only destination experience in Sandoval County.

IV. Short Term Rental (STR) Update

Averaging 80 identified rental units per month with an average of 15 STRs in code and tax compliance. Host Compliance remains the hub for registration, reporting and remittance. New monitoring and will be in house with payments remittance link to be provided to owner/operators and posted on the Sandoval County Home page when the page goes live.

V. New Mexico - TRENDS Conference/ NM Hospitality Association Updates – K. Berry

- a. NM Hospitality Association hosted the TRENDS Conference virtually this year on January 25th. The primary focus of the conference was Post-COVID rebuilding of the tourism industry. Topics addressed how to grow business meeting and travel sectors in a post-COVID timeframe. There was also a presentation on the Hospitality and Tourism Training Reimbursement program. In addition there was a presentation from NM True on the upcoming CoOp Marketing grant cycle. County Tourism Alliance continues to participate with CoOp Marketing grant funding program to promote visitor experiences throughout Sandoval County.

VI. Valles Caldera National Preserve – Interim Infrastructure Improvements Project Update

- a. Changes Proposed for Valles Caldera National Preserve Partners virtual meeting on January 27, 2022.
 - i. Background: The Valles Caldera is the newest National Preserve in the nation and we are pleased to have such an asset in Sandoval County. Dora Dominguez participated on the January 27th update meeting as well as submitted the County's survey response solicited by National Park Service.
 - ii. The Five-Year Strategic Plan – included 2011 – 2016 highlights of becoming a designated National Preserve. Valles Caldera began by 2016 increased was at 88,900 acres. Infrastructure improvements include the park ranger station, Los Amigos Bookstore and facilities operation center (added in 2021). The Preserve received designation as an International Dark Sky Park in 2021 and as a Significant Thermal Feature (1 of 17 in Nation Park System) in 2021.

VII. VisitWidget – Visit Widget is an advanced, cross-device application that creates an engaging and intuitive way for visitors to research, plan, and tourist experience.

- a. As a mobile and Web App for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO's) & Visitor Bureaus VisitWidget is a feature the County's Tourism Alliance is looking to add as a visitor experience tool. K. Berry presented the software, being considered by the Sandoval County Tourism Alliance and presented for consideration by the Lodgers Advisory Board to also support. The platform is a web-based "widget" that also have an app. An example provided was on how Gallup, NM is using VisitWidget. Access is available either online website or through App (phone) download. This program features an interactive map that plots out locations in different subject types that can be pre-determined by the location and includes: lodging, breweries & wineries, trails, restaurants, and a database of these locations would help populate an interactive database and map. The itineraries created can be custom-created, or even pre-determined and

then sent via texted or email to either phone or computer device. The trail maps created are GPS accessible and would provide trail navigation even if a phone doesn't have cellular service. This service also provides location based messaging and push messaging as well.

- i. Discussion: L. O'Hanlon referenced the similarities of VisitWidget with All Trails website resources for trails and hiking that also provides GPS trail navigation.
- ii. No action taken only instruction to consider and research the idea for future meeting discussion and future action.

VIII. 50th Anniversary of Balloon Fiesta and Route 66 Anniversary

- a. New Mexico Tourism Department announcement of the milestone anniversary for both Balloon Fiesta and Rt 66. The event is notable to lodging establishments at a regional level. The event impacts Lodger's and encourages them to make sure they are priced and ready for the surge of incoming tourism that accompany these events. Balloon Fiesta tickets go on sale on April 1, 2022. Route 66 Celebration and Events are throughout the year (2022) and posted at: [Route 66 Events \(newmexico.org\)](https://www.newmexico.org/route-66-events)
- b. Also noted is Gathering of Nations return at the end of April 28-30, 2022.

IX. Social Media/Online Lodgers Marketing Strategy Discussion

- a. Sandoval County Tourism is planning to highlight two lodging establishments each month on SeeSandoval.org and distribute those profiles on the County's social media platforms.
- b. Highlighting STR's is really providing a services to travelers looking for lodging establishments that are alternatives to staying in Albuquerque or Santa Fe or for those not looking to stay in traditional lodging i.e. hotels/motels.
 - i. The strategy was presented as a low-cost way to highlight the lodging opportunities in Sandoval County. Currently, with only one traditional lodging establishment located within the unincorporated areas of Sandoval County (La Cueva Lodge), STR's also provide an opportunity to highlight things to do and see throughout the county.
 1. Look for Monthly Spotlight on social media and at SeeSandoval website starting soon with Larry O'Hanlon as the first owner that volunteered to spotlight his STR locate in Placitas, NM.

X. New Mexico Adventure Guide Update

- a. Staff highlighted the SeeSandoval promotion advertising published in the 2022 Adventure Guide (see page 85 and page 90) Page 90 is a feature listing of Wild Hearts Gallery.

XI. Next Meeting Date

- a. May 11th 2022

XII. Meeting Adjourned at: 11:45 a.m.