The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the Las Cruces Economic Recovery Ad Hoc Board on June 8, 2020 at 9:00am. The meeting was held via Zoom.

Members Present:
Chris Schaljo, Chairman
Debbi Moore, Vice Chair
Michael Harris, Member
Doug Cowan, Member
Jolene Martinez, Member
Sharon Thomas, Member

Members Absent:
Veronica Archuleta, Member

Others Present:
Griselda Martinez, Economic Development Director
Francisco Pallares, Economic Development Deputy Director

I. Call to Order: Mr. Pallares called the meeting to order, which was created via City Council Resolution 20-161.

II. Conflict of Interest: There was none.

III. Acceptance of the Agenda: Moved to after section of the Chair.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes: Not applicable at this meeting.

V. Discussion: Introduction of Board Members. Mr. Cowan represents nonprofit category. Pastor Cornerstone Baptist Church and chief administrator for Cornerstone Academy in Las Cruces. Mr. Harris represents District 6 small business owner, technology consulting company. Ms. Martinez licensed clinical social worker, clinical director for Families and Youth Incorporated and adjunct facility at New Mexico State University in the area of community organizations and representing Councilor Bencomo. Ms. Thomas former Councilor and Mayor Pro-Tem, also former small business owner, Red Mountain Café, currently work with South Central Regional Transit District and Workforce Solutions Board. Mr. Schaljo small business owner, Salud! de Mesilla restaurant, also asked by Councilor Bencomo. Ms. Moore President/CEO Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, member of statewide workforce board, on this committee as chair of Las Cruces opens recovery task force with 16 organizations within the City and county. Ms. Martinez, Economic Development Director. Mr. Pallares, Deputy Director of Economic Development.
1. **Selection of the Chair for LCERB:** Mr. Pallares asked to have the committee have a Chair and Vice-Chair. Mr. Schaljo self-nominated to Chair. Debbi Moore self-nominated for Vice-Chair.

**Introduction and purpose of the board:** Mr. Pallares shared the resolution that created this Board. The purpose is to make specific recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on the strategies for gradually reopening the Las Cruces economic affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in a smart, safe, and effective manner that fits the needs of Las Cruces in alignment with the direction of the New Mexico Economic Recovery Council. This committee shall be dissolved upon the full reopening of the economy of Las Cruces.

2. **Frequency of the meetings:** Chairman Schaljo asked for recommendations on frequency. Mr. Pallares stated this Board was created due to COVID-19 pandemic and once the fully economy in Las Cruces reopened the board will be dissolved. Ms. Martinez stated there is no specific time constraint. City Council wants input from this Board as soon as possible to make decisions based on that input. Board Member Thomas asked if the Board is looking at how to open in face of the virus or also looking at economic development new normal and broader than just the health issues. Mr. Pallares stated the purpose as it was established for the gradual reopening of the Las Cruces economy as affected by the virus, smart, safe, and effective manner that fits Las Cruces. Might be elements associated only to our City that perhaps the City or State is not looking at in making recommendations. Board Member Thomas asking not just health/sanitation but with vibrant economy better jobs, better trained workers. Ms. Martinez states it is up to being fully reopened, longer term items, better jobs and trained workers, would be more appropriate to be discussed in a different committee.

Board Member Cowan stated this situation is very fluid, frequency of meetings needs to be at least weekly to get the economy moving. Seems on a daily basis things change. Chair Schaljo agreed. Board Member Moore says the longest would be every other week, but weekly, it is fluid since we are dealing with this since March.

Board Member Moore motioned to meet weekly, Board Member Cowan seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Pallares asked if there was a specific date and time of the week. Chairman Schaljo asked what worked best for the Board Members. Board Member Martinez just asked that it be same time, same day she can work it in, but did mention that if it is on Monday they might not have time to recommend to City Council. Board Member Harris stated Monday morning is not the best for him as he has another standing meeting at the exact same time, but Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday he is open. Board Member Moore she has a standing meeting at the exact time, she recommends at 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday. Mr. Cowan stated Tuesday morning would excellent time due to standing meetings on Monday. Board Member Thomas stated Tuesday is the County meetings and she needs to attend those periodically. She also suggested waiting for further Board Members to be appointed. Chairman Schaljo asked if Thursday 9:00 a.m. Board Member Moore stated she can do it after 10:00 on Thursday but to 9:00 a.m. Board Member Cowan can do Thursday after 10:00. Mr. Harris is open all day Thursday. Chairman Schaljo recommended Thursday at 10:00 a.m. That works for everyone. Chairman asked if meeting this coming Thursday or June 18th. Board Member Moore asked when the other Board Members are to be appointed. Mr. Pallares stated on Monday 15th. Board Member Moore suggested waiting until other Board Members are present, so start on June 18th. Chairman Schaljo agreed. Mr. Cowan agrees. Ms. Thomas agrees and suggested reading the state document.

3. **Introduction and purpose of the board:** See above.

4. **Current initiatives for dealing with COVID-19:** Mr. Pallares suggested asking what changes and/or adjustments in each of the industries.

   Board Member Cowan stated they had to minimize seating in the auditorium due to distancing requirements, accommodate additional exits so people do not congregate in the process. Increased sanitation measures. Create additional opportunities for childcare in the facility, separating by age groups to be smaller groups. School has gone to virtual learning techniques, remote learning.

   Board Member Thomas stated the county transit system has reduced routes a bit, put shield behind the driver, sanitizer on the buses, people encouraged to sit with someone they are with but otherwise leave spaces in between. Ridership down some. Workforce, the staff has bene extremely busy with the unemployment. Workforce talent group works with local businesses for better understanding of what jobs are available in our area from the businesses in our area. Business roundtable aerospace, military. Good understanding of what the jobs are there, and what kind of training needed. Discussion is thinking about new normal after this to find ways to find better jobs for people that already exist in this area and develop better workforce training programs. And some jobs are not going to come back.

   Board Member Martinez stated FYI provides many different services in many different sectors, primary sector remains serving families every day is the free meals program. Serve over 1,000 families in Las Cruces every day through the whole crisis. Staff with PPE, hand washing, hand sanitizing in between each contact. Multiple sites across the City. Congregate care setting that house children who are runaway, homeless, or some other crisis that has them removed from the home, 40 children come in out of the facility. When they come in we are quarantining in a portion of the building, allowing them two days before having them tested for COVID-19 and waiting on the
results before integrating with the remainder of children in the facility. If they are in a common space do have them wear face coverings which is difficult to ask children age 12-18 to wear face coverings, pretty annoying to them. Prevent them from going and having social outings which is problematic with teenagers. Challenges to keep teenagers entertained and occupied. Lots of health services have gone telemedicine, 85% by now. Do send therapists out to homes where families are in high risk situations. Challenge in not having a direction about fall time for school. Lot of their planning is centered around what families and children are doing. The university is going all virtual for the fall, no drop in enrollment or losing teachers.

Board Member Harris industry of general technology consulting. Immediate effect has been relatively minimal. Seeing some challenges in employees take care of children with uncertainty around what is school going to look like. Challenges with hiring and placing interns. Core is really software development and telecom stuff. Safety, everyone who does not need to be at the office is working from home. Service calls, consulting with people beforehand, what kind of safety precautions do they want the techs to take on site. Minimizing having to go out do things in person. Zoom meetings, screen sharing, and remote diagnostics.

Chairman Schaljo represents Salud! which is a decently sized restaurant, blessed with two patios. Food and beverage industry it has been very difficult the last few months. Most business owners have had to shift doing hand handling business, from dine-in guests, wining/dining with experience, to greeting them at the curb, getting to-go service, delivery service. Now at 50% capacity are still learning what is working and what is not working. And working with New Mexico Restaurant Association, work with Department of Health, the Environment Department. Coming with safe practices, best practices. On the front lines of sanitation and health and making sure people are staying distant, staying clean in the restaurant, even on the patios. Working on different business strategy. Bring to the Board how to move and transition into a different kind of business model for small business. Using delivery services, on-line services, making menu more user friendly to guests and people traveling. Focus on team members and them staying healthy, and mental health, physical health within the restaurant, outside of the restaurant, times are difficult.

Board Member Moore stated she is on the Las Cruces Public Schools Reentry Task Force and one of the issues they are grappling with that she brought to their attention is the challenge with the schedule and how it will impact this community. They are meeting weekly also. Guidelines from the State have not been received. Point of how to look at the new norm and what does that look like, and for the children. Concerned about the out of school care, how to do that, how it impacts the workforce.

Board Member Moore continued with five ways to prepare to reopen. Build a COVID plan talks about building to make sure measures are in place for
safe opening but also how to adapt to that. Also a contingency plan for another outbreak or continuation of this outbreak. Next is respect social distancing; create a cleaning schedule, market COVID plan, respect the process. Many businesses have gone way above and beyond the minimum requirements that the State has had. Posted the cleaning schedule, consumer/client what is required of them within the establishment, social distancing. So the rules of the road as well as State requirements. Marketing in the establishments and on social media. Be every respectful of the process, this is a key component. Be kind to each other. Fear of business owner is to make sure they are protecting themselves. Fear of how to protect their work family. Third fear is of the consumer. Board Member Moore noticed the consumer is a bit hesitant about coming back. Phase 2 is July 1 and all connected with numbers, effective rate, how working within the County and southwest region. Recovery is simultaneous make sure all safety precautions are met, health and well being of the community is first. She believes this committee should talk about how it is impacting our nonprofits, deliverables there and how to move forward with the five steps, but also within the guidelines of the industry standards, CSP put out by the Governor and with her plans. We are doing well with our numbers statewide.

VI. Future Discussion:
1. Topics to be discussed: Board Member Martinez stated in their sector they are struggling, no training or technical assistance center, kind of fend for themselves in the nonprofits. More represent vulnerable families than business.

Board Member Moore stated one thing they are doing is part of the task for is addressing specifically the nonprofits, behavioral and mental health issues. Trying to be very broad based. How to start breaking down industry sectors and looking for that, and resources. There is a "Certificate" program from the State that does that, not a rating but go through some training via videos, primarily pro-hospitality, but see it can be adjusted for general business including nonprofits.

Chairman Schaljo stated that that is important at Salud! They have a five page document going on cleaning practices and COVID.

Board Member Harris noticed when the state started shutting down, his office closed March 13/14th. General office environments did not. Other partners in other essential industries were reluctant to even send nonessential staff home. A lot of focus on restaurants, and hospitality, and other places the general public goes in. This other sector of people just go and work in an office and do mortgages or write software, etc. does not seem to have much guidance on dealing.

Board Member Cowan stated one thing to establish people gaining confidence, 50% is allow, but 50% not showing up yet due to confidence
issue with the public. Maintain precautions, do not minimize threat, important to build campaign for public, employees, staff, teams, confidence that moving forward in safe measures. Part of the strategy should be help build public's confidence in getting back into a "new normal." Build policies and ideas build customers, consumers, and all staffs confidence to help stay safe and provide services.

Ms. Martinez offered the different program managers for the discussion items that have been brought as potential discussion items, the Business Program Development Manager, Mandy Guss, speak to what they have done. Appreciate the idea of coordinating more efforts to serve the broader small business community. About safe practices related to hospitality, that program is launching today. Invite Rochelle Miller-Hernandez, Director of Visit Las Cruces who can speak to that.

Board Member Harris asked if suggestions for discussion items can go via e-mail between Board Members or how that would be handled. Ms. Martinez stated they can exchange information via e-mail as long as no action is taken. But she will verify that with the City Clerk

Board Member Thomas mentioned Tracy Bryan and Darlene at Workforce Connection, they are putting together a video on how to look for a job now. She will send the link to everybody.

Ms. Martinez stated that in addition to the Workforce connection also talk about the pilot virtual job fair that is being planned with Workforce Solutions. The vulnerable population that Board Member Martinez mentioned would potentially be some of those customers that we want to reach to. And also a topic of discussion for the Board.

Board Member Moore mentioned transit and safe to ride buses to be included in discussions in looking for jobs. Maybe the buses need a marketing campaign to show what they are doing, advertise their schedule.

Board Member Thomas stated for the County bus service deep cleaning is done every night, everything to keep clean, bus drivers with masks, hand sanitizer available on the buses. She will find out about the City Transit and what they are doing.

Board Member Martinez suggested people identified as customers or consumers of services in the community. All Board Members are business sector leaders. Might be interesting to add a family, or individual, or couple that might make suggestions. Also sectors that are growing due to this crisis such as food delivery services. Losing economic input from people not going to hotels, lodging taxes. How do we make recommendations on how our City, local delivery purchases or systems are taxed in a way that can compensate for the losses that the City is going to have and other sectors and industries?
Board Member Cowan part of the ability to build confidence, seeing that businesses are taking things seriously, otherwise possibly deter consumers/clients. Important to build on successes and mitigate fears. Believes there is fear and that needs to be mitigated and show successes.

Chairman Schaljo agrees with the mental health and the struggle to alleviate fears.

Board Member Martinez we need to inform and help shape the narrative that is given to the public.

Mr. Pallares stated that sharing information amongst the Board Members would qualify as rolling quorum so that would be in violation of the Open Meetings Act. Do the discussion in the meetings only. Can distribute information to the group, just not discussion.

Chairman Schaljo suggested including with buses, Uber and Lyft and their practices. Possible training for health and sanitation, help from the City for not only small business but also others within the community to help inform of safe practices, on-line forum/training type initiative.

Ms. Martinez stated for community wide educational opportunities to invite the Community Outreach person to help with that as well.

Chairman Schaljo mentioned business development initiatives as an added discussion topic. Building confidence, mitigating fears. Business development initiatives. Board Member Cowan suggested talking about positive rather than fears. Ms. Martinez suggested Jamey Rickman for part of the that discussion. Board Member Harris suggested transit discussion. Board Member Thomas would ask David Armijo and Michael Bartholomew, Directors of County and City transit.

Mr. Pallares stated for the next discussion items:
1. Business development initiatives currently existing to address COVID by Ms. Mandy Guss. Promotion and awareness campaigns rather than what is already being done.
2. Community Outreach training for sanitation including the New Mexico State program by Jamey Rickman.
3. Transportation guidelines for buses and workers.

Board Member Cowan has been working with National Center for Life and Liberty and have provided to him quite a bit of information concerning safe practices and how to help encourage people. He will share some of this at the next meeting or e-mail to everyone beforehand.

Board Member Moore stated MVEDA just finished their second consumer survey, might consider bringing them in to talk about the surveys that
included who would be shopping and coming back.

Ms. Martinez mentioned the duration of the meeting had not been discussed. Chairman Schaljo stated an hour and a half would be fine as planning for the immediate future.

Next meeting - Thursday June 18th, at 10:00 a.m. Board Members please look over any information of links that have been shared.

VII. Adjournment: Board Member Martinez motioned for adjournment, second by Board Member Thomas. The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:40 a.m.

Christopher Schaljo
Chairperson

Approved: Christopher Schaljo