The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the Las Cruces Economic Recovery Ad Hoc Board on July 9, 2020 at 10:00 am. The meeting was held via Zoom.

Members Present:
Chris Schaljo, Chairman
Debbi Moore, Vice Chair
Michael Harris, Member
Doug Cowan, Member
Sharon Thomas, Member
Veronica Archuleta, Member
George Miller, Member
Brooke Montgomery, Member
Ron Fitzherbert, Member

Members Absent:
Jolene Martinez, Member

Staff Present:
Griselda Martinez, Economic Development Director
Francisco Pallares, Economic Development Deputy Director
David Maestas, Interim City Manager

Others Present:
Darlene Lopez, Workforce Solutions
Kramer Winingham, Arrowhead Center

I. Call to Order: Chair Schaljo called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

II. Conflict of Interest: There was none.

III. Acceptance of the Agenda: Motion to accept the agenda by Board Member Moore, seconded by Board Member Harris. Motion passes.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

1. Minutes for Meeting on June 25, 2020: Motion to accept the minutes from June 25, 2020 by Board Member Fitzherbert, seconded by Board Member Harris. Motion passes.

2. Minutes for Meeting on July 2, 2020: Motion to accept the minutes from July 2, 2020 by Board Member Harris, seconded by Board Member Fitzherbert. Motion passes. Board Member Thomas recused. Board Member Archuleta recused.
V. Action Items:

1. Las Cruces Safe Promise: Board Member Harris stated he believed there was more information coming from staff, like a final draft or something before the vote. Mr. Pallares stated that updates and minor changes have been made, distribution will focus on insert in Las Cruces Utilities bills. Chairman Schaljo stated this is a three-month timeline for implementing the Las Cruces Safe Promise.

Motion to approve Las Cruces Safe Promise timetable by Board Member Moore, seconded by Board Member Harris.

Board Member Thomas asked to see the final draft with the corrections and changes. Ms. Martinez stated the timeline was revised and the draft logos were sent via e-mail last night as well. Mr. Pallares shared his screen to show the updates. He explained some of the changes are the approval from City Manager, inclusion of the Southern NM Community Foundation for outreach, the incorporation of social media talking points to be sure this a grassroots campaign and having some of the partners share this promise once it is released. It has been adjusted to accompany the three-month process as it was mentioned on the last meeting as well. Ms. Martinez mentioned that another change was that is cross referenced effort with NM Certified Program which is also included in the timeline. Mr. Pallares shared the logos, one black and white, the other identical layout but with the sun yellow and outline blue with white wording. And the third one was similar to the second one just slight variation on the color. Chairman Schaljo shared a preference for the colored logo.

Board Member Cowan stated he is not sure how effectual this campaign is at this point. This was supposed to be a grassroots program to encourage volunteer type mechanism with consumer and business working together, going towards a safe promise together, but now there is a mandate with threats of fines et al. Not sure how effectual this will be. Chairman Schaljo agreed that is a valid concern. Ms. Martinez stated that she believes this is even more needed now than before as it helps continue to educate the public and businesses on what is being required. Board Member Harris believes that this is going to be necessary in the coming months for everyone to be on board with this. Board Member Cowan emphasized this Board is to help stimulate or recover the economy not to do any kind of enforcement of statutes and ordinances that the City implements. He states the businesses are being forced into policing and getting threatened with fines which is putting employees in a very dangerous spot having to confront people that may not be kind in their response. He is concerned we are trying to implement something, and trying to do a voluntary thing, people get enthused about it, and now there is a twisting of the arm. He has spoken with people and they are not very happy, and it is going to be a challenge
to get them jump on board on a voluntary measure. Board Member Moore disagrees with Mr. Cowan in the fact that she believes this Safe Promise is an effort to unite the community in grassroots effort. She has heard concerns over the mandate. She believes the Safe Promise Campaign and the mandates are intertwined specifically. She believes that we all want united community, including all aspects of the individual community, the citizens at large, as well as the business community, the faith based community, the nonprofit community, all looking to communicate that we want to be safe. She believes this is fluid but the commitment to be a safe community as on the forefront of everybody; businesses want to be safe, and community wants to be safe. Believes this is a great program. Board Member Montgomery agrees with Board Member Moore said although mandates are going to happen they will be fluid, this is something we are showing our customers and our clients that we are keeping our businesses clean and promoting the safety of our community. Be sure to present this not as a mandate but more of "You’re welcome to come into our businesses, we assure your safety. Encouraging our businesses to be open in safe manner." Board Member Thomas says they are not asking the Council as any more than a resolution, not an ordinance, it is not required. Ms. Martinez emphasized the process, once this Board votes on this action item it will go from the Chair to City Manager. City Manager will direct staff to move into implementation and City Manager will inform City Council. No actual City Council action required which would allow us to streamline the process. Board Member Harris stated if anything they should speed up deployment of this.

Vote to take Las Cruces Safe Promise with adjustments for City Council implementation; motion passed.

VI. Discussion:

1. NM Workforce Connections Resources for Workers During COVID-19: Ms. Lopez from Workforce Solutions, the One-Stop Operators. She oversees various elements of what is going on in each of the Workforce Centers across the southwest region. In Doña Ana County in June there were 13,327 unemployment claims with 100-300 calls coming to each center, so thousands of calls regionally. Offices are in T or C, Socorro, Sunland Park, Las Cruces, Deming, Silver City, satellite office for youth in Lordsburg. Issues are novel, tricky, scary questions to answer because there is so much new information, and unemployment claims are no longer processed by Workforce Centers to be able avoid those situations. And this was put into place approximately 20 years ago. Since COVID 90% of the staff has been moved to the UI side, so left with skeleton crew in offices for other services. A virtual job fair with the City of Las Cruces and a local business, and one yesterday in Deming. This is a key focus for Workforce to start linking with economic development across the region and co-branding, with a new system/hybrid system built to support business to leverage different types of resources in moving forward in recovery. They
believe the soonest things will change with their offices will be August 1st, depending on what is going on.

They recently had several meetings of the film industry; some from NMSU, Film Las Cruces Board, and partners that offer training programs, on the job training. The board did agree to invest resources in this industry. Building some hybrid types of certifications and programs and able to support that industry, but also ensure have long term employability for the individual. They have workshops for resume writing, interview skills, navigating the virtual job search world. Currently working on some workshops and toolkits for employers to find different types of postings, latest updates on COVID, CDC, WHO, see videos and printouts, booklets, phasing reopen, PUA, and different types of state assistance.

Last is the awareness campaign. First in the state, first at of many states to ever launch an actual professional driven awareness campaign. Her supervisor has 14 projects across the U.S. Not just unemployment, but help with employment services, services for employers, offer up to 75% while someone is in the training phase being reimbursable to the employer. Tuition assistance to go back to school, or start college, or technical certificate. Supportive services for childcare, transportation. They have YouTube ads, billboards, newspapers, mailouts send directly to homes, various forms of social media and LinkedIn.

Board Member Harris one question is resources for independent contractors who people who did not have a traditional job, W-2 style job before the pandemic and many were having problems with getting unemployment knowing that they qualified or evening knowing that there were programs out there to help them. Have they seen and uptick in claims from independent contractors? What are they doing to support them? Ms. Lopez stated there is CARE Act money for those individuals that traditionally would not qualify. The Pandemic Unemployment Assurance Program would pop up and they can apply for that, but that is after no qualifying for traditional unemployment. Using social media and YouTube to educate.

Board Member Miller how to help the unemployed, are there new jobs and new industries. How to use this crisis time to really reinvent our economic growth model? Ms. Lopez stated she was on the State Board meeting just before this meeting and that is some of exactly what they were discussing. They did go for a federal grant for what they call dislocated workers, basically individuals who have been displaced from their work. At the state and local level have the ability to develop a plan on how to use that money. The model the state is pushing for is to look at those individuals that are most highly impacted which will be females and it will be individuals of color. Focusing on using those dollars to specifically support entrepreneurism in those specific demographic areas. Locally we are looking to follow that. There was already a teacher shortage and now working with a hybrid program to get people into level 1 licensure.
Board Member Cowan said now that the PPP money is running out, the program Ms. Lopez mentioned for independent contractors, you tended to talk about that in the past tense, is it still active? Are those programs still valid and available? Ms. Lopez stated the pandemic unemployment is still available, people can still apply. There will be some updates with the next package that rolls out how they will proceed supporting individuals. They do have funding for the employer. For instance the on-the-job training program can pay for an individual who may be working at a certain level and have another position opens up, program qualifies for this reimburse the employer for up to 75% of individual's wages for six months while they are training. Chairman Schaljo asked if for only current employees or is that for bringing in new employees also. Ms. Lopez stated it is both, but there is a difference, it cannot be the most entry level position.

2. Arrowhead Center Resources for Entrepreneurs during COVID-19:

Board Member Montgomery stated the purpose of the Arrowhead center is to support the mission of NMSU through enhancement of entrepreneurship and innovation. Also creating economic opportunities including community based economic development through the State of New Mexico. Actually reach beyond for their services. Programs and initiatives. Student success and social mobility - helping children as young as pre-K learn about business. Research and creativity - support programs to help patents to launch and commercialize to a business. Extension and outreached - supporting NMSU's outreach economic development goals, strategic partners in Las Cruces, Doña Ana county and across the state and outside the state. Robust system - alternate funding sources, organizational efficiency. Focus is on social mobility and reaching a diverse population and be sure able to build their own businesses or take technology or eve non-tech businesses to the market. There is quite an array of resources out there including an advisory network. Have 50 professionals in our community who give up and volunteer 30 minute advising sessions. They have three patent attorneys that give up 30 minute consultations for free. There are several accountants in the state to discuss selling things online, kinds of licenses necessary, how to register business. Find out where client is, exactly what they need and connect them to the advisors and resources and funding opportunities.

A map was shown of the statewide reach that Arrowhead has. There have a virtual summer camp with approximately 126 children right now developing their business plan. Arrowhead started at NMSU but now on 18 campuses and a formal partnership with UTEP which started in February.

Mr. Winatingham tried to figure out which parts of the economy were most impacted by coronavirus. Figure out if there are some programs to add for specific industries or geographies to help the recovery. A table with comparisons of industries and this year and last year income numbers was shown. Next a table with gross receipts by county was shown. Next table
was Doña Ana county gross receipts by industry. Next table was employments

Ms. Montgomery stated the Arrowhead Park there is 200+ acre collaborative space on the NMSU campus. They are building a new building. This area offers business space as needed. Offer students a collaborative space to meet with clients for a very small fee. Office spaces are based on square footage and lower than the City, has use of conference rooms, and use copy machines and other items. Offer local entrepreneurship, ecosystem enhancement, proven programming, and support network. BizSprint for any small business could apply and at the time of stay at home order came through there were 258 applicants, standard is 28-40. They had to quickly increase capacity. Piloted a new way to reach out by identifying what their needs were through COVID, able to bring in expertise in those areas to prevent and help them become more e-commerce focused or how they could do curbside. They are having a partnership with the City. One will start on August 12th.

Chairman Schaljo stated the BizSprint is more COVID related but a few applicants from Las Cruces that were chosen. Can that be increased with funding, increase with City Council’s help? It sounds like a really good thing for this committee to be focusing on. Board Member Montgomery stated they did fund two Sprints, one in August and the next one will be sometime in October, but each only has about 15 businesses. Ms. Martinez stated currently 30 participant have been funded split into two and this funding limitation from the Economic Development Department’s perspective. She stated a recommendation that this board could do would be to increase that available funding for the purposes of additional participants. This could be further explored with Arrowhead Center and also cognizant of their capacity as well. Chairman Schaljo stated it does sound like a funding issue and if they are willing we should be looking at as Board is putting forth a recommendation to City Council to say: “This program has limited funds, but it is directly affecting the business community with COVID related issues.” Board Member Montgomery stated it is funded for eight weeks, added three weeks of e-commerce. Chairman Schaljo stated this might be a good action item for the Board to start looking at. He did ask about the accelerated program, three weeks of e-commerce, and if there was additional funding could they look at that as not every business has an e-commerce side. Ms. Martinez stated the type of training was five weeks and with the shifting to the digital world they added the three weeks that would allow businesses to explore additional markets, and that is the e-commerce component. Here in Las Cruces they had 43 applicants and only three were admitted because of capacity. Based on this the City has identified two different areas of focus: one with the service type of business, for business accelerator, and the other just more mom and pop that can establish a website, establish channels of distribution that they have not considered yet. Another big component before the statewide group participated, the cohorts were 20 or 25, Arrowhead has decreased the size
of the cohort to be able to have more of the one-on-one coaching which they found to be most crucial for business owners to have the opportunity to have that more customized attention and personalized one-on-one conversation to be adapted to their needs. If the recommendation from the Board would be to have additional funding for more targeted efforts, we could work with Arrowhead Center to craft other type of curriculum that may be more adaptable and maybe a shorter period.

Board Member Cowan asked if there are stats on success or models to be presented to show how that program has stimulated the economy, even if before COVID, to be able to see how well it impacts the economy and then substantiate the idea of adding more funding. Mr. Winingham stated there is some data on that as the program has been running since 2017 with funding from New Mexico Gas Co., about 10 cohorts of 75 teams, and over the three years an average, each created two to three direct jobs, so total impact of about four to five jobs if you do the economic impact analysis. Each team raised about $20,000 in funding. Program is all about research. Insights from customer research are valuable. Board Member Montgomery stated Arrowhead can send an e-mail to see something tangible. There might be a new need on training and they can provide that. They are flexible as a wide range of advisors who can come in and speak. Mr. Winingham stated the program with market research can be added onto.

Chairman Schaljo asked Ms. Lopez if there was any way to work out a partnership between Workforce Solutions and the City of Las Cruces. Ms. Lopez stated the Ms. Martinez has been working on the EDA grant, which is a great starting point. She stated there is a need, and they can expand to help more people. Ms. Martinez stated a conversation was started related to Workforce development opportunities first through Workforce Talent Collaborative which is a community based meeting that is every month, and the Economic Development Administration Cares Act made funding available for efforts to alleviate the negative impact of the current situation. First identifying the core problem to the more severe impact to the displaced workers in our community. Then they discussed possible ways to address through the partnership. Grants team is working on strategies from the discussions. And then define a scope of work that we can discuss with the regional EDA representative and get more feedback on whether or not that is a program they would be interested in funding. Ms. Lopez stated they need to work on understanding the LEEP program for teachers, and proof that they have exhausted all other options. Schools do have Title I funding. Board Member Moore wants to caution the Board that they compliment programs out there, not duplicate them. She is hearing business development, business assistance, workforce development, workforce assistance, an actional item would be to ask the City Council to support some of these that are already in place. She asked if there are some ordinances that can be deferred, relooked at as part of a true action item. Support the City on what they have done and give action items moving further.
Chairman Schaljo state he is aware of the Hunt Institute out of UTEP, and is there any partnership with them. And are there programs that they have been doing that mimic what they are doing or work between the two. Mr. Winingham stated the best partnership is the Studio G program for student entrepreneurs. There is also a Hunt Center at Arrowhead. Cross promoted the I-Corps programs, Hunts Sponsorship Program, some business competitions that are opening up. UTEP's program just started up and already have 100 join just in the last four months. Board Member Miller believes these ideas should be put into a framework. Provides opportunity for all residents, and especially historically excluded populations that benefit, contribute the economic prosperity. Believes still missing some overall framework to present to the Council.

Board Member Cowan stated he has two items for action. One is to help people find this information such as was presented today, be more engaged with it. Create a directory or some type of liaison in the City's office where they are able to put all this information together in one spot. Second to ask the City Council to reexamine some of the mandates, the impacts, etc. Board Member Moore agrees with Board Member Miller has seen indices for topics and perhaps staff could research these, and she would be happy to forward them to staff. Board Member Harris stated it is important to hear from the State Public Health People. What are reasonable actions people can take. Contract tracing of where people are getting sick.

**VII. Future Discussion:**

1. **Topics to be discussed:** Board Member Miller has some slides for an inclusive economic recovery program, but the City may have somebody more with expertise. Person at Brooking's Institute that is helping develop this across the country. Ms. Martinez will coordinate with Board Member Miller to collaborate on the best option in acquiring someone and/or more materials.

Darleen Lopez will get information on the LEEP or alternative licensure to get concrete information on where the gap is between what we can do and what is stopping us from serving some people.

Board Member Thomas suggested using GIS staff to map where all the businesses are that are open, what their service is, and keep updating it, information pertaining to that business. Chairman Schaljo stated Google maps already has this set up. Mr. Pallares stated the City has global information for the businesses but do not have information of hours of operation, this would be a lengthy process to provide some of this but if the Board believes it is worth the time they can look into that. Board Member Thomas stated in Seattle their GIS department put out an application for businesses to send in their information to be part of the program. It has been popular. If Google is already doing this, then encourage businesses to do that and have a link from the City website. Board Member Cowan
stated he was talking about the programs that they heard from today. Chairman Schaljo stated the Las Cruces website, there are resources for small business and workers section that does this. Board Member Harris stated for next week, funding for Arrowhead Sprints, looking at various recovery plans from other cities, presentation about what inclusive recovery means. He would add getting some input from public health officials not heard from. Board Member Harris motioned to those items on discussion for next week, Board Member Moore seconded.

1. Inclusive economic recovery.
2. Ms. Lopez highlight what we can do in conjunction with the programs.
3. Get someone from health side to present to us, hopefully accredited, knowledge of state level of COVID, well versed.

Motion passes.

VIII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:15 p.m.

Christopher Schaljo
Chairperson

Approved: Christopher Schaljo