MINUTES

GOVERNOR'S FILM COUNCIL

Thursday, September 17, 2026• 10:00 PM – 12:00 PM via ZOOM

10:03 AM – Call to Order. Chairperson Gollin called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM and welcomed attendees. Roll call was conducted.

The following Council members were present, constituting a quorum: James Gollin (Chair), Jo Edna Boldin, Marj Ergas, Keagan Karnes, Jennifer Schwalengberg, Sam Tischler, Paula Dal Santo, Ramona Emerson, Liz Pecos, Elias Gallegos and James Lujan.

10:04 AM – Approval of the Agenda. Chairperson Gollin called for a motion to approve the agenda.

- **Motion:** Sam Tischler
- **Second:** Keagan Karnes
- **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously. Agenda approved.

10:04 AM – Approval of the Minutes from June 12, 2026. Chairperson Gollin called for a motion to approve the agenda.

- **Motion:** Sam Tischler
- **Second:** Elias Gallegos
- **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously. Minutes approved.

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Loan Fund Proposal: The group discussed a proposal to shift film production funding from the State Investment Council to the New Mexico Finance Authority, an initiative that has the support of the governor and legislative leadership. The loan program would carry a $7.5 million cap with no minimum floor. To maximize its chances of passage, the bill will be kept simple, with detailed administration guidelines to be determined later through NMFA. The current draft is not yet publicly available, as it is still being developed and will go through proper legislative channels before debate and voting next year.

While the bill does not currently include specific labor requirements, the group discussed adding local hiring provisions to strengthen legislative messaging and support job creation goals. Sam Tischler expressed optimism about the initiative, noting no significant pushback on the concept, though sponsor support is still being secured.

Tax Credit Incentive Program: The group reviewed updates to the tax credit proposal, with an emphasis on simplifying messaging around increasing the base rate to 30%. Jennifer Schwalengberg proposed an additional 5% tax credit for productions that directly hire New Mexico residents in crew and talent positions, which Sam Tischler supported as well aligned with local hiring goals. Marj Ergas raised concerns about defining specific eligible positions and flagged issues with outdated post-production definitions in the statute currently being used by auditors to reject common modern practices. James Gollin cautioned that overly specific language in legislation could become problematic over time. Marj Ergas also suggested establishing a dedicated liaison position to improve communication between the New Mexico Film Office and TRD.

Legislative Strategy: Liz Pecos shared insights from successful legislative campaigns in 2018–2019, emphasizing the importance of simplifying complex legislation and building broad support among legislators and community members. Sam Tischler urged the film industry to support the upcoming legislation even if it does not contain everything desired, noting that progress should not be held back by the pursuit of a perfect bill. James Gollin outlined three key priorities for the session: passing the film loan fund, passing the incentive bill, and ensuring improved coordination between TRD and NMFO. Ramona Emerson reported limited movement due to election-related delays, with ongoing discussions with Senator Shannon Pinto about regenerating the Senator Pinto Memorial Grant and potentially expanding it to include small independent New Mexico filmmakers.

NEW MEXICO FILM OFFICE UPDATES: Steve Grahan provided updates on several fronts. A national film incentive proposal is gaining bipartisan support, featuring a proposed 20% credit on U.S. labor that would be stackable with state incentives. Recent outreach efforts included industry events in Los Angeles and Toronto, where the office held meetings with major studios including Netflix and Sony.

On the program side, the office launched a new actor reel showcasing New Mexico talent and announced a new film partner agreement with a studio committing $50 million in annual production and $35 million in capital investment over ten years. Current annual production spending stands at approximately $320 million, compared to a previous peak of over $800 million. Steve Graham noted this represents a new normal for the industry rather than a full recovery.

11:59 AM – Chairperson Gollin called for a motion to adjourn.

- **Motion:** Jennifer Schwalenberg
- **Second:** Keagan Karnes
- **Vote: Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at11:50 AM.**

Disclaimer: These meeting minutes were generated with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance efficiency and documentation accuracy. The content has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the New Mexico Film Office to ensure it reflects an accurate and official record of the proceedings.