



MEETING MINUTES

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON FILM AND MEDIA INDUSTRIES MEETING

Thursday, August 27, 2020 • 1:00 PM

Video/conference call-in/GoTo Meeting: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/981248845>

Dial: (872) 240-3212 • Access Code: 981-248-845

Call to Order – Chair James Gollin. The quarterly meeting of the Governor's Council on Film and Media Industries (GCFMI) was held via Go-To-Meeting video-conference. The meeting convened at 1:02 PM with a quorum of members present.

Members in attendance:

- James Gollin (Chair)
- Talia Kosh
- Jo Edna Boldin
- Ramona Emerson
- Ken Fischer
- Lance Maurer
- Rajeev Nirmalakhandan (Arrived slightly late)
- Liz Pecos
- Luke Renner
- Sam Tischler

NMFO Staff:

- Rochelle Bussey (NMFO)
- Amber Dodson (NMFO)
- Joann Wylie (NMFO)

Approval of Agenda: Chair James Gollin asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ken Fischer moved to approve the Agenda and Talia Kosh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from June 30, 2020-- Chair James Gollin asked if there were any changes, there being none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Jo Edna Boldin moved to approve the minutes and Ken Fischer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

In his introductory remarks, James Gollin stated that the Council will have reports from the working groups.

Update from the NM Film Office – Amber Dodson, NM Film Office Director. Ms. Dodson said that the NMFO knows know it has been a challenging six months for the entire community. The global film industry can help rebound the state's economy. Pre-production was opened recently. She has productions who have committed to coming to NM with amazing budgets and she expects a full rebound. Productions will follow Covid-safe practices. She wanted to thank the subcommittee that is dedicated to reopening film. The committee had everyone at the table to create Back2One, the catchall document, and we have received positive feedback on the first iteration. Back2One is based on the AMPTP white paper, which has been adopted by the State as the baseline for COVID-Safe film/TV production. NMFO continues to work to keep the pipeline full. She anticipates more productions as location packages are flying out the door right now. She is

seeing an uptick in brick and mortar businesses who are interested in NM, for more than just a production hub, including post-production, visual effects, and animation. There is a lot happening behind the scenes. NMFO is also working to uplift underrepresented voices in the film industry in the vein of the Senator John Pinto fund. NMFO is also looking to qualify more production facilities statewide. She asked that the Council members let people know that NMFO would like to see more spaces across the state. NMFO then plans to reach out and ask small businesses to become pre-qualified vendors with the state. This expedites paperwork. That helps productions. She would like to make productions as easy as possible. Finally, NMFO has a new hire. Jennifer Esquivel, formerly with the City of Albuquerque, will work on marketing, communications, outreach and events. Ms. Dodson would like to elevate the NMFO brand and show NM as world class place to film. She is looking forward to a busy and bright year ahead. She is thankful to the Council for all they have done and are doing. James Gollin thanked her for all that NMFO does. He asked if there were any questions. When asked, Ms. Dodson explained that Ms. Esquivel will be working in more than the Outreach Coordinator capacity.

Updates from working groups –

Education and Training – Liz Pecos reported that the working group has met twice. The second meeting included participants from outside the group. The group looked at what the previous group had worked on, and incorporated their work into a goals outline. They added new goals. The goals include education training, mentoring, transferable skills, covid-19 safety training, a path to union membership, and others, with diversity being an underlying theme. The group is identifying those items that can be implemented in both the short term and long term. They also looked at targeted efforts that don't require legislative or executive approval such as working with colleges and universities on the articulation issue for transfers from two-year to four-year colleges in film programs so that a four-year program doesn't take a two-year transfer student five years. There are several companies that are looking to provide Covid-resources and working on training to develop a safety curriculum for Covid Safety Officers to use in conjunction with unions. The group would like to take a look at training curriculums and seminars and provide information for a resource development content page on the NMFO website. They would like to see outreach to both in-state and out-of-state students and market film in NM. They are interested in developing mentoring programs between student and employers. They also discussed the development of the midtown campus at Garson studios to include housing, sound stages, etc. and developing a program for the fall of 2020 with UNM and SFCC. They have a very detailed outline that they hope to include in the final report. Mr. Gollin thanked Ms. Pecos for the report.

Incentive Optimization – Sam Tischler reported that the group was able to meet on August 21. They focused on long- and short-term strategies, including how to make the rural uplift better, pass-through company issues and ways to diversify local home-grown talent. The consensus was that, because of the state's current financial position, the short-term suggestions need to be cost-neutral or of minimal cost. They discussed inviting someone from the executive branch or EDD to talk at their next meeting on September 2. Mr. Tischler mentioned that the term rural uplift as it exists is perhaps the wrong name. He said that perhaps the 60-mile zone might better originate from city hall instead of county borders. He also noted that the rural zone includes Las Cruces, which is not a rural area. With respect to pass through companies, the group discussed oversight and the fact that the previous approach was cumbersome for both productions and the film office. They want some sort of approval process, but not one so burdensome that a lot of extra bodies are needed to approve the pass-through items. They would also like to see a study to determine what items are consistently being obtained through a pass-through company. How can that information be used to incentivize local startups to provide those items locally? With respect to diversity they talked about the need for training and a path to union membership. It needs to be incentivized. They will be inviting the Illinois Film Commissioner as Illinois has an aggressive diversity program. They are also looking at the lack of a pathway for local production companies to access the rebate and use local talent. Steve Graham will attend a meeting and talk about how his successes and above the line training. They wondered if there were ways to incentivize up and coming filmmakers without hitting the incentives, such as grants or something like the Governor's Cup which was very successful. Mr. Gollin again emphasized that in making recommendations everyone needs to distinguish between short term and long-term recommendations. Mr. Maurer asked if there was any thought given to maintaining and improving the incentive over a five-year stretch. He is seeing less differentiation between TV and Film as streaming becomes more popular. He thought a language change to recognize streaming would be useful. Mr. Tischler said those are good points, but that there still needs to be a distinction. TV shows can mean five years of work while a film is a one-time event. He asked how we get a company to say they will stream out of New Mexico. Mr. Maurer said that is a

separate conversation. Apple and Netflix will stream the content that gives them the most subscribers. So, they will be looking to see what sells. If that is TV type shows, great, but what if it is a series of 10-minute shows such as the Quibi business model approach? How does the incentive program address that? The Council had several positive things to say about the success of the Governor's cup. The local filmmakers with a \$5-20,000 budget do not apply for the incentive because it is too difficult. Ms. Emerson said she is glad to see that steps are being taken to preserve the Senator John Pinto Fund. She noted that Netflix gave \$25 million to indigenous communities in Canada and they don't even get incentives. Mr. Fischer wondered if the group will generate materials that can be used to protect the incentives. Mr. Tischler said he would like to develop talking points to help defend the incentives as they exist. Post-production will be a topic the committee will be looking at in their next meeting. Mr. Maurer said that since post-production can be done remotely, the committee should look at having the 2 and 4-year schools work on the workflow to help bring in new business. Mr. Gollin said that as we head into the session, there are always questions about the cost of the incentive and the positive effects. It would be good to keep track of those numbers. Ms. Dodson said that the NMFO is working on a database to make those numbers more easily accessible. There is a lot of available data and NMFO will share what they are allowed to share.

Business Development – Lance Maurer reported that the group met a couple of weeks ago and added three volunteers so they have eight members in the working group. They focused on what to accomplish, when and for whom as well as what can be done in volunteer time. They collected the best ideas, consolidated them and voted on the top three using survey monkey. Their goal is a high-level report that will get read. The items voted on include emergency crisis readiness, big data and software, high tech media and creation of high-tech media assets, commercial marketing with a focus on why NM is great, migrating the entire directory into an app that can be used anywhere, increase spending in NMFO so that they can move more content through, and looking at the social gatherings the NMFO hosts. Trade shows are less effective for networking if your customers don't attend the show. Perhaps a different type of structure would provide some gains. They would like to see external analysis of media education programs and how they stack up against other states' programs. Likewise, are the soundstages well-staged? What is our capacity? Our technology? Finally, a big picture analysis (40,000-foot view) – what does NM stand to lose by not moving forward and investing in film? How urgent is it that the state moves forward? Mr. Maurer said he wants to touch base with the other committee chairs to make sure that they are not covering the same information in two groups, resulting in a slightly different recommendation.

The survey identified the top three ideas:

1. Post-production, visual effects, animations and gaming – evaluate the laws to improve that sector.
2. Big Data and software
3. The 40,000-foot view.

The group wants no more than a couple of pages on each topic. After their September meeting, the group will work on data collection. They will draft their information and present in a palatable form. He wants to make the report available to the Council long before it is due so people can comment. NM is in a unique position and they would like to know, for example, what would make a visual effects post-house relocate to NM?

Mr. Gollin thanked Mr. Maurer and noted that the incentives cover other forms of digital media and yet we haven't seen the boom in those other areas. It may be a question of marketing, time, attracting people. It would be good to know if a change in the law would help. Ms. Dodson said that it would be invaluable to get field research from more post-production facilities and find out what would push them over the edge and have them choose NM. Mr. Renner said that perhaps a Post-production advancement program similar to the FCAP might be a great way to train residents. Mr. Fischer said he was aware of a company that left Louisiana to move to Canada because the company didn't think there was enough educational support in Louisiana. Ms. Emerson said that she recently filmed some at Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint. She said they have made a huge investment in training, manufacturing, construction and other trade schools. Meanwhile the film students have no support and are trying to fund their efforts with bake sales. Mr. Maurer said this comes back to the question of identity. Productions think of NM as a production state. They need to think of NM as a Post Production place and more. Ms. Dodson said that with a marketing person on staff now, the goal is to rebrand NMFO and what NMFO can offer the film community. She wants to amp up NMFO's presence digitally.

Mr. Gollin thanked everyone and said it was terrific to hear all the views. He skipped ahead to Agenda item IX.

Next Council Meeting – As the report is due December 1, the Council will need to meet and approve the report and will also need to meet before then for a working session to have each group present their results a little more clearly. The document can be assembled offline and then approved at a meeting closer to the deadline. He suggested a meeting in late October and then one in late November to see the final report. Mr. Maurer suggested early November as he thought late October might be a bit too aggressive. Ms. Kosh said even if not completely done by that early November meeting a check-in would be good. Ms. Pecos agreed. Mr. Gollin will work with NMFO to find dates and avoid Tuesdays and Thursdays to accommodate known conflicts.

Proposed Online Questionnaire – Mr. Gollin asked the Council what they thought about putting out an online questionnaire to ask local people, national producers, and more to find out who people are, what their role is, to have them answer both questions from the working groups and maybe NMFO staff. The questionnaire would be distributed to stakeholders and data analyzed. Raj asked how extensive the questions would be? Is it just a survey of skill level and background or is it to gain information for statistical purposes for the Legislature. Mr. Gollin said he viewed it as an anonymized sample to see what works in NM and what doesn't. Mr. Tischler said he liked the idea, but the audience needed to be targeted. There would be different questions for Studio executives vs. drivers. It could be done as a short-term project. Amber suggested that NMFO could obtain information from line producers when they wrap. It needs to be concise. Mr. Maurer asked if there was a way to make it a requirement for getting the incentive. He noted it is tough to get people to fill out a survey, so there needs to be an incentive to fill out the survey. Mr. Gollin said he appreciates surveys where he can either choose a multiple-choice answer, make a comment or both. He also has no idea how many questions you can ask before you lose people. Mr. Renner suggested reaching out to a marketing class and have the students work on the project to get real world results. Ms. Pecos said that if this is going to be worked on before the next meeting, there needs to be a target group to receive the survey and a determination of the length of the survey. She asked if the information could be distributed to everyone for discussion within working groups and the thoughts discussed at the next meeting.

New Business -- There was no new business.

Public Comment (3 min. per person) Gigi Erneta asked if there was a way to communicate ways to address anti-incentive comments. Ms. Dodson said that it would be great to talk about that off-line. There is a need to have a good media campaign. Steve Graham introduced himself and said that he looks forward to seeing new educational opportunities and holding onto the incentive.

There were no other members of the public who wished to comment.

There was no further business.

Adjourn – There being no further business, Mr. Gollin asked for a motion to adjourn. Liz Pecos moved to adjourn the meeting and Ramona Emerson seconded the motion. The motion being approved, the meeting adjourned at 2:56 pm.