

Scotts Bluff Area Visitors Bureau
North Commissioners Room in the Scotts Bluff County Administration Building
Wednesday, January 14, 2026
1:15 p.m.

Meeting was called to order at 1:18 p.m. by Lanna Hubbard and public information notice was read aloud.

Board Members Present: Lanna Hubbard, Bekah Gorsuch, Melissa Price, Chuck Heeman, Amanda LeMay, Jessica Lecher-Wasson.

Board Member Absent: Marvin Floyd (attending Denver Stock Show on behalf of the Committee)

Commissioner Representative Present: Matt Parsley

Others Present: Brenda Leisy, Dave Wolf, Jay Sturdivant

The January 14, 2026 agenda was approved unanimously with no amendments or changes offered or discussed.

The consent agenda and December 10, 2025 minutes were approved unanimously with no amendments or changes offered or discussed.

Committee discussed and considered a Marketing and Promotion Grant request of \$2,407.48 for the Nebraska West Fest, a proposed craft beer festival. Katlyn Massey presented information about the event, the participants and the expectations. Seven breweries, cideries and distilleries from the Panhandle area of Nebraska are committed to the event at this time, with more being recruited. The organizers plan to make this event self-sufficient as it grows and they are able to hold seed money from year to year. Marketing materials are to be placed at local breweries, cideries and distilleries within a 100-mile radius of Scotts Bluff County, with radio and social media promotion in that area and into a multi-state region. The event is scheduled for March 21, 2026.

The Committee reviewed all areas of the request and after discussion awarded \$2,000.00 to be used for radio and social media advertising.

Committee discussed and considered an Event Incentive Grant request of \$4,999.50 for the Nebraska West Fest as described above. Katlyn Massey provided a list of groups and businesses that are co-sponsoring this event. Capturing ZIP Codes will be accomplished through the event's online ticket sales as people purchase tickets for the event. Tickets will be priced at \$45.00, standard for such an event. The incentive funds are used to entice vendors and assist in vendors' expenses to attend the event. It was explained that this is standard for such events. Chuck Heeman noted that with the Pioneers, the team often does the same, offering a group a financial stipend to travel to Scotts Bluff County, so this is not unusual.

The Committee reviewed all areas of the request and after discussion awarded \$4,999.50 to be used as Event Incentive funding.

Committee discussed and considered a Capital Improvement Grant request of \$225,000 for the proposed Crowl Family RV Nest & Cabins project, to be built south of Gering along Highway 71. JoDee Crowl presented the grant request in person. Ms. Crowl noted that the request is a total project cost and would be happy with any amount the Committee awards. Ms. Crowl gave a detailed proposal of the project with a goal to complete the project within 12-18 months. Ms. Crowl noted that the project is seeking 501-c-3 status and noted that the process is lengthy.

Committee discussed the proposal and decided that it would be prudent to revisit the grant request after 501-c-3 status is granted to the Crowl family.

Committee discussed and considered an Event Incentive Grant request of \$6,000 for the Cinco de Mayo Car Show, submitted by Chrisian Parra. Mr. Parra participated by phone and gave a review of past similar events and his hopes for growth in 2026 and beyond. Committee asked Mr. Parra about non-County visitors and how those visitors were counted. In the past the event did not count these but plan on using QR codes to measure these numbers in 2026 and the future. As visitors vote on their favorite entries, the QR code is used to gather that information.

Committee discussed the proposal and decided to deny the grant for 2026 as the event seems to be more of a local than regional event. Committee will invite Mr. Parra to submit for 2027 based on QR code information gathered at the 2026 event.

Committee discussed and considered an Event Incentive Grant request of \$6,500 from WESTCO Travel Baseball for funding for the 2026 Summer Slugfest, an 11U and 12U tournament, with 2026 being the third year of the event. The tournament is scheduled for the last weekend of May 2026 and held at the 23 Club facility in Scottsbluff. Travis Rodak participated by phone and gave a review of past Summer Slugfest events and reviewed teams who had participated in the past as well as 2026 current entries. Mr. Rodak noted that in 2026, 14 teams are currently registered, with 12 traveling from outside Scotts Bluff County, with nine from Colorado and/or at least 100 miles from Scottsbluff, enhancing the chance of overnight stays. Mr. Rodak estimated total attendance of approximately 1,000 based on previous event numbers. He gave a detailed review of the specific items the funding would be used for, including promotion, prizes, recruitment of non-Scotts Bluff County teams, and more.

Committee discussed the proposal and based on the continued growth of non-Scotts Bluff County visitors and participants, awarded \$6,500 as requested.

Committee discussed and considered a proposal by Dennis Lennox, a travel writer, to visit Scotts Bluff County and write a feature article about the County and its attractions. Mr. Lennox requested an amount between \$1,7032 and \$2,032 for a visit to Scotts Bluff County.

Committee discussed the proposal and agreed to delay a decision until after the February 26 Master Planning meeting to assure that this effort would fit within that plan.

Committee discussed and approved a move of the February Committee meeting to the 17th due to a conflict with the State of Nebraska Tourism Conference. This will allow Brenda Leisy to attend the conference and not miss the February meeting.

Committee discussed and considered contracting Tyler Redwine to produce marketing videos for the Scotts Bluff County Tourism Bureau's use in promotional areas. Brenda Leisy noted that Mr. Redwine has a good history of quality videos and affordable pricing and showed examples.

Committee discussed and agreed to delay a decision until after the February 26 Master Planning meeting to assure that this effort would fit within that plan.

Committee discussed and reviewed a grant to the West Nebraska Sports Council to assist in funding the November for Noah basketball event held in 2025. The funding was a portion of a previous grant to the Council of \$30,000 to fund three new or enhanced events during the 2025-26 fiscal year. Brenda Leisy informed the committee that of \$10,000 available, the event spent \$5,848.24.

Commissioner Matt Parsley remarked that he had nothing new to add to the agenda and expressed appreciation for the smooth and cooperative functioning of the Committee.

Dave Wolf updated the Committee on developments at the State level. He noted the State Conference is in February and encouraged attendance if possible. Mr. Wolf updated the Committee on proposed legislation that could move tourism income from each County into the State's general Economic Development funding and encouraged the Committee to express their opinions to their legislators. He updated the Committee on the new State Tourism marketing program, expected to be revealed within two months.

Committee heard an update from Melissa Price and Chuck Heeman on the West Nebraska Sports Council project. David Kiraly has put together the Council's website and sent to all members for review. Chuck updated the group on a planned cheer/dance competition to be held at Oregon Trail Park Stadium on Labor Day weekend 2026. Chuck is working with Mari Blanco on the event and invitations have already gone out from Mari to her contacts. The goal is to make it a two-day event to encourage overnight stays. This will be one of the three projects stated as a goal by the Council.

Brenda Leisy provided an update regarding the Council's bylaws, which will be patterned after the Tourism Bureau bylaws.

Committee discussed rotating monthly meeting locations in order to encourage more local participation and showcase local businesses. Members encouraged to bring ideas to the February meeting.

Next meeting February 17, 2026 @ 1:15 p.m. in the same location.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m. by Lanna Hubbard.