

**Pima County Small Business Commission
Meeting**

Thursday, April 15, 2021
3:00 P.M.

Video Conference/Telephonic Meeting

SUMMARY OF MEETING

Commission Members Present

Kent Blumenthal, Chairman
Bernie Wiegandt, Vice-Chair (*arrived
3:23 pm*)
Gabrielle David
Ken Goodman
Josh Jacobsen
Carlos Ruiz
Jenni Zimmerman

Commission Members Absent

Mark Miller
Raul Aguirre
Guillermo Gallegos

Staff in attendance

Pima County:
Patrick Cavanaugh, Economic Development
John Moffatt, Economic Development

Guests in attendance:

Hon. Steve Christy, Pima County Supervisor D-4
Hon. Adelita Grijalva, Pima County Supervisor D-5
Maria Klucarova, Chair Bronson's Office
Kim Challender, Supervisor Scott's Office
Shaq McCoy, Supervisor Heinz's Office
Keith Bagwell, Supervisor Grijalva's Office
Elvira Suarez Din, Supervisor Grijalva's Office
Arlethe Rios Morrison, Supervisor Grijalva's Office

MOTIONS

MOTION: Commissioner Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner David, to direct a letter to the Pima County Board of Supervisors requesting the Board of Supervisors' support for Arizona legislative bill SB 1179 and HB 2124 in support of Pima JTED. Motion approved 7-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner David, to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved 7-0.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Call to Order

The meeting began at 3:05 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by Patrick Cavanaugh. Commission quorum was confirmed.

3. Chair's Report: Review of the agenda and virtual meeting protocols

Chairman Blumenthal welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Carlos Ruiz and Hon. Supervisor Adelita Grijalva; wished a speedy recovery to Commissioner Aguirre, and extended condolences to the family of Ellen Kirton, director of the Small Business Development Center. Commissioner Goodman noted Ms. Kirton's passing as a tremendous loss to the business community. Chairman Blumenthal remarked on Deseret Romero's service to the Commission and Pima County before her recent resignation; and provided a brief overview of the meeting protocols and the review of the meeting agenda.

4. Call to the Public

All of the guests in attendance introduced themselves and greeted the Commission.

5. Introduction: Hon. Pima County Supervisor Adelita Grijalva

Supervisor Grijalva related her life, education and work in Tucson and the importance of Small Businesses in Pima County. She noted the important role small businesses can play in encouraging COVID-19 vaccinations and she cited incentives and other examples for potential collaboration; she stated the Board of Supervisors were unanimous in wanting businesses open and employees back to work safely. Supervisor Grijalva offered to address any questions from the Commission or discuss any ideas to assist small businesses during the pandemic:

Commissioner Jacobsen noted he observed the last Board of Supervisors meeting and expressed concerns about the City of Tucson's proposed differential water rates for unincorporated Pima County users. He asked what the impacts would be on opening a new business in an unincorporated area. Supervisor Grijalva explained the graduated rates and additional costs of service and suggested the Commissioner contact the City. She also noted heavy users would pay more. Commissioner Jacobsen said he believed the added cost along with other governmental regulation will be overly burdensome.

Commissioner Jacobsen expressed concern about the mask mandates, confusing pandemic regulations and the issue of business staff asking belligerent customers to wear masks. He offered an example of Tucson Police not responding to mask-related calls. Supervisor Grijalva explained the limits of the Health Department's authority and noted the political nature of anti-mask sentiment and encouraged people to view the pandemic as a health issue.

Commissioner Ruiz noted his business does not interface much with the public or the Health Department and underscored that only restaurants and a few other classes of businesses are bearing the brunt of the regulatory requirements. Supervisor Grijalva clarified the County's mask mandate applies to everyone but only certain businesses fall under Pima County regulatory authority and she will support mask mandates until the health emergency recedes and that the public health issue should not be politicized.

Commissioner Jacobsen said the County should stick to education rather than regulation. Supervisor Grijalva provided the Pima County health statistics and stated the vaccination rate needs to be higher in order to get the pandemic to recede.

Commissioner Goodman described a previous Commission meeting when the topic of Sun Corridor's involvement in small business recovery was discussed. He said small business does not appear to have a seat at the table for Sun Corridor's planning and encouraged the Board of Supervisors and the Commission to craft a recovery plan for small businesses. Supervisor Grijalva expressed support for small business recovery efforts.

Commissioner Jacobsen asked Supervisor Grijalva about her vote on a \$50 million road repair and infrastructure initiative for Pima County and the Supervisor explained she wanted to explore all options for the funding, particularly workforce issues.

Chairman Blumenthal expressed his appreciation to Supervisor Grijalva and the Board of Supervisors for their support of Small Business.

6. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Cavanaugh noted the Economic Development Office had recently lost its staff support and asked to defer consideration of approval of the March 18, 2021 meeting summary until the May 20, 2021 meeting. Chair Blumenthal noted the deferral without objection from the Commission.

7. Coordinator's report and updates

Mr. Cavanaugh reported on the following items:

- a. Federal, state and local business assistance and update on the mask ordinance;
 - The federal American Rescue Plan and expansion of the Paycheck Protection Program and extended deadlines.
 - The Shuttered Venue Operators Grant under the American Rescue Plan
 - American Rescue Plan details for Restaurant Revitalization program.

Mr. Cavanaugh underscored Supervisor Grijalva's comments about the mask mandate being county-wide and briefly recounted the failed legal

challenges to the mandate that have validated the County's legal authority for the ordinance.

b. County Supervisor appointments to fill SBC vacancies:

Mr. Cavanaugh announced he had just received the resignation of Commissioner Gallegos resulting in two vacancies in District 2 but staff from Supervisor Heinz's office has placed one appointment on the April 20, 2021 Board agenda and is already working on the second. District 1 is also working on Supervisor Scott's appointments and has identified potential nominations. Mr. Cavanaugh is in contact with District 5 staff and has a message in to Commissioner Aguirre.

c. 2020 Small Business Awards

Ms. Cavanaugh reported that all of the award winners had received their award of \$500. Chair Blumenthal inquired as to the when the Board of Supervisors would return to in-person meetings. Mr. Cavanaugh noted that the Board has not indicated when it will resume in-person meetings. The Supervisors will make that decision publicly and will likely base it on the public health data. The Supervisors at this point are still meeting remotely.

8. Unfinished Business

a. 'Ready for You 2.0' PSA Radio Spots

Ready for You Subcommittee Chair Ken Goodman updated the Commission on the content of the scripts developed for the ad campaign and reported that the initial drafts of the Hilton & Myers ad spots had been shared with the Commission's subcommittee. Commissioner Goodman commented on the prominence of the Small Business Commission in the ads and noted the radio ads are now running.

Commissioner Goodman reiterated the importance of the Commission leading on the issue for small businesses and vaccinations.

b. Restaurant worker hiring difficulties

Commissioner Zimmerman recounted the difficulty she is experiencing at her restaurant and what she is hearing from other restaurant owners. She asked for clarification as to whether the State is still requiring work search documentation for unemployment compensation. Commissioner Jacobsen confirmed the State is not.

Chair Blumenthal asked for staff and commission input.

Mr. Cavanaugh advised widening the discussion to the hiring difficulties of all small businesses and suggested a presentation of information from the Pima County One Stop business services staff or Arizona Commerce Authority at a future meeting.

Commissioner Ruiz noted the dramatic increase in sales at his metal fabrication business and the difficulty in dealing with staffing agencies and the requirement for significant

salaries to compete with enhanced unemployment benefits which has become a serious issue nationwide.

Commissioner Jacobsen suggested Dr. George Hammond of the University of Arizona's Eller Business School be invited to discuss the matter at a future meeting. Commissioner Jacobsen also suggested there should be a future agenda item regarding the "Fight for 15" effort to raise the minimum wage in Tucson and Pima County.

9. New Business

a. JTED legislative update and action

Commissioner Goodman reported that the new facility on Park Avenue is open but expressed concern that the legislature is not considering JTED a priority. Two bills that that would affect career/technical education funding and average daily membership are being considered. Commissioner Goodman suggested that a letter be sent to the Board of Supervisors encouraging the Board to support JTED's legislative priorities during the current session. Commissioner Goodman asked Mr. Cavanaugh for his opinion. Mr. Cavanaugh stated the action would be appropriate in the Commission's role as an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors but expressed concern that the Commissioners did not have the letter language in front of them for consideration. Mr. Cavanaugh suggested if more information was provided to the Commissioners now the Commission could direct staff to work with Commissioner Goodman and Mr. Cavanaugh to draft the language of the letter to the Board. He also cautioned that the Board of Supervisors would need to consider the letter at a Board meeting and the end of the Arizona legislative session is rapidly approaching. Chair Blumenthal and Commissioner Goodman proceeded to craft the motion and the staff direction and recommended JTED's bill analysis document accompany the letter.

MOTION: Commissioner Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner David, to direct a letter to the Pima County Board of Supervisors requesting the Board of Supervisors' support for Arizona legislative bill SB 1179 and HB 2124 in support of Pima JTED. Motion approved 7-0

b. Pima County Small Business Commission Bylaws requirements

Chair Blumenthal stated he placed the item on the agenda to hear the Commissioner's thoughts on a future agenda item to address possible changes to the Small Business Commission's bylaws. The primary purpose would be to address quorum issues and Commissioner attendance requirements. Chair Blumenthal asked for Commission comment or objections and received neither. Chair Blumenthal directed that the item will be on the next agenda.

c. Pima County internet/broadband internet opportunities

Chair Blumenthal referred to discussion at a previous Commission meeting with Pima County Economic Development Director John Moffatt about broadband expansion in Pima County. Chair Blumenthal stated Pima County Chief Information Officer Dan Hunt

has agreed to attend the next Commission meeting to discuss this topic. Mr. Hunt has asked for questions in advance and Chair Blumenthal asked Commissioners to send the questions in advance of the meeting to Mr. Cavanaugh.

d. Small Business element within Sun Corridor, Inc.

Chair Blumenthal asked Commissioner Goodman for an update. Commissioner Goodman noted the disconnect between Sun Corridor, Inc. and small businesses and believes the Board of Supervisors should approach this matter in a bipartisan fashion to ensure the inclusion of small business and the Commission in regional economic recovery efforts. Chair Blumenthal asked Commissioner Goodman to create a document that will serve as a discussion draft on this topic for the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Goodman agreed.

e. Determination of 2021 Small Business Awards program criteria

Chair Blumenthal provided the most recent criteria that focused on the pandemic resilience. He asked volunteers to help create the recommended criteria for the 2021 program that would then be submitted to the Commission for consideration. Commissioner Zimmerman agreed to assist Chair Blumenthal in developing the draft criteria. Mr. Cavanaugh suggested it not be a subcommittee and that only two commissioners be involved in submitting their drafts to him for placement on a future agenda.

f. Discussion – post-pandemic public hearings

Chair Blumenthal deferred the item to a future agenda in the interest of time.

g. Contact information for small businesses located in Pima County

Chair Blumenthal deferred this item to a future agenda in the interest of time.

10. Commissioner Updates

Chair Blumenthal asked for updates from the Commissioners and received none. Chair Blumenthal updated information about a tour he planned to take of Ajo and its small businesses with Commissioner David.

11. Agenda items for next SBC meeting

Chairman Blumenthal noted the items previously deferred agenda items (9f and 9g) and a presentation on broadband by Pima County's Chief Information Officer would be added to the May 2021 agenda.

10. Adjournment (5:05 p.m.)

MOTION: Commissioner Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner David, to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved 7-0.