

**Pima County Small Business Commission  
Meeting**

Thursday, May 20, 2021  
3:00 P.M.

Video Conference/Telephonic Meeting

**SUMMARY OF MEETING**

**Commission Members Present**

Kent Blumenthal, Chair  
Ken Goodman, Vice-chair  
Janay Arenas  
Gabrielle David  
Carlos Ruiz  
Josh Jacobsen  
Vera Minot

**Commission Members Absent**

Raul Aguirre  
Shelby Collier  
Moniqua Lane

**Staff in attendance**

Pima County:

Patrick Cavanaugh, Economic Development  
John Moffatt, Economic Development  
Dan Hunt, Pima County Information Technology

**Guests in attendance:**

Maria Klucarova, Chair Bronson's Office  
Shaq McCoy, Supervisor Heinz's Office

**MOTIONS**

**MOTION: Commissioner Jacobsen moved, seconded by Commissioner David, to approve the summary of the March 18, 2021 meeting. Motion approved 7-0.**

**MOTION: Commissioner David moved, seconded by Commissioner Minot, to form a Small Business Commission Bylaws Subcommittee. Motion approved 7-0.**

**MOTION: Commissioner Ruiz moved, seconded by Commissioner Jacobsen, to adopt the criteria for the 2021 Small Business Commission awards as presented with one modification. Motion approved 7-0.**

**MOTION: Commissioner Minot moved, seconded by Vice Chair Goodman, to authorize the Chair to send a letter to the Board of Supervisors encouraging the development of a COVID-19 vaccination incentive program for the public. Motion approved 4-3.**

**MOTION: Vice Chair Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner Arenas, to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved 7-0.**

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

1. Call to Order

The meeting began at 3:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Chair's Report (Blumenthal)

Chair Blumenthal welcomed newly appointed Commissioners, provided an overview of the meeting protocols and procedures; and reviewed the meeting agenda.

4. Call to the Public

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

5. Guest presenter: Dan Hunt, Pima County Information Technology CIO (Blumenthal)

Chair Blumenthal introduced Mr. Hunt and noted that the Chair and Commissioner Ruiz had submitted questions in advance for Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Hunt provided his background in IT starting in Page, Arizona which gives him some background in the Commission's primary interest in broadband expansion in rural communities.

Mr. Hunt stated that coverage maps show that Pima County has broadband coverage at 92.3 percent but he understands that Ajo and other rural communities in the County are still lacking adequate coverage. He said in 2018 he worked with the State of Arizona's Broadband Director and other IT professional to develop a state-wide strategic plan for digital access and broadband expansion. It needs to be updated but there is a plan in place and more recently Arizona's Governor succeeded in getting \$50 million in to the State's budget specifically for broadband. The funds will primarily be used for the installation of broadband conduit and new technology development for rural areas of Arizona. One of the questions posed in advance asked if Pima County would see any of the \$50 million broadband funding. Mr. Hunt stated he can't say that this will directly benefit small businesses in Pima County immediately but it does provide the basic infrastructure that will eventually be beneficial. The federal initiative under President Biden's proposal would flesh-out broadband infrastructure even more significantly in Pima County.

Mr. Hunt noted that Pima County Supervisor Steve Christy had said at a recent Board of Supervisors meeting that many areas of Pima County not thought of as lacking adequate

broadband, such as the Catalina Foothills, also need to be addressed. The claim that 92.3 percent of Pima County has coverage still leaves many areas unserved or underserved. The Arizona Broadband Stakeholders Network found that while broadband connectivity is important, people still need to have access to affordable devices, skill development and technical support. The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program seeks to discount the cost of internet but the application form is too technical – and requires people without computers or broadband access to file an application online.

Pima County IT is working with libraries, Community and Workforce Development, Superintendent Schools, school districts and other partners to do outreach. Mr. Hunt said he works closely with the Pima County Library system to ensure high speed access and hotspots for use by underserved individuals.

Previously submitted questions from the Commissioners were read and answered by Mr. Hunt:

Commissioner Ruiz asked if Pima County had coverage maps provided by telecom companies, specifically, maps that show government subsidized coverage and the density of businesses in those areas.

Mr. Hunt explained in detail the stratified and proprietary nature of that private sector business coverage information. He stated when he deals with telecoms he cannot get that information but can only ask if coverage is available in a very specific area and the companies will only confirm yes or no.

Commissioner Ruiz asked for a discussion of other commercially available high speed internet options for remote area of Pima County such as satellite and wireless.

Mr. Hunt said he would forward information from the Arizona Commerce Authority to the Commission on this topic through Mr. Cavanaugh.

Commissioner Ruiz asked if there was an “ask” of the Commission to support a program or if this was just to be an informational presentation for the Commission.

Mr. Hunt offered to convey information from the Commission to County Administration and the Board of Supervisors. Chair Blumenthal clarified that the purpose of the presentation grew from previous discussions by the Commission and its interest in sustaining business in rural communities that did not have adequate internet and digital access.

Chair Blumenthal summarized previous Commission discussions of digital access: in terms of expanding broadband, what can be done to assist small businesses in rural Pima County communities, what can be done to assist those working through the pandemic, and what can be done that would help incentivize new businesses to move to Pima County to further economic development?

Mr. Hunt read Chair Blumenthal's previously submitted questions and stated he works with the director of the Pima County Economic Development Office and agreed the economic development aspect of sustaining existing businesses and attracting new business to Pima County was a critical aspect of broadband access. He noted that previous state and federal grant opportunities have tried to further expand broadband access and he offered to assist with future opportunities in conjunction with the Pima County Grants Management and Innovation department. He added that the Pima County Board of Supervisors had recently adopted a resolution supporting greater digital access in relation to proposed federal and state grants.

In response to the question of Pima County's broadband priorities, Mr. Hunt stated some state governments have statutes that prevent state and local government from competing with the private sector. Mr. Hunt said he had previously consulted with the Pima County Administrator on this question and the County's position was to work within

public-private sector partnerships to further digital access. Mr. Hunt cited a partnership in the Sunnyside Unified District as a model example.

Mr. Cavanaugh clarified that much of Mr. Hunt's and the Pima County IT Department's work is focused on Pima County operations, but that Pima County was always looking for partnerships and Mr. Hunt's knowledge of digital access issues can assist the Commission in developing a framework of what the Commission wants to advocate for and advise the Board of Supervisors on, particularly the the small business aspects broadband expansion in Pima County.

Vice Chair Goodman expressed appreciation for the data and information presented by Mr. Hunt but noted a large number of people are working from home and creating their own small businesses and broadband internet is vitally important. He asked for more focus on that issue. He also expressed frustration with how the City of Tucson was handling the installation of 5g network poles in the community. Mr. Hunt explained the state and federal restrictions limiting local government's ability to regulate tower and pole placement.

Commissioner Jacobsen asked what company is going to be putting expanded broadband in rural Pima County and who will maintain it?

Mr. Hunt stated if Pima County went forward with such a project it would be a bid process but would also seek out partnerships, but the discussion is premature. Mr. Hunt discussed a similar project in the City of Tucson.

Chair Blumenthal thanked Mr. Hunt for his time and information and suggested he return at a future meeting.

#### 6. Approval of meeting minutes

Commissioner Jacobsen moved, seconded by Commissioner David, to approve the March 18, 2021 meeting summary. The motion was approved 7-0. Chair Blumenthal stated Mr. Cavanaugh and the Economic Development Office was still without staff support and the remaining summaries would be presented at a future meeting

#### 7. Coordinator's report & Updates (Patrick Cavanaugh)

- a. Pima County BOS Resolution 2021-35 (5/14/21) – revisions to County mask mandate

Mr. Cavanaugh stated the mandate has been lifted in Pima County and the City of Tucson following the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and read the Board of Supervisors resolution to the Board.

- b. Update on Pima County COVID 19 vaccinations progress and economic recovery

Mr. Cavanaugh provided the most recent vaccination statistics from the Pima County Health Department and noted he had previously provided the Commission the recovery plan information from Sun Corridor, Inc.

- c. Status of remaining vacancies on SBC Commission

Mr. Cavanaugh said there was only one vacancy remaining and District 3 Chair Sharon Bronson's Office has identified a possible appointment for the next Board of Supervisors

agenda. There is a minor problem with the recent appointment from District 1 Supervisor Rex Scott's office in that the appointee's business employs slightly more than the 100 employee/FTE limit required by the Commission bylaws. Mr. Cavanaugh attributed this to a miscommunication from his office with the District 1 office regarding the nature of full-time equivalent employees and the applicant's calculation of his part time employees. The appointment has already been ratified by the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Cavanaugh stated he had discussed the issue with the Commission Chair and the issue may be able to be resolved through the bylaw amendments being considered for a future agenda item under item 11 of the current agenda.

Chair Blumenthal stated he would ask each Commissioner who has an opinion to provide their thoughts about modifying the Commission's current requirement of limiting eligibility to those company and managers of businesses employing 100 full time equivalent employees or less.

Commissioner David said she was likely against increasing the limit due to the special issues faced by small businesses of less than 100 employees and noted most businesses in Ajo have less than 100. She would likely agree if the Commission votes to raise the limit but wants to ensure the voice of smaller businesses is not eclipsed.

Commissioner Minot said she echoed Commissioner David but is unsure where the limit should be and looks forward to the discussion.

Commissioner Ruiz said he would support keeping it small or at the 100 employee limit noting his firm has five employees. He also cited the large number of very small businesses located in Pima County.

Commissioner Arenas said she agreed with Commissioner David and believes it should be no more than 150.

Vice Chair Goodman favored 125 but thought 150 might be too high

Commissioner Jacobsen said he believes it should be focused on owner-operators that are deeply engaged with their small businesses but believes the limit should be raised to 125.

Chair Blumenthal asked Mr. Cavanaugh about the process. Mr. Cavanaugh read the current bylaw that required 100 and suggested the Commission could amend the bylaw and noted the emphasis on small businesses that permeates the rest of the bylaws. He said there may also be other items in the bylaw that the Commission may want to consider and suggested full Commission discussion of the bylaws at a future meeting.

Chair Blumenthal said there are issues with the attendance and quorum requirements in the bylaws that he would like to have the Commission discuss. He suggested a subcommittee be formed and asked for a motion to form a bylaws subcommittee. Commissioner David moved the item, seconded by Commissioner Minot. Chair Blumenthal asked for subcommittee members to serve with him and Commissioners David and Minot agreed to serve on the bylaws subcommittee. The Commission voted 7-0 to form a Small Business Commission Bylaw Subcommittee

d. BOS consideration of SBC requests to support of two career and technical education bills in the Arizona legislature

Mr. Cavanaugh stated the request letters seeking Board of Supervisors support for the bills that would assist the Pima JTED were distributed to the Board and no response was received.

e. Launch of the "Ready for You" and "Ready for Business" radio and digital ads sponsored by the Small Business Commission

Mr. Cavanaugh said the public service advertising paid for with Federal CARES Act funds are active and getting good audience penetration and response. He noted the radio scripts and digital ad drafts had previously been provided to the Commission.

f. Presentation of the 2020 PCSBC Awards at a BOS meeting

Mr. Cavanaugh provided background about the awards for the new Commissioners and said the Board of Supervisors continues to meet by videoconference due to the pandemic which will delay the presentation of the awards.

g. Questions from the Commission

The Commission had no questions.

8. New Business

a. 2021 Small Business Awards program criteria (Blumenthal)

Chair Blumenthal provided details of the awards criteria and said he wanted to start early and had developed the draft criteria in the exhibit provided in advance to the Commission. Chair Blumenthal asked for a motion to approve the criteria with one modification discussed. Commissioner Ruiz moved that the Commission adopt the criteria as modified, seconded by Commissioner Jacobsen. The motion passed 7-0.

b. Potential changes to Pima County minimum wage (Jacobsen)

Commissioner Jacobsen stated the "Fight for \$15" effort is currently going on in the City of Tucson to raise the minimum wage to \$15 and they are currently trying to collect 30,000 signatures to get the issue on the ballot in November. He stated that a presentation he attended indicated that they will try and pass it in the City and Pima County would follow. He believes is that the minimum wage will not help people and would be harmful to business. He said he wanted to see if the Commission wanted to take a position to advise the Board of Supervisors that the Commission either does or does not support raising the minimum wage at this time.

Commissioner Arenas said she agreed with Commissioner Jacobsen and is opposed to a minimum wage increase to \$15.

Commissioner Ruiz wanted the Commission to discuss it more and to advise the Board. Mr. Cavanaugh recommended placing it on a future agenda for discussion and possible action rather than taking any action on this agenda. He stated he understood the "Fight for \$15" was a ballot initiative just starting in the City but he was unsure whether Pima County, as an arm of the State could impose a minimum wage. He stated he would attempt to get clarification on the County's authority as previously requested by Commissioner Jacobsen.

Commissioner Ruiz asked that it be on the next agenda and Chair Blumenthal concurred.

c. Incentives to increase COVID-19 vaccinations among Pima County residents (Blumenthal)

Chair Blumenthal said he was aware that many local governments across the country offering incentives to people to get vaccinated to protect against Coronavirus and offered examples such as a bar offering a free beer and branding it as "A Shot with a Chaser." He stated he had prepared a brief resolution to the Board of Supervisors for consideration by the Commission that would encourage consideration of a vaccination incentive program. Chair Blumenthal asked for comments and Commissioner Ruiz stated he did not want any incentive directed toward parents to vaccinate their children. Chair Blumenthal agreed and read to the Commission the resolution he wrote. Commissioner Arenas stated she was opposed and believed vaccination should be a choice. Vice Chair Goodman stated he believed it was a good strategy for an important purpose. Mr. Cavanaugh asked for clarification as to who would be offering the incentives. Chair Blumenthal stated it could be modeled in many ways. Mr. Cavanaugh stated Pima County was already having discussions of a possible incentive program and suggested consultation with the Pima County Health Department. He also recommended the Chair's communication to the Board be in the form of a letter and not a resolution. He also noted the Commissioners have just learned of this letter as it was read out to them and would not have much time to consider it or shape the language of the letter being sent from the Commission. Chair Blumenthal stated he would ask for a motion to send a letter to the Board to consider an incentive program. No motion was offered by the Commission and Chair Blumenthal stated he would withdraw the item. Commissioner Minot stated more information would be needed from the Health Department. Chair Blumenthal stated he would accept that as a motion. Vice Chair Goodman seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-3 with Commissioners Ruiz, Jacobsen and Arenas voting nay.

d. Contact information for small businesses operating within Pima County (Blumenthal)

#### 9. Unfinished Business

a. Small business element within Sun Corridor, Inc. (Goodman)

Vice Chair Goodman asked that the item be deferred to the next agenda.

#### 10. Commissioner updates

Chair Blumenthal stated he had recently toured the community of Ajo with Commissioner David.

#### 11. Agenda items for next SBC meeting

Chair Blumenthal stated these items had already been discussed for agenda placement.

#### 12. Adjournment

Vice Chair Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner Arenas to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 7-0 and the meeting adjourned at 5:25pm.