

**CITY OF SURPRISE**  
**Tourism Fund Sub-Committee Meeting**  
**16000 North Civic Center Plaza**  
**Surprise, AZ 85374**

**Monday, January 5, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Councilmember Patrick Duffy called the **Tourism Fund Sub-Committee Meeting** to order at 4:05 p.m. at Surprise City Hall, North Lobby Conference Room, 16000 North Civic Center Plaza Surprise, Arizona 85374, on Monday, January 5, 2026.

**ROLL CALL**

Councilmember Patrick Duffy, Chair; Vice Mayor Jack Hastings, Committee Member; Councilmember Nick Haney, Committee Member.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**CURRENT EVENTS AND REPORTS**

None.

**STAFF REPORTS**

None.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Kendra Pettis, Sports, Entertainment, & Culture Director, Travis Ashby, Sports, Entertainment, & Culture Assistant Director, Tara Combs, Sports, Entertainment & Culture Business Administrator.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

None.

**REGULAR AGENDA ITEM**

**1. Action item: Consideration and action to approve the Tourism Fund Subcommittee meeting minutes of April 23, 2025:**

Vice Mayor Hastings moved to approve the April 23, 2025, Tourism Fund Subcommittee Meeting minutes and Councilmember Haney seconded the motion. Motion carries 3-0.

**2. Action item: Consideration and action pertaining to a recommendation to City Council to utilize a maximum of \$100,000 annually from the Tourism Fund to support the NCAA Big 12 Conference Baseball Championship to be hosted in Surprise for up to 3 years (FY26-FY28).**

Kendra Pettis presented to the sub-committee a power point that explained the background of the Big 12 Championship which is a 5-day, single elimination tournament showcasing the top twelve baseball programs from the conference. The event will be in partnership with the Big 12 Conference, REV Entertainment and the City. The event will showcase Surprise on a national stage, driving tourism -related economic activity and build a foundation for future collegiate & professional events.

Kendra Pettis explained how this event partnership aligns with the Council and Tourism Strategic Plans. From the Council Strategic Plan: Strategy 3.2 – which is providing sports tourism programming; Strategy 3.3 - cultivating an environment for residents and visitors to enjoy arts, culture, and entertainment within the City of Surprise and Strategy 3.5 – identifying opportunities for public-private partnerships to continually improve the quality of life for Surprise residents. From a Tourism Strategic Plan: Focus Area 1: Events and Entertainment – The goal has always been to utilize the Tourism Fund to attract professional event partners, to work with third parties to add event and entertainment opportunities to build and promote year-round tourism activity and increase tourism related room nights. Focus Area 2: Marketing – To increase strategic collaboration with key partners to expand our ability to identify and target demographics for tourism.

Kendra Pettis discussed how the event would support the strategic goals by bringing in 40,000 attendees across the five-day tournament, with an estimate 50% that will be outside the Phoenix metro area, an estimated 3,500 room nights with the 12 teams, coaches, officials, family and friends, and a total estimated economic impact of \$3.5 million.

Kendra Pettis explained that when we look at the Tourism Strategic Goals for Marketing and Media Exposure, the event will have National coverage on ESPN platforms; Big 12 Conference will also execute a comprehensive marketing campaign with regional and national reach, with over one million combined followers on social accounts. From Community Impact, the Big 12 will engage local baseball/youth programs, offer military discounts, outreach to Luke Air Force Base and local businesses which will benefit from increased visitor traffic.

With all of the Tourism Fund Applications that are received, Kendra Pettis looks at what the Tourism Fund Guidelines are that were approved by the Tourism Sub-committee and Council which are hotel room nights, attendance, seasonality and the operating budget. Then, she looks to see how the application fits within those guidelines. In this case, the NCAA has asked for up to \$100,000 from the Tourism Fund for support. The way that this could be met is by the following:

- Category 1 (Hotel Nights) - \$2,500 for every 100 Surprise hotel room nights verified (maximum of \$25,000)
- Category 2 (Attendance) - \$2,500 for every 2000 in total attendance verified (maximum of \$25,000)
- Category 3 (Event Days) - \$2,500 for each event day (5 days total = \$12,500)
- Category 4 (Seasonality – events between May-September) - \$2,500 for each event day (5 days total = \$12,500)
- Category 5 (Operational Costs) - \$25,000 in operational support (marketing, facility rental costs, etc).

The NCAA is requesting from the Tourism Fund not to exceed \$100,000 total in each fiscal year (available for 3 years maximum if the tournament returns to Surprise, FY26-FY28). The funds can be used to reimburse facility use fees and event marketing (which must include “Surprise, Arizona” in any form of marketing) to be considered for reimbursement.

Kendra Pettis stated that the overall NCAA budget is \$800,000 and the Tourism Fund sub-committee has agreed not to ever pay over 50% of the total operation budget of an event/project.

Vice Mayor Hastings asked how big the event is from an economic standpoint. Kendra Pettis answered that the City has never hosted an NCAA National Baseball Championship. The baseball tournament that the City currently hosts in February does not get this big of national media attention. The tournament in February is comprised of 4 teams while this one is 12 teams.

Chair Councilmember Duffy asked if we know where the teams will be staying. Kendra Pettis stated that it is the teams’ responsibility to book the rooms, but NCAA is only promoting the Surprise hotels to the teams. The room nights that are being requested for reimbursement are for Surprise hotel room nights only, so NCAA is incentivizing the teams to stay in Surprise. Travis Ashby commented that Perfect Game baseball tournaments, Division II Tennis Championships and the Big 12 Championship are all going on at the same time making a huge economic impact to the City of Surprise that week.

Kendra Pettis also stated that by hosting these types of events, the City of Surprise will be awarded more similar events since they know the City can host events of this caliber.

Chair Councilmember Duffy made a call to the public. A meeting attendee, Alex, had some questions. Alex stated that the Big 12 was already advertising the event for the City of Surprise and asked if we are or will be getting any help from the state. Kendra Pettis answered that we are not getting any help with this event. Alex asked Kendra Pettis if she had reached out to Legislator Nick Kupper. Alex suggested that we should

because he is interested in this type of tourism out here. Another question Alex asked was how much outreach we were doing to our community. For example, players that are coming out here for the tournament, they should be going to schools letting the kids know that we are going to be having this tournament here. Kendra Pettis stated that NCAA is responsible for all of the paid marketing, but we will go through our normal routes with our marketing and communications team with our social media. The Big 12 is looking at doing ticket deals with our youth sports programs and possibly doing youth clinics. Alex asked if there are ticket discounts for the citizens of the City of Surprise. Kendra Pettis stated that we do for spring training but the ticket pricing for this event has not been put together yet, but it is something that we can ask them to do a resident discount. They have already mentioned giving a youth and military discount. Travis Ashby pointed out that on their Tourism Fund Application, NCAA did attach their marketing plan which included their outreach program. Alex also asked if there will be any social media users who are interested in this helping to promote the event. Kendra Pettis stated that we usually reach out to the local ones for spring training and other events, and she knows NCAA has theirs as well so a lot of it will be a collaboration with all groups involved on the social media side. Alex asked how many beds the City of Surprise has. Kendra Pettis answered that we are under 1000- 900 and something.

Vice Mayor Hastings made a motion to recommend to City Council a budget amendment to utilize up to \$100,000 annually from the Tourism Fund to support the NCAA Big 12 Conference Baseball Championship to be hosted in Surprise for up to three years (FY26-FY28). Councilmember Haney seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

#### **ATTEST:**

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Councilmember Patrick Duffy, Chair

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