



Special Tourism Industry Meeting Minutes – Friday, May 15, 2020 (4pm)

Format:

The forum will take place online using Zoom as the platform. All participants must be registered in advance of the meeting and use the password and link provided.

During the video-conference, all participants will be muted except the featured presenters.

Throughout the forum, participants can raise general questions using Slido. To access Slido, open another window on your computer or your phone and enter <https://www.sli.do>. The passcode for the meeting is 45527. Once this is entered it will take you to the video-conference question centre where you can type in your question and/or vote for other people's questions. The most popular questions get raised to the top and will be the ones that are featured during the Q&A portion.

Meeting Agenda

94 people

4pm – Welcome:

TIA Yukon Executive Director, Blake Rogers

- This session same format as noon calls - we have Q&A at the end through Slido
- Slido information in the chat

4:02pm – Introduction of Speakers:

TIA Yukon Chair, Neil Hartling

- Big event that we are here to address is the announcement by the CMO and premier today regarding reemergence here in the Yukon
- We are part of the industry with the furthest out horizon.
- Hearing from industry: better to hear no season than dangling, not knowing if you buy insurance etc.
- this is a tremendous opportunity and I appreciate the Ministers being available

4:05pm – Remarks from the Yukon Government on the Safe Reopening of the Yukon

Yukon Minister of Tourism & Culture, Hon. Jeanie Dendys

Yukon Deputy Premier & Minister of Ec. Development, Hon. Ranj Pillai

Minister Ranj Pillai:

Summary:

- On Ec. Dev. side: our department has contributed to the Covid recovery plan by providing support program information in an economic lense.
- resilient Yukon provides framework for lifting restrictions and allowing Yukoners and businesses a view towards a safe resumption of activities in coming months
- Ec. Dev is rafting Yukons economic response plan to navigate safe resumption of business activities according to sector specific needs and guidelines
- The plan will be informed by the outreach to the Business Advisory Council, Yukon Tourism Advisory Board, Industry organisations, Chamber of Commerce and ongoing contact with individual business clients.
- Paid Sick Leave Rebate for employers and self employed covered sick leave early on. Total funding approved: approx. \$170,000 - 102 application
- temporary support for events covered costs of related to major events:
- 42 inquiries, 39 applications, funding that went out over \$630,000
- Yukon Business Relief Program: I hope this has helped many of your members and people on the phone - this is something I think has done a good job
- we are looking to push to extend this, info on this we will share quickly
- Statistics on it: as of May 15: 406 inquiries, 214 applications, total funding approved is \$ 1.4million
- Yukon Essential workers Income Support Program: approx. \$4.3 million for low income workers. We are trying to get the program right for people that will use it
- I know this is the most challenging sector right now for us to support
- With the announcement that came today I know many of you have questions about local border restrictions, enforcing self-isolation.
- I work with my colleagues on a case by case basis to look at how we can figure out different plans that will work.
- As you read the plan you'll see where the phases are and my real focus is understanding that we have significant work coming out of phase 1-2.
- Understand that July, Aug, Sep. is so critical for most of you, and hope for new normal as we get into the fall.
- Working with Jeanie's team to understand how we can help people pivot. Supporting them in things they normally don't do. Tourism has the infrastructure
- When I look at what potential revenue can be derived and how people can get put to work and what experience we can give to Yukoners to better understand your product: these are all things I think will be important.

Minister Jeanie Dendys:

- I know the plan is going to have a significant negative impact on our industry. I know this is life time work. It's hard to see the new norm. I am really looking forward to collaborations.
- I want you to know that we have marketing plans locally, regionally nationally and internally when the time is right to do so.
- having the plans released today gives some guidance where we are going as Yukoners.
- Ministers of labour meeting this morning with WCB. They have been in supportive roles and now are pivoting into supporting businesses. Public Health of Canada has entered into new agreement with CCOSH and are launching 3 deliverables:
 1. a Covid 19 website with guidelines for workplaces for all canadian jurisdictions and international best practices including European Union
 2. National guidance for different sectors. We need guidelines that are manageable and reasonable that we can navigate for Yukon businesses.
 3. Advice and guidance at all levels of Public Health and Safety as it relates to employees and employers.
- Direct link to the WCB website - Covid 29 specific page.

4:25pm – Q&A:

Question 1 / Slido:

I understood: International tourism won't be possible until a vaccine is out. Any thoughts on that?

Minister Ranj Pillai:

I will talk about travel restrictions: you heard Dr. Hanley about European flights. US borders: I think some areas in western Canada are looking to have that border opened quicker than others. We will see extensions of border controls continue, but compressed each time. What US/Canadian border will look like will be identified over the next couple months. Jeanie can talk about on European side. No big policy changes this summer I believe.

Minister Jeanie Dendys:

No international flights coming to Whitehorse as per Dr. Hanley. When you look at reopening plan, it has specific conditions around borders. Those will be in place until we're certain we're safe in the Yukon. If they're lifting restrictions, people could come from Van etc., but that's a wait and see. A lot of moving pieces.

Pierre Germain:

Gradual relaxation - once all mechanisms are in place to move on to the next phase. Opportunities in phase 3 for less travel restrictions domestically. International will most likely be the last to be relaxed. Our current restrictions will determine when to be able to move in the next phase.

Minister Ranj Pillaj:

Re: Time frame - People on the call will look at what cash flow will look like. Phase 1 enacted today: Restaurants, hospitality, personal services are going to work through guidelines this weekend and then going to refer to YG next week with guiding plans, then people will start to open. As they are up and running, we will be able to move into the next phase (minimum 2 weeks per phase). Opportunities this summer for some, if people respect the guidelines in place. Timing: no definite answer, but maybe sooner than later.

Blake Rogers:

Follow up on question re: international flights. An announcement from an airline stating they'll be bringing international flights into Toronto from June 3rd - clarity about passengers; I understand it's just returning Canadians to Canada, and Europeans to Europe?

Pierre Germain:

There are international flights - Lufthansa to Toronto, primarily to focus on cargo and repatriate Canadians back into the country, or part of essential services. Authority of Canada: International flights for leisure not until approx. end of June as of now.

Blake Rogers :

Thanks Pierre. Condor is still making bookings at the end of June. Is Condor aware of rules?

Pierre Germain:

We're talking regularly with Condor. Current schedule reflects current restrictions. Condor is not arriving and the schedule will be changed accordingly.

Question 2 / Slido:

I sense a lot of confusion about intra Yukon travel - can we visit all communities - are some restricted - how do we find out exactly what facts are?

Minister Ranj Pillaj:

We're asking people to refrain from non-essential travel to communities. Based on the fact that First Nation Governments are still very concerned. We are trying to be extremely respectful. On opening campgrounds: MOST will open on June 4th - my take is: Community members are still really concerned. Only travel if necessary. As we get into June, and campgrounds will be open - we will continue to put out info - some may be unique, might not be uniform - maybe some communities say "gas up before you come through, don't stop at our gas-station" before going to campground. Every week we will update information.

Minister Jeanie Dendys:

Historical times: What First Nations have gone through, being almost wiped out because of pandemics, that's where apprehension comes from. Communities have lots of elders and seniors. Try to alleviate concerns, but communities are allowed to have a say on who can travel through.

Question 3 / Zoom chat bar.

From Amelie CTMC(4:30 PM):

Is YG going to work with the dev corps regarding local tourism in the communities?

Minister Jeanie Dendys:

Of course, absolutely. Going back to Tourism Development Strategy, much goes back to that with tremendous opportunity for Development Corporations going forward even more than prior to pandemic.

Minister Ranj Pillai:

Of all the 14 Development Corporations I think that we definitely have some First Nations Development Corporations that heavily weighed into the tourism realm. Asked First Nations Chief & Council to provide their perspective on the current situation. And it's up to the Trust, which is exclusive from the Government Chief & Council. Millions of dollars have come from FN Governments invested in Hospitality and Tourism products and it is at risk. We have to come together and be creative and support this industry. First Nation Gov. with their trust hold about between 750million and 1billion \$ of potential investment dollars.

Rich Thompson / Northern Vision Development:

NVD had the support of a number of First Nations, both trust and Dev Corps. and they are very aware of the challenges and how this is impacting us. NVD as a consequence of a recent arrangement that we made with YIDC now has all of the First Nations of the Yukon as investors of NVD. We appreciate everything that you do Minister, and we will continue to do our part of the work.

Stanley Noel / Dena Nezzidi CEO and Corporate Director:

I echo Rich's comments. We're one of the first to invest in NVD. As CEO of one of the First Nations Dev Corps I can tell you that me and my colleagues in the First Nation Dev. Corps sides are actively talking to and trying to inform our shareholders of the First Nation Governments of the importance of having balance. It's not just a blank comment of lockdown of the communities, but we do have businesses that rely on them. What we have to understand is that First Nations Governments are also, like Yukon Gov., trying to protect their community health and elders in an environment where they have very limited access to medical equipment.

What I encourage tourism sector folks to do, is to communicate your plans: Find some unified basic plans from the tourism side that you can communicate to FN stating your awareness of the importance of health in communities and what your plan is to manage that.

Question 4 / Zoom chat bar:

From June Hampton/ Communities Rep on YTAB in Zoom chat(4:36 PM):

I agree that we need to respect the right of communities to make that decision but how does that fit with the plan to promote in-Yukon tourism as the first step of recovery?

Minister Jeanie Dendys:

All ties hand in hand, we need to work in partnership with everyone. Creating confidence for folks to travel , so that there is a welcomeness from our communities. It will take some time, there's just apprehensiveness in FN communities. We need to communicate.

Minister Ranj Pillai:

Working trying together and getting a sense from particular First Nations on what their ideas are. We are probably in the range between 25k to 50k of Yukoners money that would get spent abroad, that is now here in the Yukoners. I will communicate with people to get right, healthy plans to get people to get into action with new customized products.

Minister Jeanie Dendys:

In terms of Tourism recovery plan, I am willing to take on a more hand-on approach, as I have really good relationships in communities. The work that we did in regards to Yukon Tourism Development Strategy is fundamental, we created partnerships and had full buy in from the board. That work is very instrumental in going forward. I am prepared to go into communities with this and have those discussions.

Neil Hartling:

Minister Dendys, thank you for that offer to talk to communities. I am sure a number of operators listening right now are very anxious to explore those relationships they have with their communities. I agree it's very sensitive. But over 40 operators over the weekend reaching out to communities could be overwhelming. What is your recommendation to us and how can we help you on this engagement?

Minister Ranj Pillai:

We're going to talk with municipalities and FN Gov. What we are trying to do here is to politely pivot in a healthy manner to save peoples businesses . We can't wait around for long dialogues.

Minister Jeanie Dendys:

Good suggestion. We are working on having something very concise and are wanting to stay away from complications and time delays.

Question 5 / Slido:

For a lot of businesses it will cost them more to open for inYukon travel only, than they could make so they will probably stay closed - is there help for them?

Minister Ranj Pillai:

We have the discussion of exting our Relief Program is the first piece. Second piece: CanNor will work with YG, more programs will come out in the short run. Making sure infrastructure is in place in communities -> Ec. Dev. working with CAnNor on this.

Sierra Van Der Meer / CanNor :

Number of tourism businesses are going through the Relief Fund Programs, but we're working with companies, as we want them to open and offer services. If there is a Cost differential if you open and it's better staying closed, we want to be there to help with Relief Funding. We want products to be available and Yukoners mental health to be good. If an operator is apprehensive to open because of additional costs, we would work with them. We are here, we have Recovery Money specifically for the tourism sector. We want to work with communities and operators on different strategies to allow us to work this summer (with reduced capacity). If somebody is looking to reframe their product for a local audience and needs financial assistance, I encourage you to reach out to us.

Question 6 / Slido:

It is the middle transportation date between provinces/territories that matters domestically. Any projections on letting BC or Ontario in?

Minister Ranj Pillai:

I know people need a time frame to make decisions but it is difficult. We can get to Phase 3 with lesser restrictions in July, but it depends on different variables. What we are hearing from private sector driven individuals, being very strategic and thoughtful through this is the appropriate way to maximise the recovery from a financial perspective.

Question 7 / Slido:

International travellers to Whitehorse via Vancouver: Do they have to self-isolate in Vancouver or Whitehorse??

Minister Ranj Pillai:

International travelers that are not essential workers are limited in their travel into the Yukon at this point. And even if they are essential workers, we still have the 2 week process in place and you have to self-isolate in Whitehorse.

Question 8 / Slido:

Could cmoh give an estimate date for phase 3. Need to plan tourism season, resp. like to know if we rather cancel our season all together

Minister Ranj Pillai:

I'm going to leave this for the Chief Medical Officer. People have to make strategic decisions based on their business knowledge. You will be referred to the plan and will have to make your own decision based on that.

Question 9 / Slido:

From MARK WALDBILLIG to Everyone: (4:35 PM)

A concrete "closed" date allows business to cancel because we HAVE to. When we cancel based on 'maybes' it puts us in a more 'liable' business position. Have you considered taking on this responsibility to help us make decisions?

Valerie Royle / Tourism and Culture:
Reopening plan is there, right now borders are closed for the foreseeable future. Each business has to evaluate that on their own and the Government will not take on any reliability on that. As you can see in the plan there are lots of triggers and variables not just for our territory. There is no firm date and is not going to be one in the next couple of weeks. Just left meeting with the CMOH and asked him if he has a sense for Phase 3 and his answer was no, there are too many variables and he is evaluating on a daily basis.

Question 10 / Slido:

Minister Dendys thanks for having a plan. As 2020 tourism season is essentially over. What can we expect as support for 2021/22

Minister Jeanie Dendys:
We are working on tweaking the Tourism Recovery Plan with Ec. Dev and TIAY and YTAB. There is a lot of variables here and we are assessing, I hope we are having more information in a short time to see how things go.

Valerie Royle / Tourism & Culture:
The Yukon Tourism Advisory Board is meeting on Tuesday. We do have the Yukon Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund and are looking how to roll that out. Government knows, tourism is hit earliest, longest, hardest. Support will be longer than for other sectors and we will see what that looks like. We'll be working on it for the next couple weeks, and we'll have an economic recovery plan but we needed the re-opening plan first.

Question 11 / Slido:

How is tourism's int'l marketing staff and \$ being moved to help respond and help businesses?

Valerie Royle / Tourism & Culture:
We have savings as Travel Canada has cancelled its international Travel Shows until February 2021. We use savings to offset the increase that we have seen through Covid. We are looking at how to maximize those resources and get them out to assist in recovery and tourism development.

Minister Ranj Pillai:
Good advice from industry - reallocate funds to to enhance revenue for companies in industry for them to continue to be here in the future.

Blake Rogers / TIA Yukon:
Thank Ministers for their time, we still have a lot of questions in the queue. We are trying to gather them and find answers, but I will just ask if we might be able to do a follow up meeting like this, cause this has been fantastic and really important conversations are being had. Wondering if there might be an opportunity for your time possibly next week?
(positive response from Minister Dendys and Pillai)

Question 12 / Slido:

If we are realistic, real tourism in Yukon isn't going to be normal for at min the coming 12 months. Are business supports being discussed for the long term?

Minister Jeanie Dendys:

Yes, absolutely. I think that Valerie answered that well. Knowing that our industry is hit first, hardest and longest, those are discussions that we have on a weekly basis with the Federal Minister of Ec. Dev. We have tourism specific FPT calls weekly and reiterate it on a weekly basis.

Blake Rogers/ TIA Yukon:

Thanks again for your time Ministers, highly appreciated.

Neil Hartling / Chair TIA Yukon:

Thank you Ministers. Just for anybody on the call in regards to timeline, milestones and Phases: I wouldn't expect any stage to be quicker than 2-3 weeks, in a perfect world. You can do the math and see where that brings us into the summer. I will put this out for consideration. Thanks again everybody, it has been a long week and a long day. We will all be stronger working together and I am looking forward to working together with you all.

5pm – Adjourn