

VISIT GRAND JUNCTION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

August 13, 2019

Holiday Inn and Suites Grand Junction Airport
2751 Crossroads Blvd.
Grand Junction, CO

Presiding: Britt Mathwich

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Paul Petersen, Julie Shafer, Tammy Anderson, Josh Niernberg, Kevin Reimer, Mikhail Blosser

Grand Junction City Councilmember Present: Phyllis Norris

Board Members Absent: Ken Mabery, Zeb Miracle

Guests: Angela Padalecki – Grand Junction Regional Airport

Staff Present: Greg Caton, Elizabeth Fogarty, Mason Barrows, Ciara DePinto, Kim Machado

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 pm.

Minutes from the July 9, 2019 meeting: Tammy Anderson motioned to approve the minutes as written; Paul Petersen seconded. Motion passed.

Community Updates – Grand Junction Regional Airport

Angela Padalecki, Executive Director of the Grand Junction Regional Airport, shared data on passenger traffic for 2019 year-to-date compared to previous years. The goal is to reach 500,000 passengers by 2021. Areas of focus to increase traffic include shrinking the airfare gap between Grand Junction and Denver, adding non-stop air service to a west coast hub, improving eastbound air service access, and increasing the catchment area retention to 50%. Angela also reported that the airport's \$184 million capital plan covers 13 projects including fencing north of the runways, a terminal renovation project which is 90% complete, and a 10-year runway project which began in August 2018.

Tru by Hilton Hotel Update

Kevin Reimer reported that business at the new Tru by Hilton hotel has been positive since the July 9 opening, despite having electricity and hot water issues. He also mentioned that new businesses, including a brewery and a restaurant, will be opening near the hotel, which will add to the guest's experience.

Review of 2019 Grand Junction Air Show

Julie Shafer reported that based on initial numbers, attendance at this year's Grand Junction Air Show (GJAS) increased 30 – 35% over the last show in 2017. She mentioned that the event promotion strategy with Visit Grand Junction to sell more tickets was successful. Elizabeth Fogarty distributed a post-event report to the board members that summarized the marketing strategy for the GJAS along with the results. She reported that Visit GJ was able to capture over 250 creative assets through social media, which came in the form of mentions, tags, and hash-tagging posts. Total online reach was over 310,300 from a total of 90 social posts and 16,300 total owned media page views. The overall sentiment from the event was very positive, resulting in thousands of responses to Visit GJ's event page, along with an active discussion within the event page on Facebook. This information is used to provide strategic direction for future events along with insights into improving communications and operations. Elizabeth commented that this partnership is an example of how Visit GJ's event partnership program can provide added value to events.

Julie thanked Visit GJ for partnering to make this year's GJAS successful.

Discussion and Vote on Partnership Language with Palisade Marketing Partners

Elizabeth reported that since the joint meeting with the Palisade Tourism Advisory Board (TAB) on July 9, representatives from the Town of Palisade have reached out regarding specifics of the marketing partnership. A meeting is scheduled later this week to address their questions. A meeting with officials from the town of Fruita will be scheduled soon.

The Visit Grand Junction board proposed the same motion, that Palisade TAB formally approved on July 9. Britt Mathwich read the motion aloud. The language is stated as follows:

Palisade marketing partners (Town of Palisade, Palisade Chamber, and Palisade Tourism Advisory Board) and Visit Grand Junction will meet before 2020 budget development of all three Palisade organizations to share marketing strategies, scope, and marketing budgets. This will allow Visit Grand Junction to strategize as a partner and provide additional value while avoiding duplication of effort. Visit Grand Junction's willingness to provide additional value to Palisade marketing partners, including complimentary listings on the Visit Grand Junction website, will be dependent upon the level of partnership, budget, and participation from Palisade as a whole.

Paul Petersen approved the motion as read. Tammy Anderson seconded. Motion approved by all board members present.

Director Update

Elizabeth introduced Visit GJ's two interns, Mason Barrows and Ciara DePinto. Mason and Ciara both shared their background, areas of study, and the projects they have been working on at VGJ.

Elizabeth provided updates on the following:

- The Colorado Governor's Conference on Tourism (GovCon) will be held on September 29 through October 1, 2019. Once again, Visit GJ will be sponsoring a select number of community members to attend this year's conference. Britt Mathwich, Kevin Reimer, and Tammy Anderson will be attending. Elizabeth mentioned if other board members are interested in attending to contact her.
- An outside recruiter has been contracted to actively recruit for the Marketing and Advertising Manager position, which will be posted soon.
- A request for proposal (RFP) for branding will be issued soon with a 2 – 3-week turnaround. RFPs for website development and PR will also be issued. For creative, an option is to hire a creative agency who will not only provide creative for the new brand but also remain as the creative agency for on-going projects. Elizabeth distributed a copy of Bill Baker's new book, *Place Branding for Small Cities, Regions and Downtowns*. The new edition expands on Mr. Baker's previous book, *Destination Branding for Small Cities*, (which was distributed to board members last fall) with more case studies and examples.
- Elizabeth recently attended Destinations International Annual Conference and will be attending the U.S. Travel Association Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) next week.
- Lodging tax collections increased for June's business by 7.6% over the same 2018 period. This reflects the original 3% lodging tax. Year-to-date collections through June are 6.8% above the same 2018 period.

City Manager Update

City Manager, Greg Caton, shared that the City has established an internship program with Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College. The "1.0" version of the program is for a part-time internship while the student is attending school. The "2.0" version of the program offers full-time, benefitted employment for the graduating intern. All city departments are participating in the program.

Greg mentioned that two questions will potentially be on November's ballot, but are not certified yet. One question will address whether the City should utilize excess TABOR funds for transportation improvements. The other question will address extending lease terms of city-owned properties specifically in the Las Colonias business park area, from 25 years to 99 years. Extending the lease term will assist with attracting businesses and ease bank funding issues.

There being no further business, Julie Shafer motioned to adjourn the meeting; Josh Niernberg seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:03 pm.