

**VISIT GRAND JUNCTION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**October 8, 2019**

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

**Presiding:** Britt Mathwich

**Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present:** Julie Shafer, Tammy Anderson, Kevin Reimer, Josh Niernberg, Paul Peterson, Ken Mabery

**Board Members Absent:** Mikhail Blosser, Zeb Miracle

**Staff Present:** Elizabeth Fogarty, Mason Barrows, Kyle Amann, Michael Bodman

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 PM.

Minutes from the September 10, 2019 meeting: Ken Mabery motioned to approve the minutes as written; Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed.

**2019 Governor's Tourism Conference Recap and Attendee Comments**

Elizabeth Fogarty gave a brief overview of the 2019 Governor's Conference on Tourism (GovCon) on September 29-October 1, 2019, in Denver. Visit Grand Junction (Visit GJ) sponsored 13 attendees. Six of the attendees were community members, two were board members, and the rest were Visit GJ staff. The goal of the scholarship is to share with community members tourism trends, how they can be more involved in the industry, network with tourism professionals, and further expand their knowledge of the travel and tourism industry. Elizabeth shared that Visit GJ will continue to offer the GovCon scholarships, as it has been very well received by those who have attended via the scholarship program.

Tammy Anderson, Britt Mathwich (Visit GJ Board members), Shane O'Neill (City of Grand Junction), Caitlyn Love (Downtown Grand Junction), Eric Yarina (Holiday Inn Express and Candlewood Suites), Michael Bodman, Kyle Amann, Mason Barrows (Visit GJ Staff), each gave a brief summary of the sessions they attended at GovCon. Topics discussed included the Colorado Concierge program, the need for data to direct insights, the cannabis, and hemp industry, the importance of community involvement, partnerships, place-making, place marketing, and ColoRoadtrips. Elizabeth thanked the attendees for sharing their insights and for representing Grand Junction at GovCon. Visit GJ had the most attendees from anyone DMO in the state.

**Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan**

Dave Thornton (City of Grand Junction Community Development) reported that the 2020 Comprehensive Plan is in the process of being updated from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. Community development is using data and community input to create the 2020 Comprehensive Plan. Dave described that the new plan will include more than just the basic city needs including topics such as public health, economic development, and tourism. In order to get the community more involved in the planning process, community development will host two meetings. A Community Vision Review and Public Input Workshop that will be held at Two Rivers Convention Center on October 29, 2019 at 5:30 PM and a Sub-Area Plans Workshop held at Lincoln Park Barn on October 30, 2019 at 5:30 PM.

## **Community Updates**

Vara Kusal (Horizon Drive District) presented a map of the 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Horizon Drive roundabout and shared with the Board that the Horizon Drive District (HDD) is in support of the ballot question 2A.

Darshann Ruckman (Clarion Inn) announced that the Clarion Inn will be downsizing from 239 rooms to 143 rooms due to foundation issues. Demolition will begin the week of Thanksgiving. The Clarion will continue to have pet-friendly rooms, which will now be complemented by an outdoor “dog park” area as well. Darshann explained that they will also have an outdoor smoking and sitting area 15 feet away from any entrances that can be used by guests as a place to relax.

## **Director Update**

Elizabeth updated the Board on the following topics:

- Lodging tax collections for August’s business was 0.7 percent down compared to August 2018’s business (original 3 percent lodging tax). Elizabeth stated that this was the month that Visit GJ predicted to be considerably down due to Two Rivers Convention Center being closed for renovation, which resulted in a significant reduction in conference business. August 2018 hosted 18 groups/conferences compared to zero for August 2019. Considering essentially lodging tax revenues for Sept. 2019 as basically flat, it was an accomplishment to make up the difference in lost conference business. Year-to-date lodging tax collections through August are 5.9 percent above the same 2018 YTD period for the original 3 percent lodging tax.
- The job title and description of the Marketing Manager position has been revised again to attract more data-driven specific candidate talent. One candidate has been interviewed in-person, while others have had phone interviews. The hope is that the revised job title and description will bring in stronger candidates who are proficient in data-led marketing.
- Elizabeth shared that the City of Fruita and the Town of Palisade decided not to partner with Visit GJ in a formalized way to support a larger brand and institute a place-making strategy across all three communities. The formal ask was a request for each community to contribute \$40,000 each to Grand Junction, and Visit GJ would continue with its \$3.4 million investment. Fruita passed on the opportunity altogether. Palisade countered with \$5,000 (with a list of expectations), and Visit GJ chose not to accept. Kevin Reimer commended the City and Visit Grand Junction’s efforts in trying to establish the partnerships. The Visit GJ Board also expressed their appreciation for the amount of effort, talent and funds that went into the 18-month process to encourage the communities to formally partner. Elizabeth shared her appreciation for the Visit GJ Board’s support and also thanked the Grand Junction hotels who help fund the Visit GJ Department. Elizabeth shared that Grand Junction will continue to excel in all areas as a destination, although it was unfortunate that the neighboring destinations did not seize the opportunity to expand their own initiatives through the Visit GJ Department.

## **Other Business**

- Elizabeth reminded the Board that Kevin Reimer is term-limited as a Visit GJ board member. Possible candidates for the three open board seats were discussed among the Visit GJ Board members.
- As the Board continues to hear from area community partners, they requested a presentation from DDA (Downtown Development Authority) for the next board meeting, if they were available. Elizabeth shared that the Sports Commission is scheduled for the November Board Meeting.

Paul Peterson motioned to adjourn the meeting, Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:13 PM.