

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
October 10, 2023, 3 pm – 5 pm

The meeting was held at the Hotel Maverick, 840 Kennedy Ave., Grand Junction, CO

Presiding: Kelsey Coleman, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Paul Petersen, Pat Nichols-Perrin, Tammy Anderson, Elizabeth Fortushniak, Brenda Greene, Mikhail Blosser

Absent: Joe Burtard

City of Grand Junction Staff Present: Elizabeth Fogarty, Director; Kim Machado, Administrative Specialist

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Board Chair Kelsey Coleman.

Minutes from the September 12, 2023, meeting: Pat Nichols-Perrin motioned to approve the minutes as written; Tammy Anderson seconded. Motion passed.

2023 Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference Recap and Attendee Comments

The 2023 Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference (GovCon) was held in Ft. Collins, CO, on September 26 - 29, 2023. Representing Grand Junction were ten attendees, consisting of three Visit GJ advisory board members, four community stakeholders, and three Visit GJ staff members. Visit GJ covered the expenses related to conference registration and lodging for the sponsored attendees.

Visit Grand Junction staff members Mason Barrows and Matthew Hart shared their insights, key takeaways, and action plans derived from the sessions they attended. The sessions covered a variety of topics, including artificial intelligence (AI), emerging marketing and data trends, sustainability, brand development, responsible destination management and stewardship, and visitor services.

Board member Tammy Anderson shared her conference insights, including additional information gained from the AI session.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth Fogarty provided an update on Grand Junction's lodging tax collections and hotel metrics for August 2023's business activity. For August 2023's business, lodging tax collections were 16.5% above August 2022. For August 2023 YTD, lodging tax collections were 14.3% higher compared to August 2022 YTD.

For August 2023's hotel metrics, Grand Junction's occupancy was 74.9%, ADR was \$113.85, and RevPAR was \$85.26. For August 2023, Grand Junction's occupancy was 2.5% higher than Colorado when including ski towns, 0.5% higher than Colorado when excluding ski towns, and 13.5% higher than the U.S. occupancy. For August 2023 YTD, Grand Junction's occupancy was 67.0%, ADR was \$107.86, and RevPAR was \$72.29. For August 2023 YTD, Grand Junction's occupancy was 1.4% higher than Colorado when including ski towns, even with Colorado when excluding ski towns, and 4.5% higher than the U.S. occupancy.

Other updates include:

- The annual City of Grand Junction Board and Commission Appreciation Dinner is scheduled for December 11, 2023. Board members were encouraged to save the date. Formal invitations will be sent out next week.
- The election for Chair and Vice-Chair of the Visit GJ Advisory Board for 2024 will occur during the December 12, 2023, meeting. Board members were encouraged to consider potential candidates.
- Community and Industry Meetings, Conferences, and Events that Elizabeth attended recently include CTO's Destination Blueprint first and second Core Team meeting; the Western Colorado Arts Center Board meeting; the 2023 Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference; City Council Workshop: City of Grand Junction and Visit Grand Junction 2024 Requested Budget; and the Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance meeting.

- Visit GJ's Core Team for the CTO's Destination Blueprint met twice to discuss Visit GJ's advancing the tourism workforce. The next steps include a survey to be sent out to a broad group of community stakeholders and a meeting of the Core Team prior to the in-person workshop consisting of a larger group of stakeholders on November 28.
- In response to a Visit GJ advisory board member requesting information on Visit GJ's advertising creative, Elizabeth shared Visit GJ's past and present animated, video, and programmatic ads.
- Recent media coverage of Grand Junction included AFAR Magazine ("12 Epic Hikes in the U.S. Plan a Trip Around"); Edible Aspen ("Appetite for Adventure"); and Huckberry ("3 Days in the Gateway to the Western Slope | Kitted UP – Grand Junction").
- Grand Junction's hotel occupancy during the past four winter seasons (2019/2020 through 2022/2023) was shared. The past four winter seasons in Grand Junction saw an average annual year-over-year occupancy increase of 5.2 percent. Visit GJ considers the months of November through March as a winter season for Grand Junction.
- As time allowed, Elizabeth shared information and images from the 2023 Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference sessions she attended. Additional information from the conference will be shared at future board meetings.

There being no further business, Elizabeth Fortushniak motioned to adjourn; Mikhail Blosser seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.