

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
May 14, 2024, 3 pm – 5 pm

The meeting was held at Residence Inn by Marriott, 767 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction, CO.

Presiding: Brenda Greene, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Theresa Horvat, Manon Derosiers, Elizabeth Fortushniak

Absent: Pat Nichols-Perrin, Tammy Anderson, Joe Burtard, Mikhail Blosser

City Council Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Randall Reitz

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

Guests: Jamie Hamilton, Tournament Chairman, JUCO; Candace Carnahan, President and CEO, Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce

A quorum of Visit Grand Junction advisory board members was not achieved for this meeting. ***As a result, the following information are notes resulting from the meeting and are not to be considered official minutes.***

The meeting began at 3:00 p.m.

Due to the lack of a quorum, the minutes from the April 9, 2024, meeting were not presented for approval and will be considered for approval instead at the June 11, 2024, board meeting.

Visit Grand Junction Director Elizabeth Fogarty welcomed Mayor Pro Tem Randall Reitz as the new City Council liaison to the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board. The advisory board members introduced themselves and shared their backgrounds. Elizabeth also expressed appreciation for former Mayor and current Councilmember Anna Stout's support as City Council liaison to the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board from May 2023 through April 2024.

Community Updates and Q&A

Jamie Hamilton, Tournament Chairman of the Junior College World Series (JUCO), provided an update on the 2024 Alpine Bank JUCO World Series tournament, which will be held from May 25 through June 1, 2024. All of the tournament games will be broadcast nationally on ESPN+. Tournament ticket sales are trending at 37% above the same time period in 2023. The annual JUCO Banquet is Friday, May 24, 2023, and will feature Drew Goodman, the television play-by-play sportscaster of the Colorado Rockies, as the speaker. Other JUCO-related events include the Challenger Baseball game and MLB Play Ball Youth Clinic for local youth.

Jamie thanked the City of Grand Junction, the Visit Grand Junction advisory board, and staff for their continued support of JUCO. Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Jamie for sharing the updates with the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board and for his continued leadership with JUCO.

Candace Carnahan, President and CEO of the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), shared information on the Chamber's mission to support businesses in Grand Junction, along with the latest economic indicators. Results from the annual chamber member survey indicate that the Chamber members' primary concern is recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce. The chamber's efforts and initiatives to address the concern include grants for promoting work-based learning opportunities and essential skills development, such as conflict management and accountability. Candace further shared the Chamber's policy on the latest legislative bills impacting businesses, housing, and taxes.

Elizabeth thanked Candace for the update and asked what Visit Grand Junction could do to enhance the partnership with the Chamber. Candace expressed that Visit Grand Junction is a great partner and to remember the Chamber's resources to help support a vibrant community. She mentioned she would contact Visit Grand Junction if she needed assistance.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth shared an update on Grand Junction's lodging tax collections and hotel metrics for March 2024's business activity. For March 2024's business, lodging tax collections were estimated to be 8.1% above March 2023. Year-to-date lodging tax collections are 10.8% higher through March 2024's business compared to the same three-month period in 2023.

For March 2024's hotel metrics, Grand Junction's occupancy was 59.9%, ADR was \$90.14, and RevPAR was \$53.99. For March 2024, Grand Junction's occupancy was 3.5% above Colorado's occupancy when including ski towns, 1.3% below Colorado's occupancy when excluding ski towns, and 6.0% lower than the U.S. occupancy. For March 2024 YTD, Grand Junction's occupancy was 51.4%, ADR was \$86.52, and RevPAR was \$44.50. For March 2024 YTD, Grand Junction's occupancy was 9.1% below Colorado's YTD occupancy when including ski towns, 8.4% below Colorado's YTD occupancy when excluding ski towns, and 11.6% behind the U.S. occupancy.

Other updates included:

- Community and Industry Meetings, Conferences, and Events that Elizabeth attended from March 13 through April 9, 2024, include the Destination Thinx! X Innovations Meeting; Western Colorado Art Center Board Meeting; Destination Learning Lab with Colorado Tourism Office (CTO); Palisade Chamber Executive Director, Jessica Burford, Meeting; Colorado Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (CADMO) Meeting; Greg Caton Community Farewell Reception; CMU Hospitality Management Board Meeting; CTO Tourism Marketing Committee Meeting; City Manager, Greg Caton, Staff Farewell Open House; Dos Rios Developer Meeting; JUCO Meeting; and Colorado Mesa University Hospitality Management Club Reception.

Community and Industry Meetings, Conferences, and Events that Elizabeth attended from April 10 through May 13 include the Colorado National Monument Association Meeting with the Executive Director; Grand Junction Economic Partnership's Western Colorado Economic Summit - Panel Speaker; Visit Grand Junction Volunteer Ambassador Potluck Luncheon; Beacon Fest - Volunteer Award Presentation; CMU OREC Class - Guest Speaker; CMU Associate Professor, Britt Mathwich, Retirement Reception; City of Grand Junction Employee Appreciation Lunch Events; Western Colorado Art Center Fundraiser - "A Night in Paris"; Museum of Western Colorado Meeting with Executive Director; Grand Junction Air Service Alliance Board Meeting; Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce State of the Valley; JUCO Committee Meeting.

- Recent media coverage of Grand Junction included The Points Guy ("The 10 Best Places to Visit in May"); HGTV online ("15 Elopement Destinations We Love"); Fox 31 KDVR Denver ("Exploring Unique Destinations in Colorado with Travel Expert Jennifer Broome"); Fifty Grande ("Great Hotels Under \$200"); Outside ("15 Super Cool Places to Camp in Colorado"); and Boston Globe ("Vintage Hotel Debuts in Western Colorado").
- Visit Grand Junction contracted travel expert and media personality, Jeanenne Tornatore. She appeared on large market television stations, highlighting Grand Junction as a dual-climate, less-crowded, and affordable destination to consider for Spring Break. Jeanenne featured Visit GJ's b-roll including hiking, biking, golfing, dining, skiing, the Grand Junction Regional Airport, and the Colorado National Monument in the segments. Visit Grand Junction contracted over 16 TV news spots in total. The segments shown to the advisory board members included Fox 19 Cincinnati, Fox 6 Milwaukee, and Business First AM, a daily business news program broadcast on 114 TV stations across America.

Elizabeth Fortushniak shared an update on the Grand Valley River Festival scheduled for May 18, 2024.

The meeting concluded at 5:20 p.m.