

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
March 10, 2026, 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.

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

Presiding: Manon Desrosiers, Vice-Chair

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Members Present: Elizabeth Fortushniak, Julie Shafer, Theresa Horvat, Brenda Greene, Dora Fang, Tevfik Demirciftci

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Members Absent: Pat Nichols-Perrin, Christina Schultz

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Vice-Chair Manon Desrosiers

Minutes from the February 10, 2026, advisory board meeting: Theresa Horvat motioned to approve the minutes as written; Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed.

Community Updates and Q&A – Grand Junction Economic Partnership

Curtis Englehart, Executive Director of the Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP), provided an update on GJEP's programs, initiatives, and goals. He shared that GJEP continues to focus on primary job creation, proactive business recruitment, assistance with business relocation and expansion, and collaboration with community partners throughout Mesa County. Curtis highlighted recent commercial development activity, GJEP's work related to site selection and performance-based incentives, the site selector familiarization tour, and the annual Economic Summit. He also shared GJEP's economic metrics for the 2025 year. In response to an advisory board member's question about hospitality business recruitment, Curtis explained that GJEP targets industries that generate higher-wage primary jobs tied to a wage threshold, and does not directly recruit hotels or the hospitality industry, but happy to be at the table. Curtis noted Visit Grand Junction's data and confirmed that Grand Junction is prime for development but costs on a national level is an issue. Advisory board members discussed the significant need for additional lodging and tourism related businesses to better support increased visitor activity including sports tourism. Curtis added that GJEP is supportive of hospitality development even though it is not a primary business recruitment focus.

Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Curtis for the update and asked if there is anything Visit Grand Junction can help with or anything that can be improved upon (by Visit Grand Junction). Curtis replied that Visit Grand Junction continues to do a great job marketing the area.

Community Updates and Q&A – Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Kirk Oldham, Area Wildlife Manager for Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Mesa & Garfield Counties, provided an update on recent recreation and wildlife-related efforts. He shared information about CPW's 2025–2029 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and the growing importance of outdoor recreation across Colorado. Kirk noted that outdoor recreation continues to be an economic driver for the state and discussed the plan's four goals: resiliency, collaboration, education, and equity. He also shared updates on regional partnerships, trail and stewardship grants, and legislation intended to strengthen coordination with local recreation partners. On the wildlife side, Kirk mentioned that CPW manages over 900 species of wildlife. He further mentioned zebra mussel concerns in the Colorado River corridor, wolf reintroduction efforts and monitoring in Colorado, and ongoing wildlife management issues affecting the state and region.

Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Kirk for the update and for the ongoing partnership between Visit Grand Junction and CPW. She asked if there is any other information Visit Grand Junction can help share. She confirmed that the department continues to focus on Leave No Trace principles, constantly putting responsible messaging in blogs, etc. Elizabeth asked if there were any trails or areas CPW would prefer not to be talked about. Kirk stated no and appreciates the collaboration.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth shared an update on Grand Junction's lodging tax collections and key hotel performance metrics for January 2026's business activity.

For January 2026's business, Grand Junction's lodging tax collections were 3.5% above January 2025. This year-over-year comparison is not directly comparable due to a 2026 Grand Junction tax code change that eliminated the vendor's fee deduction previously allowed in 2025 to offset administrative costs associated with collecting and remitting lodging tax. On a comparable basis, after removing that deduction from the prior-year comparison, January 2026 lodging tax collections were 1.0% above January 2025. Hotel occupancy was 45.0%, average daily rate (ADR) was \$87.89, and revenue per available room (RevPAR) was \$39.52.

Notable hotel metrics include:

- January 2026 occupancy of 45.0% was 1.9% above January 2025, and outpaced Colorado (including and excluding ski towns) and the U.S. It was the highest recorded occupancy for any month of January in Grand Junction's history. This marks the ninth consecutive month that Grand Junction has paced ahead of Colorado (including and excluding ski resorts) and the U.S. in occupancy.
- January 2026 ADR of \$87.89 was 2.6% above January 2025, and outpaced Colorado (including and excluding ski towns) and the U.S. It was the highest recorded ADR for any month of January in Grand Junction's history. This marks the sixth month that Grand Junction has paced ahead of Colorado (including and excluding ski resorts) and the U.S. in ADR.
- January 2026 RevPAR of \$39.52 was 4.6% above January 2025, and outpaced Colorado (including and excluding ski towns) and the U.S. It was the highest recorded RevPAR for any month of January in Grand Junction's history. This marks the ninth consecutive month that Grand Junction has paced ahead of Colorado (including and excluding ski resorts) and the U.S. in RevPAR.

Other updates included:

- The City of Grand Junction Boards and Commissions Volunteer Appreciation Banquet will be held on April 27, 2026, at 5 p.m. at the Grand Junction Convention Center. A formal invitation will be emailed to all board members.

There being no further business, Dora Fang motioned to adjourn; Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.