

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
MARCH 12, 1996

PRESIDING: Brad Higginbotham, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lon Carpenter, Doug Gust, Fay Timmerman, Bill Maiers, Tom Kleinschnitz, R.T. Mantlo, Dan Sharp, Ken Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Karen Berryman

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Erin Chapman, Barbara Bowman

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 13, 1996: Dan Sharp moved the minutes be approved as written; Tom Kleinschnitz seconded; passed unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: The Board retreat will be held Wednesday, March 27 from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm at Bookcliff Country Club. The Chair asked each member to be prepared to present their vision for the VCB and strategies to achieve that vision. The day will begin with a review of the 1995 retreat goals and action plans as well as a discussion of the 1995 pre-retreat focus sessions. The Director and Chair will prepare an outline agenda for the retreat. Staff need not be present for the entire day, but will join the Board for lunch.

RV, Sport and Boat Show: Doug Gust reported that the show was well attended and the weekend was extremely busy. The VCB partners gave out approximately 3,700 packets; additional information was requested by about 10% of those receiving packets. The wineries were the number one area of interest followed by

- biking (a poster of the Fruita Fat Tire Festival was displayed),
- Country Jam;
- rafting/canoeing;
- Colorado National Monument;
- hiking/camping

Compliments were paid to Barb Bowman for the booth lay-out, which encouraged interaction with attendees. Over 1,000 entries were received in the partners' give-away; 75% requested more information about Grand Junction. The response at this show was a complete reversal of that received at a Denver consumer show 4 years ago when 80% of the attendees turned down Grand Junction information.

Tom reminded the Board that the VCB attended this show in response to specific requests from our tourism partners who said they would attend this show and did not, as well as those who talked about being involved and were not. Tom also pointed out that some partners spent very little working time in the booth; on Sunday (an exceptionally busy day), Barb Bowman and Doug Gust were the only ones working the booth the entire day. He suggested that partners' level of commitment will have to be judged before the VCB commits to another consumer show of this type. We would need to question

those who did not participate. Additionally, he recognized the tremendous commitment of staff resources on the part of those partners who essentially “carried” the booth and acknowledged that those entities will have to make their own decision if they are able to make similar commitment in the future. Tom and Doug will discuss these concerns at the Colorado West Tourism Council meeting this Thursday (Colorado Monument Trading Post, 5:30 pm).

Other Board Business: The DDA will host our April Board meeting at the C.D. Smith Building.

R.T. Mantlo reported on discussions at the Tri-City dinner. He suggested that VCB Board members meet with Fruita City Council representatives to inform them of how the VCB promotes Fruita attractions and how our volunteers promote the entire area, not just Grand Junction. The Chair suggested staff explore locations for future Board meetings in both Fruita and Palisade.

Special Events: Fay reminded the Board that Front Page Follies will be presented at the Avalon Theater March 29-30. Organizers have worked very hard at promoting this event out of town; a travel club from the Denver area is expected to bring a motorcoach for the production.

City Council: R.T. Mantlo discussed Council’s actions to rescind the December 1995 eastern annexation. A discussion followed concerning how that affects the Clifton Inn and KOA relative to the two properties (Orchard House and Stonehaven) that have voluntarily become full partners with the VCB, and if the VCB should continue sending leads to the Clifton Inn and KOA. Motion by Lon Carpenter: The Director should open communications with the KOA Campground and Clifton Inn regarding those properties voluntarily paying 3% of gross sales toward the VCB’s marketing efforts, and if they choose to contribute 3% of their gross then they will continue receiving full benefits as VCB partner. Fay Timmerman seconded; passed unanimously.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT: Lodging tax is down versus the same period for 1995. Dan Sharp noted government group business is down; Powderhorn is reporting a decrease; and the number of road closures on I-70 have been higher than usual this winter. Special Events are helping to bring more business; weekends in March and April are expected to be strong. The Museum’s Grand River Indian Artists gathering has commitments from 66 artists.

Group sales look positive so far for 1996; we expect our response capability to improve with the addition of the sales assistant position. Convention Servicing is working toward repeat business from groups that have met here 2-3 years ago. The 1996 official Visitor Guide was distributed. Paper cost increases were more than anticipated and the project will be over budget.

Public Relations: Char Shoffner made arrangements for a 9-person film crew from Thailand. The owner of this TV Company also owns a travel company and expects to bring tours to our area in 1997-98. Staff will meet with this company at Pow Wow in Los Angeles. We also hosted 13 travel writers on the Grand Circle fam (9 were international). The group was here for a very limited time, but we are hopeful that positive articles will result.

Air Service Task Force: Air 21 representatives are very committed to partnering with the community. They are interested in packaging and will allow wholesalers to book reservations in their system. This is a marketing-oriented company; to build passenger load to Fresno, they billed the destination as “Fresno/Yosemite.” They would be amenable to touting Grand Junction in similar ways (Grand Junction/Moab/Aspen).

Air 21 needs to be successful to stay here: flights to Colorado Springs and Las Vegas need to be 50% full. Air 21 has committed to providing comp tickets for two sales missions (to Colorado Springs and Las Vegas). Tashiro is writing copy to overprint on our postcards for a mailing to travel agents in advance of each trip. The Director will work with the Colorado Springs CVB to set this up, probably in mid-April. Las Vegas will be targeted in early May. Air 21 will also provide comp tickets for a media fam, as well as comp air fare for participating Pow Wow partners. In return for this in-kind contribution, Air 21 will be added as a full partner at Pow Wow and a representative will be present in the booth. We are discussing comp air fare for a pre-Pow Wow fam for Pacific Rim tour operators who represent high traffic to Las Vegas. Jet service from Las Vegas to Grand Junction could provide a tremendous boost to our ability to market to Pacific Rim countries.

Other Business: The Durango Chamber Resort Association has asked Tashiro to submit a proposal for advertising services. Because of possible conflict of interest, Tashiro will not respond to the RFP without prior consent from the VCB Board. Tom said that the VCB can benefit from any expertise Tashiro acquires. Doug recognized the potential for conflict, depending on how Tashiro would handle the accounts. He suggested that, if successful in the Durango bid, Tashiro could put together co-op marketing opportunities. R.T. sees this as a win-win situation. Fay had no strong feelings about the issue. Bill pointed out that Durango is Grand Junction's competition; Tashiro could open new markets for Durango just as they have for Grand Junction. The consensus of the Board is to consent to Tashiro responding to Durango's RFP.

OTHER BUSINESS: Colorado Reservation Service has inquired if the Board made a decision on the proposed contract. Members noted that we requested a proposal for fulfillment, but were given a proposal for central reservations. The Board is very concerned about the type of information and level of service callers would receive. Potential visitors would not have the benefit of the level of knowledge or enthusiasm staff provides.

Doug Gust moved the meeting adjourn, Tom Kleinschnitz seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.