

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
DECEMBER 9, 1997

PRESIDING: Karen Berryman, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Miers, Jack Scott, Brad Higginbotham, Lon Carpenter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ken Smith, Dan Sharp, Jamee Simons

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

GUESTS: Meggen Bernstein, Robin Kleinschnitz, Rich Nicholls

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4, 1997: Jack Scott moved the minutes be approved as written, Brad Higginbotham seconded, approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: The Chair welcomed Board appointees Robin Kleinschnitz and Rich Nicholls.

Dinosaur Diamond – Brad Higginbotham and the Director attended the December 3 meeting in Fruita. The Museum of Western Colorado, rather than the VCB, will assume full participation in the Dinosaur Diamond (DD) as the Grand Junction representative. The Museum has agreed to provide the VCB with copies of DD minutes and an update on all meetings as well as including the VCB's 800 phone number and Visitor Center location on promotional materials. All "full participants" are expected to contribute financially to the group's projects; the 1998 contribution has been set at \$2,000. The Museum was not aware of the financial obligations, however, and has no funds budgeted. The VCB had \$1,000 available in the regular budget for possible DD programs and the Board discussed using that amount to offset the Museum's obligations. Brad Higginbotham moved that, if funds are available, \$2,000 in the 1997 contingency budget to be paid to the Museum of Western Colorado for Dinosaur Diamond co-operative marketing programs; Jack Scott seconded, passed unanimously.

Special Events – A workshop was held November 20 to review the 11 applications received by the November 4 deadline. Nine events were recommended for funding:

Southwest Fest	\$ 1,000
Tour of the Vineyards	1,500
Rim Rock Run	1,500
Fruita Fat Tire Festival	2,000
Celtic Festival	2,000
Desert Sun Half Iron Triathlon	1,500
Grand River Artists Gathering	4,000
Colorado West Paint Horse Show	2,500
Power Cruise – 1998	<u>1,000</u>
Total Funding Recommendation	\$17,000

Jack Scott moved the funding award recommendations be presented to Council for approval, Bill Miers seconded; approved unanimously.

Meetings Format/98 Retreat – Regular meetings format, time and location was tabled until the January 1998 meeting. Board members will be asked to prioritize the day of week and time of day to hold the regular monthly meetings. Tentative dates for the retreat are March 10-11; staff is directed to explore possible locations and prospective local facilitators.

HILL & TASHIRO MARKETING and ADVERTISING: Meggen Bernstein distributed final copies of ads for the Official State Vacation Guide, Colorado Hotel/Lodging Association publication, Successful Meetings and the post-holiday shopping ad.

The 1998 Visitor Guide was reviewed. In response to tour operators' concerns voiced last summer, the Visitor Guide will not mention any individual operator's name. That change was approved by consensus. It was suggested that the Riverfront Trails be shown on the map. After discussion, however, it was agreed that the map is too small to legibly indicate all of the Trails and names. The map legend for the Audubon Trail will be revised to indicate "Audubon Trail/Riverfront Trail." Three additional bed and breakfasts will be included for 1998: Los Altos, located in The Ridges and opened in summer 1997; and two as part of the "expand the tent" program; Stonehaven B&B in Fruita, Mt. Garfield B&B in Palisade. An expression of interest was received from H Motel in Fruita, but the signed contract and deposit were not returned.

Meggen reviewed data base management capabilities of inquiries to our website.

STAFF REPORTS: Lodging tax collections are on target for year-end projections.

The Director and City staff met with Unitel and discussed a Tadiran telephone system that would mirror the equipment used by City Hall and other off-premise City departments. The initial cost of this system is \$1,950 more than originally budgeted but monthly line-lease expenses will decrease; there are numerous long-range benefits that would result from investing in this equipment. Lon Carpenter moved that the VCB purchase the Tadiran telephone system and transfer \$1,950 from contingency to the telephone purchase account, Brad Higginbotham seconded; approved unanimously.

Group Sales: Barbara Bowman and the Director attended the National Tour Association annual convention in Tampa November 7 – 13. Trends that were identified from appointments with tour operators included hub and spoke tours as well as a move from escorted to package travel.

A record number of tourism partners attended the post-season wrap up session. Participants reported a flat year for hotels, tour operators and attractions.

The number of sales leads issued through the end of November is at 77% of goal. The current conversion rate of 1997 sales leads issued is 54%. Of 1996 sales leads issued, 75% have been converted to booked business; this is 15% above the industry standard. The sales staff is spending more time on assisted bookings as tour operators are becoming less inclined to use receptive operators. The number of convention groups serviced is at 94% of goal.

Visitor Center: Four new volunteers have joined the staff. The Board is invited to attend an open house for the volunteers December 12 from 2:00 – 4:00.

OTHER BUSINESS: Four different legislative bills that would reinstate promotional funding are being discussed. By mid-January, the Tourism Industry Association of Colorado hopes to agree on one bill to support.

Brad Higginbotham presented outgoing Chair Karen Berryman with a plaque and thanked her for her service as Chair in 1997 and as a board member for 5 years.

Brad Higginbotham moved the meeting adjourn, Bill Miers seconded; there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.