

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
DECEMBER 11, 2001

PRESIDING: Wade Haerle, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alan Friedman, Jane Fine Foster, Peggy Page, Kevin Reimer, Linda Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Blackburn, Larry MacDonald, Bill Miers, Frank Bering

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Layne Whyman, Irene Carlow, Erin Chapman, Layne Whyman, Vivian Brodine, Sharon Delay, Susan Weigand

GUESTS: Anna Maria Ray, Bob Taylor

HOST REMARKS: Kevin McConnell conducted a tour of the Cabaret and discussed recent renovations/expansion .

The meeting was called to order at 3:20 pm.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 6, 2001: Jane Fine Foster moved the minutes be approved as written, Peggy Page seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events: Ten applications for the 2002 funding year were received by the deadline of 5:00 pm, November 6. Those applications were reviewed and possible funding levels discussed at a workshop November 13. Alan Friedman moved that funding awards be recommended to Council as follows:

- \$2,000 Fruita Fat Tire Festival, contingent on matching funds from the City of Fruita
- \$4,500 Colorado Mountain Winefest
- \$2,000 Kokopelli Adventure Race
- \$ 500 Celtic Festival and Highland Games
- \$1,670 Rim Rock Run

Linda Smith seconded; passed unanimously.

The 2002 Special Events budget is \$30,000, leaving a balance of \$19,330 after the above award recommendations. Alan Friedman moved that a maximum of \$15,000 in Special Events funds be earmarked for a local travel/trade show tentatively identified as the "Western Colorado Travel Expo"; Peggy Page seconded, passed unanimously.

Country Jam: The Chair noted that, after lengthy discussion at the November 13 workshop, no consensus was reached on the Country Jam funding application. The floor was opened for additional discussion on this matter.

VCB support for this event could be modeled after the 2000 Special Event funding award for the Rocky Mountain Open Golf Tournament, wherein the VCB designed and purchased an ad rather than making a direct cash distribution to the event organizers. Country Jam is recognized as an important event for the Grand Valley. The Board would like to provide additional benefits to Country Jam, but also must stay within the Special Event Policy. Concerns with policy compliance include: the VCB logo appearing on all printed materials and eligibility for matching funds, since their advertising is on a trade-out basis rather than cash payment.

Many elements need to be considered before VCB funds are committed. Hotel occupancy has declined from several years ago; hotels do not sell out as they do for the soccer weekend in October. There was an ample supply of rooms the day before the 2001 festival opened; 3 properties were full both Friday and Saturday with two additional properties full on Saturday only. Because of increased room rates, however, Country Jam is probably the #1 net revenue weekend for hotels. The number of campsites at the festival grounds increased by approximately 300 a few years ago and that has decreased hotel occupancy. The camping area may be reconfigured for 2002, decreasing the number of campsites. At a previous Board meeting, member Chris Blackburn reported that restaurant businesses suffer during Country Jam weekend. VCB funding could potentially increase both hotel occupancy and restaurant sales. Retail sales at Mesa Mall do increase in the morning hours before performances begin for the day; sales show a greater increase if the weather is inclement.

Country Jam representatives have indicated that Salt Lake City is a stronger market than Denver. Front Range attendance is down because many of the musicians appearing at Country Jam have performances in the Denver area immediately before or after Country Jam. Their 2002 advertising plan includes a massive radio campaign in Salt Lake City and St. George, Utah.

Alan Friedman moved that \$4,000 in Special Event funds be spent on advertising for Country Jam, that the ads be developed by Hill & Company and the funds disbursed by the VCB. Anna Maria Ray of Hill & Company advised that \$4,000 would not buy much reach or frequency for print ads, but would go further on a radio buy. Alan Friedman amended his motion: \$4,000 in Special Event funds be spent on advertising for Country Jam, that the ads be developed by Hill & Company and the funds disbursed by the VCB, but that funding amount does not limit the amount of in-kind services the VCB could provide to the event. Jane Fine Foster seconded, passed unanimously.

Board Vacancies: The City Clerk received applications for re-appointment from Peggy Page and Alan Friedman, as well as seven applications from potential new appointees. Current members were reminded that they serve until a replacement is appointed.

2002 Officers: Nominations and seconds were made for Peggy Page as Chair and Alan Friedman as Vice Chair; both were approved by acclamation.

HILL & COMPANY: An online survey was conducted April-September of 2001. Users accessed the survey via the home page and were asked a set of 19 questions. Respondents were

almost evenly split between previous visitors and those who have not been to Grand Junction. Highlights of the responses include:

- 62% will visit for vacation
- 74% will travel with family/spouse
- 49% heard about Grand Junction from a friend/family member
- 58% used a search engine to find the site
- 80% were first-time visitors to the site

Also presented was an overview of the 2002 contract budget amount of \$350,000. Significant increases are planned for TV production and total media costs.

**VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION:** Sharon Delay introduced two volunteers who have completed 1,000 hours of service at the Visitor Center. Harold Moss has volunteered since 1994. Gae Crisman joined the Visitor Center in 1995; she also assists at hospitality tables for convention groups. The Chair expressed the Board's appreciation for the volunteers' dedication and commitment.

**STAFF REPORTS:** Lodging tax receipts are up 9.4% YTD. November advertising responses increased 68%, due in large part to the holiday shopping promotion.

Final artwork for the 2002 Visitor Guide was delivered to the printer December 10 with the first round of proofs expected December 13.

**Sales:** The Destination Colorado trade show at Cherry Creek Shopping Center had an excellent turn-out and attendees expressed a great deal of interest in the Grand Junction area.

Barb Bowman presented Erin Chapman with the VCB's "Employee of the Month" award. Staff members nominated Erin for her very successful efforts in organizing and managing a room block/reservation system for "soccer weekend" in October.

**Visitor Center:** Visitation at the Visitor Center increased 52% for the month and was evenly split between in-state and out-of-state residents.

Board members are invited to the Holiday Open House for our volunteers from 2-4 pm Wednesday, December 19 at the Visitor Center

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Bob Taylor did a presentation on how \$1 can flow through the economy, demonstrating the quantity and variety of goods and services that are exchanged; the number of transactions that can be made in a short period of time; and the importance of free-flowing commerce to each of us as consumers and businesspersons.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm on motion of Kevin Reimer and second of Alan Friedman.