

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JUNE 12, 2001

PRESIDING: Wade Haerle, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Miears, Kevin Reimer, Jane Fine Foster, Linda Smith, Peggy Page, Alan Friedman, Larry MacDonald, Chris Blackburn

MEMBER ABSENT: Frank Bering

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

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Connie Black

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

MINUTES OF MARCH 13 AND MAY 15: Alan Friedman moved and Linda Smith seconded that the minutes be approved as written; approved unanimously.

HOST REMARKS: Larry MacDonald discussed the expansions and renovations completed at the Adam's Mark. The new facilities represent a 25% increase in meeting space; \$52,000 was spent on audio-visual equipment. The hotel will work toward getting local business back now that the renovation is complete; larger, out-of-town groups will also be targeted.

BOARD BUSINESS: The Director discussed the schedule for preparing the 2-year budget. Staff recommendations will be presented at the August 14 meeting; the City Manager and Finance Director will review the final budget on September 14. Preliminary figures (fixed costs, operating expenses, etc.) will be discussed at the July 10 meeting and staff will ask the Board for direction on programs, projects and Special Events. The capital project to convert the deck to storage and the current storage area to office workspace is in the 2001 budget. Staff proposes to work through the Purchasing Agent to hire an architect to prepare the design and specifications, then go out to bid so the project can be completed by year-end. Year-to-date expenses are on target; lodging tax revenues are up 15% through April collections.

The Chair suggested, and the Board concurred, that a 1-hour workshop be held at 2:00 pm July 10, immediately before the regular meeting. At that time, staff will present preliminary recommendations along with narrative on proposed programs and other new items, as well as the 10-year financial projection. After that review, the Board will decide if another budget session is needed.

In response to Council's request, the Board offered the following possible dates for a breakfast meeting with Council: July 25, August 8, August 29, September 26. Staff will advise the Board when a date is confirmed.

HILL & COMPANY: Linda Hill displayed a sample of the boards that will be on the 16th Street Mall buses during June, July and August. The first piece of the 3-part direct mail was sent at the end of May. Each piece will direct recipients to the website where they will register for a poster, golf weekend or wine country getaway. The 1st quarter ADR/Occupancy report was distributed. Occupancy was up each month for an average of 51.4%; daily rate averaged \$55.

Two focus sessions were conducted in Golden May 22 – one group of users (who had visited within the last year) and one group of non-users. At the first focus groups conducted in 1991, participants refused to believe there is anything in Grand Junction worth doing. Results of the current session prove that 10 years' of image building has paid off: the researchers had difficulty finding non-users for this session. In 1991 the situation was reversed: non-users were identified within a week, while identifying users took over a month.

Participants in the non-user group were young, not as many families as the user group. The Internet is their #1 planning tool and they want a broad variety of activities. All of them knew that it is a 4-hour drive to Grand Junction; however, driving 6-8 hours for this type of trip would be OK. Their perceptions of Grand Junction included: peaches; Grand Mesa; good climate; on the way to Las Vegas; Monument; quiet but growing. A weakness identified by both groups is that Grand Junction is not well known for one thing. Responses to print ads were very positive; the most compelling were those that combined wine with outdoor activities. Families need an incentive to bring kids to Wine Country. They liked test copy that said "2 hours from Vail" because it gave a locator. TV ads were not as well received; many participants characterized them as infomercials. We will change the end of those ads to add statements about activities. Radio ads were well received and they like the web site overall. The web address coloradowinecountry.com is viewed as one-dimensional, while visitgrandjunction.com is more inclusive. All participants were very complimentary of the Visitor Guide and liked the comprehensive information it contained. After seeing it, all participants said they would consider a Grand Junction trip in the future.

STAFF REPORTS: The Special Event Policy revisions are on Council agenda June 20; staff will email a reminder notice. The meeting starts at 7:30 and all Board members are encouraged to attend. We will publicize the revisions in the City newsletter and local ads. Applications for the next funding cycle will be available in late September, with a deadline of November 6.

Lodging tax receipts are up 14.5% YTD. The number of Internet users is up 37% while the decline in the number of advertising responses reflects our marketing shift from national ads to Front Range/regional promotions.

Sales staff distributed a draft policy on trade show participation and lead distribution. Staff would like to receive the Board's comments at the July meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Vice Chair noted that this is the first meeting of the year with all members present. She noted that we have had difficulty assembling a quorum for some meetings and requested that members notify the VCB office if they will be absent.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m. on motion of Bill Miers and second by Alan Friedman.