

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

December 10, 2002

PRESIDING: Peggy Page, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Smith, Jane Fine Foster, Wade Haerle, Tillie Bishop, Michael Somma, Jill Eckardt, Kevin Reimer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alan Friedman

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

GUESTS: Lynne Sorlye, Anna Maria Ray, Linda Hill

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

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2002: Wade Haerle moved the minutes be approved as written, Linda Smith seconded, approved unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS: The Chair introduced Lynne Sorlye, general manager of the Holiday Inn, who received a 3-year appointment, and recognized Michael Somma who will continue his service on the Board for a 3-year term. Steve Meyer of Shaw Construction will complete the one year remaining on the seat vacated by Larry MacDonald.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events Jill Eckardt reported that the Kokopelli Adventure Race final report was submitted within the deadline. Funds were spent appropriately and the event received very good press. Kevin Reimer reported that participation in the Rim Rock Run was down a little, which was attributed to bad weather the day before the race.

The Board's recommendation for 2003 funding awards is on the December 18 City Council agenda, along with the Hill & Company contract renewal. The Director stated that the unallocated Special Events funds have typically been spent on promoting events. Various options will be explored and a decision made in the Spring. This item can be discussed in more detail at the retreat.

(Jane Fine Foster arrived at 3:30.)

HILL & COMPANY: A new seasonal campaign will run mid-January through mid-February. The "Cupid promotion" will focus on romantic getaways and will include the variety of live theater performances to choose from. The 2003 Marketing Plan should be finalized in mid- to late January. Research in the coming year will include Front Range focus sessions regarding both the

group market and the Visitor Guide. An online slide show, set to music, is being developed; the goal is to give potential visitors the “feel” of the area. The new map feature on the VCB’s site is expected to launch in January.

STAFF REPORTS: YTD lodging tax revenue is up 8% over last year, although November receipts declined 5%. Our website reporting program will change in January. The new software will provide better information on the source of our site visitors and more current and accurate database information.

Sales: Barbara Bowman and Kayla Arnesen made a 4-day sales trip to Denver. They made direct sales calls; staffed a booth at the American Society of Travel Agents trade show; attended association meetings; and exhibited at the Destination Colorado meeting planner show at Cherry Creek Shopping Center. Staff learned that resort properties are lowering their rates substantially to book groups in response to meeting planners’ increased sensitivity to rates. Some resorts are offering group rates that are very competitive with Grand Junction’s and staff anticipates increased competition in this market. Many industry professionals in Denver do not expect group business to recover until 2005.

Michael Somma asked how the sales division tracks business. He asked if it were possible for staff to provide a comparison of confirmed/tentative business as well as a year-end report comparing the current year to previous years. Barb Bowman will talk with Michael regarding the monthly reports generated by the sales staff and will put together a presentation for the January Board meeting explaining the process.

The annual tourism partners’ post-season wrap up was a very positive session and continues to be a good forum for local industry partners to learn about each other and exchange information. Kevin McConnell of The Cabaret attended the National Tour Association annual convention for the first time and their product was very well received. Kevin encouraged other local businesses to join NTA so they can meet with tour operators at the convention and promote their product directly to decision-makers.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Association (COPMOBA) requested the VCB send a letter of support to the State Parks Department for a one-time cash grant. Funds would be used for improved signage at the Lunch Loop area. Wade Haerle abstained from the discussion because of his position on the State Parks Department Board.

The Director read a description of the improvements COPMOBA proposes to make. Board members asked if supporting a particular project is unusual for the VCB. The Director stated that, over the years, several Boards have voted to send letters of support for a variety of projects in Mesa County. Jill Eckardt moved that the VCB send the State Parks Department a letter in support of COPMOBA’s proposed project; Jane Fine Foster seconded. Motion passed with 6 in favor and 1 abstention.

Kevin Reimer requested that the January meeting include a discussion of how to improve airline service to Grand Junction. There was a general discussion of previous efforts; the Director will provide more details to Kevin in advance of the January meeting.

Selecting a date for the 2003 Annual Retreat will also be on the January agenda; members are asked to bring their calendars and be prepared to set a date. Jill Eckardt asked if the officers could present possible dates and locations.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm on motion of Wade Haerle and second of Michael Somma.