

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JULY 8, 2003

PRESIDING: Alan Friedman, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Somma, Peggy Page, Lynne Sorlye, Jane Fine Foster, Jill Eckardt, Linda Smith, Steve Meyer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kevin Reimer

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:40 pm.

MINUTES OF JUNE 10, 2003: Jill Eckardt moved the minutes be approved as written, Linda Smith seconded, approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events Michael Somma reported that the entertainment line-up for the Art & Jazz Festival was the best ever. The absence of on-street beer and wine sales, however, had a negative impact on attendance. It also seems that there could be more emphasis on the artwork being displayed. Peggy Page stated that liquor sales were dropped because the cost of insurance and security was prohibitive. The Board will give feedback to the organizers on changes that might increase attendance. Renaissance Faire organizers contacted Peggy Page on July 3 regarding the funding agreement and insurance documents. (Organizers had called the VCB the same day,, but the appropriate staff was out of town.) The event has changed insurance companies and did not meet the 60-day requirement. Peggy asked for guidance from the Board on how to proceed. The Chair stated he doesn't want to set a precedent by ignoring our own policy, which could open the door for non-compliance to all other events. After discussion, the consensus of the Board is to give the organizers until 5:00 pm July 9 to deliver the documents to the VCB. Peggy will relay that direction to the organizers.

Meeting with Council: Council has selected Tuesday, August 12 for the breakfast meeting. Commitments came from 6 Board members who will be able to attend.

Research: Staff and Hill & Co. will attend focus groups in Denver July 10. The subject is the layout, design and information presented in a variety of visitor guides. The discussion will end with a critique of the Grand Junction Visitor Guide and we will use that information to revise and improve the 2004 Official Visitor Guide.

Budget: The budget workshop held immediately before this meeting was very productive. Staff needs specific direction on budgeting for the Board's annual retreat. The Chair pointed out that,

historically, the Board has gone out of town every-other-year, alternating with a one-day session in Mesa County. Continuing that pattern, the 2004 retreat would be in Grand Junction with an overnight retreat in 2005. Staff should budget for an out-of-town trip in 2005, but that could change depending on economic conditions.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENTS CENTER COMMITTEE: Diane Schwenke discussed the results of Phase I of the study and distributed copies of the consultant's Power Point presentation. Phase I addressed competitive markets: Is Grand Junction a large enough market to support an events center and, if so, what size? Site selection, financing, and economic impact are not included in this stage. The study looked at comparable cities and their facilities. The conclusion is that Grand Junction could support a multi-purpose facility with 6,000-7,000 seats. Nearly all the entertainment promoters contacted said they would book acts in Grand Junction. Support from sports teams varied; The Central Hockey League showed great interest with some interest indicated on the part of the National Indoor Football League and minor league basketball.

Results of the next phase of the study are expected August 1; funding partners will be invited to that presentation.

STAFF REPORTS: Promotions/Public Relations Tamara Churchman attended the Lafayette Wine Fest in mid-June. A fruit harvest promotion, including media interviews, is scheduled for later this week in Denver. The Back-to-School promotion begins in late July. Participating hotels have committed to honor the stated rate for 2 months so staff could launch another promotion using the same rates without having to contact the hotels again.

The Colorado Wine Industry Development Board asked the VCB to participate in a new event at Copper Mountain; we are also considering a wine event at Keystone. Staff needs feedback and input from our local wineries – what is valuable to them, what would best showcase Grand Valley wines -- before making a decision on these or additional events. There are numerous wine events throughout the state and we need to gauge the return on attending these events and the best use of staff time.

Statistics Lodging tax receipts are down 3.7% YTD. Several hotels are reporting that June's business is about even with last year and that transient traffic is still good. Advertising responses are up for the month as reader service inquiries are received from the May ads.

Sales Sales leads issued to date are at 52% of goal for the year. On August 14 the VCB will host a reception for locals who have brought – or could potentially bring – group business to Grand Junction. Staff continues to work with AMTRAK top put together wine promotions. The VCB has placed an ad in the Fall issue of AAA Colorado magazine promoting a wine package.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm.