

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
NOVEMBER 8, 2005

PRESIDING: Jane Fine Foster, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Brunella Gualerzi, Kevin Reimer, Deb Hoefler, Steve Bailey, Eric Feely

ABSENT: Steve Meyer, Linda Smith

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Layne Whyman

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Anna Maria Arizzi, Amy Nuernberg

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 pm.

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 11, 2005: Steve Bailey moved the minutes be approved as written, Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Election of 2006 officers will take place at the December regular monthly meeting. Lynne Sorlye, 2005 Vice Chair, is interested in serving as Chair in 2006; one Board member has expressed interest in serving as Vice Chair. One responsibility of Vice Chair could be chairing the committee to review Special Events applications.

Budget: The City Manager presented a balanced budget to City Council on November 5. Council will entertain a motion to approve the entire budget at the first meeting in December. The Director presented the VCB departmental budget on that day as well; the only questions from Council members related to the contract sales position in Denver. Council was supportive of these additional sales efforts without adding an employee. Two VCB staff positions were audited and both are recommended for increases based on additional responsibilities. Layne Whyman has assumed many sales duties that were not originally part of her position and Vivian Brodine has taken on the administrative duties that Layne previously performed.

Special Events: Amy Nuernberg presented the Winefest final report. Preliminary attendance figures are 5,200 which is down slightly from 2004. Media comp tickets, possibly as many as 500, were traded for advertising. VIP pass sales were 270, an increase of 100 over 2004. Surveys indicate that 75% of attendees were from the Front Range. Local hotels were sold out in August but festival ticket pre-sales were down. Ticket sales at retail outlets picked up approximately 10 days before the festival as people waited to commit to the non-refundable ticket. Saturday visits to wineries were down, indicating more people were going to the festival and staying longer.

HILL & CO.: Linda Hill reported that they are waiting for ADR/Occupancy data from one property; they hope to have the report finalized by the end of this week. Additional data is still needed for the Overnight Visitor Study.

Hill & Co., Miles Media Group and VCB staff held a planning session October 20. Discussion items included:

- Product focus – Brand integrity
- Primary target markets
- Brand partners
- Leverage marketing efforts
- Marketing segments
  - Biking
  - Golf
  - AAA
  - Events
  - Shopping
  - Wine industry

Linda discussed the importance of maintaining control of the “Colorado’s Wine Country” brand and ensuring that the wine train (and other associated events/promotions) adhere to the high level of service and customer satisfaction that are identified with the GJVCB.

Continued collaboration between Hill & Co. and Miles Media Group will ensure a smooth transition of management and maintenance of the VCB’s website.

Holiday Shopping Package: Fifteen properties are listed in print ads being run in regional newspapers. A copy of the ad must be presented at check-in and each party will be given an information packet with coupons/flyers from 58 local businesses, the broadest representation we have ever had in this promotion.

STAFF REPORTS: The final wine train of the year will be November 11-13. Denver PBS Channel 6 has inquired about booking a train for 300 people in the fall of 2006 as a major fundraiser. Staff responded with options, but 60 is the optimum number of participants to maintain the highest quality experience. The VCB needs to keep control of the “product”, balancing the partnership with AAA vs. affinity groups who want to book a private wine train weekend. Board directed staff to work with the City Attorney to explore legal avenues to protect the uniqueness of the wine train experience, itinerary, elements of the package tour and customer satisfaction.

Lodging tax revenues set a new record for October collections. There were no large convention groups in September; business was FIT, leisure, motorcoach, events and corporate, including the oil and gas industry. Staff reported that a LaQuinta is under construction in Rifle and a Holiday Inn Express is anticipated to be built in the same general area.

Internet statistical reporting will change after January when Miles Media begins managing the website. We have seen significant increases this year after the launch of the new site and additional keyword placement.

Visitor Center: Upgrades and enhancements continue to be incorporated in the annual budget. The VCB's display at Walker Field will be updated each season.

Board members are invited to the annual Visitor Center Holiday Open House December 7, from 1:00 – 4:00. This is an opportunity for our volunteers to gather for a relaxed, social kick-off to the holiday season.

Convention Servicing: The Colorado Government Finance Officers Association will arrive November 14; 350 people are currently registered for this conference.

OTHER BUSINESS: Architect Craig Obergfell has been retained to do an initial space needs analysis for the building expansion. The plans that result from this study will be the basis for an RFP to be issued in 2006.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm on motion of Kevin Reimer and second of Deb Hoefler.