

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

PRESIDING: Jane Fine Foster, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Reimer, Jill Eckardt, Steve Meyer, Lynne Sorlye, Linda Smith, Steve Bailey, Brunella Gualerzi, Eric Feely

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

GUESTS: Anna Maria Arizzi, Charlie Novinskie

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm.

The Chair welcomed Steve Bailey, Eric Feely and Brunella Gualerzi to the Board.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 18, 2005: Linda Smith requested that the minutes be corrected to indicate that she was present at the January 18 meeting. Kevin Reimer moved the minutes be approved as corrected, Lynne Sorlye seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: The Chair distributed copies of City Council Resolution 84-02, which addresses ethical standards for members of the City's boards and commissions. Council has historically appointed business owners/general managers to the VCB Board. The VCB can and does purchase goods and services from businesses owned/operated by Board members, but members should not benefit financially from being on the Board. The VCB will continue its practice of soliciting estimates or proposals from other service providers in addition to a Board member's business to avoid a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict. Board members who have questions or concerns about the ethical standards are asked to talk to the Chair.

Annual Retreat The annual Board retreat is confirmed for April 11-12. Written proposals were received from Aspen Meadows and Powderhorn. Redstone Inn gave a verbal quote of \$100 per night per room but no information was provided on availability/costs of meeting space and meals. Chipeta Sun Lodge has not responded.

Steve Bailey, noting the conflict of interest, abstained from the discussion and offered to step out of the meeting so that the Board would not feel constrained in reviewing the proposals. The consensus of the Board is that his presence would not hinder the discussion.

Aspen Meadows presented a total-cost proposal of \$2,550, or \$170 per person; total costs at Powderhorn would be approximately \$1,700 or \$113 per person.

Discussion items included:

- Opportunity to interact with tourism professionals in Aspen/Snowmass
- Travel time
- Agenda topics may require earlier start time/lengthier discussions
- Cost effectiveness

Linda Smith moved that the 2005 Board retreat be held at Powderhorn Resort beginning at Noon April 11, ending by 5:00 pm April 12; Brunella Gualerzi seconded. Motion passed with 8 in favor; Steve Bailey abstained.

Ride the Rockies Staff will present a preliminary budget and estimate of recommended expenditures at the March 8 Board meeting. Affected City departments, e.g., Police, Fire, Parks, VCB, will prepare estimates of personnel and equipment costs incurred by the City to assist with this event. (Council will require similar information regarding the Air Show.) The estimated economic impact of Ride the Rockies is \$175,000 per day.

A Mesa State student has been hired as an intern to work on Ride the Rockies. Layne Whyman will coordinate local volunteers.

PROMOTIONS: Staff will exhibit at the Denver Golf Expo February 11-13; four hotels and two golf courses will participate in the VCB booth. The Spring Blossoms Wine Train weekend is scheduled for April 8-10; RMA tours will again sell the packages.

Website Update Staff has contacted 76 tourism partners regarding reciprocal website links:

- 28 currently link to the VCB
- 18 have websites but do not link to the VCB
- 30 do not have a website

The Board agreed to discuss this topic further at the annual retreat.

Marketing Plan Copies of the Marketing Plan were distributed in advance of this meeting. The following highlights were presented:

Promotions/Public Relations

- Customer Relationship Management will be a focus of the newly-designed website
- Continue public relations campaign and established promotions (e.g., wine train, golf, fruit crops/Denver peach promotion)

Market Analysis

- 2004 showed signs of recovery
- Estimated 44% of travel bookings will be done on the Internet by 2010
- 79% of domestic trips via personal auto

Visitor Center

- Keep exhibits fresh and interesting; changing artwork
- 82 volunteers
- Declining visitation is a trend due to Internet usage

Convention Servicing

- Emphasis on affinity groups
- Concentrate on providing very high level of service
- Hospitality training on-site at hotels

Group Sales

- More sales calls in Denver
- Purge database as part of trace date process
- Enhance/increase communication with hotels by reviving quarterly coffee meetings

Overview/Director's Message

- Completion of public works projects will have big impact on visitors
 - Horizon Drive improvements
 - 24 Road development
 - Riverside Parkway Project

HILL & CO.: A summary of the December 2004 meeting planner focus group was distributed. Nine experienced meeting planners participated in the session; all had a strong awareness of the VCB but less knowledge of meetings properties. Participants identified Grand Junction's competition as Estes Park, Pueblo, Greeley and Fort Collins. "Wine Country" is the only thing that delineates GJ from the competition. Meeting planners use the Internet for research but prefer to talk to the bureau for specifics. The 2004 billboard campaign was very effective and participants identify the signature deep purple color with Grand Junction. Drive time continues to be an issue, with the perception that it takes 5 to 6 hours to drive to Grand Junction and that length of time is difficult to sell to groups.

STAFF REPORTS: Amtrak packages from Denver to Grand Junction are available year-round through RMA Tours. In 2004 RMA booked 5,000 passengers to Glenwood Springs and 170-180 passengers to Grand Junction. Promotional efforts will continue to increase the "trackable" packaging in 2005.

The Director reviewed the monthly statistical reports.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Chair distributed a sample questionnaire that could be used for the required intercept surveys at funded Special Events and asked for any additional comments. Linda Smith moved that the Board adopt the questionnaire as the required form for intercept surveys at events receiving Special Event funds in 2005; Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously.

The March 8 agenda will include a presentation on the Riverside Parkway Project by a representative of the Public Works Department.

Charlie Novinskie, Walker Field Airport Authority, reported that load factors for 2004 increased 13% over 2003; 144,500 passengers were served.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm on motion of Lynne Sorlye and second of Linda Smith.