

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MAY 10, 2005

PRESIDING: Jane Fine Foster, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Reimer, Jill Eckardt, Lynne Sorlye, Eric Feely, Steve Bailey

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brunella Gualerzi, Steve Meyer, Linda Smith

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

GUESTS: Anna Maria Arizzi, Charlie Novinskie

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2005: Jill Eckardt moved the minutes be approved as written, Steve Bailey seconded; approved unanimously.

HOST REMARKS: Charlie Novinskie reported that enplanements (through April) are up 13% versus last year; April enplanements increased 21% over April of 2004. In March, Skywest added another flight from Salt Lake City, bringing the total flights per day to 21. Deplaned freight is even with last year and enplaned freight is down slightly; car rental revenues are up 15% over last year. Charlie reminded the Board that Walker Field does not receive any tax funds from the City or from Mesa County.

BOARD BUSINESS: Jill Eckardt announced that she is resigning from the Board effective at the conclusion of the June 14 regular monthly meeting. Her family is relocating outside Colorado.

Ride the Rockies: Layne Whyman reported that regular meetings with other city departments continue; excellent ideas are being presented and everyone is committed to the success of the events and activities planned for this group. Board assistance is requested for a number of key positions each day of the event (June 18, 19, 20); Layne will email the Board with the dates and times. Main Street restaurants are being very cooperative as we face the challenge of feeding 2,400 people within a very short period of time.

Advertising RFP: The Request for Qualifications/Request for Proposals will be issued May 13. Staff will provide the Purchasing Division with a list of companies to notify in addition to the Division's normal publication/notification procedures. A pre-bid conference will be held at City Hall Auditorium June 1; statements of qualifications are due June 20.

Retreat Follow-up: Jasper Welch, participating via phone, led a discussion of the workgroup notes and goals.

Workgroup Notes

- Special Events – The Board needs to determine what is actionable and if the committee should reconvene to discuss the retreat items.
 - The committee will meet again and make specific recommendations to the Board.
 - The committee will give reasons for proposed policy revisions, which will need to go to Council in August in order to be effective for the upcoming application cycle.
- Agency RFP Process – Progressing on schedule and within the City’s purchasing procedures.

Top 5 Goals

- Evaluate staff efficiencies and functions relative to space needs
- Increase group business
- Agency RFQ/RFP
- Packaging/promotions – niche markets
- Develop two-year budget

Budget development and the agency RFP are stand-alone projects that will be completed within the required timeframes. Staff functions/space needs were identified as the top priorities to focus on before other issues or projects can be addressed. Staff is directed to work toward getting a professional analysis of the existing facility to explore options, e.g., continue with current space utilization; convert part of the Visitor Center area to office space; relocate. Staff should present this information at the June meeting.

Workgroup notes “Improving the GJVCB” identified program review and staff allocation as issues to be addressed. Jill Eckardt suggested those issues should be dealt with before proceeding with a space needs analysis to ensure that any remodeling or space reconfiguration will truly meet the needs of the organization. Jasper Welch suggested that it would be helpful to do a full program review every 3 – 4 years. It would be good to step back and evaluate what the VCB does and to identify programs/responsibilities that are staff intensive versus budget intensive. The Chair noted that the Board does not want to micromanage operations and staff activities, but will rely on staff to present information to the Board. Staff is directed to do a top-to-bottom program review and make recommendations on which programs to continue and how to allocate staff resources and workspace.

PROMOTIONS: The April 8-10 Spring Blossoms Wine Train had 44 paid passengers. The guests enjoyed the trip from Denver and seemed unconcerned at the delay in Glenwood Canyon that put the arrival time 2 ½ hours behind schedule. The weekend was extended with an additional overnight in Grand Junction, compliments of the VCB, because of a major snowstorm in Denver that made driving conditions hazardous and closed some sections of I-25. Debbie Kovalik and Barb Bowman accompanied the group for the duration of their stay, including a stop at Enstrom’s, a tour of the Colorado National Monument and dinner downtown.

The two-day live remote on Denver’s all sports station AM 950 at Tiara Rado went very well. Our thanks to Tiara Rado, Redlands Mesa Golf Club and the Holiday Inn for their participation and support.

The Visitor Center will celebrate National Tourism Day with an open house from 1:30 – 3:30 pm on Wednesday, May 11. Two German golf magazines and a British publication featured articles about Grand Junction; these resulted from a 2004 fam.

HILL & CO.: Samples of the two-part meeting planner direct mail postcards were distributed. They are designed like a wine label and feature a reproduction of an original watercolor. The headlines are “Unique Places” and “Unique Venues”. Responses will be tracked through a specific web address that recipients will use to register to win a gift basket or a case of wine.

The summer campaign is underway:

- The bike event rack card is completed
- Denver billboards are in place; Colorado Springs boards will go up in June
- Ads in the *Denver Post* and *Gazette* will complement the billboards
- Radio will supplement some special events/promotions
- Ad is running in the Colorado edition of *Gourmet*

STAFF REPORTS: Lodging tax collections have set a record for each month of 2005; the YTD increase is 18%. These increases are attributed to a high volume of transient traffic rather than large groups.

Group Sales: Hotels were nearly full the weekend of May 20-21 as Grand Junction hosted a GYMSA soccer tournament, the NCAA Division II regional baseball tournament and various other smaller groups. The Lions Club District Conference will convene in Grand Junction in April 2006; staff is also working on a proposal to host the Lions’ State conference in May 2006.

Visitor Center: Visitation is down but there is a steady flow of visitors and they spend more time in the Center than has been experienced in previous years. The local woodcarvers’ association has provided display items and the Colorado State Parks exhibit has been updated. The VCB exhibit at Walker Field Airport will change four times per year; we will now be able to place exhibit materials at the Amtrak station.

The Holiday Inn hosted the volunteer training April 20. VCB staff gave an overview of marketing office activities and representatives of public land management agencies presented information on what’s new for the coming season.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Grand Valley Winery Association sent a letter thanking the VCB for its support of the wine industry and the GVWA.

The VCB will participate in a media fam with the Colorado Wine Industry Development Board on June 7-8. Participants will be food and wine writers from upscale publications such as *Gourmet*, *Bon Appetit*, *Cooking Light* and *Wine Enthusiast*.

The being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 pm.