

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
December 12, 2006

PRESIDING: Lynne Sorlye, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Feely, Kevin Reimer, Bill Hill, Deborah Hoefler, Jane Foster, Brunella Gualerzi, Steve Meyer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Denise Henning

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Layne Whyman, Erin Chapman, Vivian Brodine, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Tonia Masse, Ryan Klopchic, Gaylene Ore, Rex Tippetts

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

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 14, 2006: Jane Foster moved the minutes be approved as written, Eric Feely seconded, passed unanimously.

HOST REMARKS: Tonia Masse welcomed the Board to LaQuinta Inn & Suites. She reported that this property was sold in January to Blackstone Management Company, which is adding an average of 15 new properties every quarter. Most of the acquisitions are in the eastern United States; some are renovations and some are newly-built. Renovations at this LaQuinta will begin in late 2007, resulting in a completely new, European look. Business is up 10% over 2005; an additional 10% increase is projected for 2007.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Public Awareness Committee Deb Hoefler reported that the committee will focus on six key areas in 2007:

- City's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration
- Community survey (website instead of telephone)
  - Incentive to participate will be to register to win a BBQ for 20 people
  - Target launch date late April
- JUCO 50<sup>th</sup>
  - Primary TV sponsor
  - Public relations
- Art & Jazz Festival wine train and artists' reception
- Street banners – integrate this program into overall awareness campaign

Area events will be used to build awareness of the VCB. PR tools will include a Powerpoint to use at community presentations and Hill & Company is designing a template for community publications. The committee's next meeting will be Tuesday, February 6.

2007 Officers The Chair restated the established process for election of officers: the current year Vice Chair is the nominee for 2007 Chair and nominations will be accepted for 2007 Vice Chair. Eric Feely nominated Deborah Hoefer as Vice Chair, Steve Meyer seconded. There being no further nominations, Jane Foster moved the nominations be closed, Bill Hill seconded. The Chair called for a vote on the slate of 2007 officers: Eric Feely, Chair and Deborah Hoefer, Vice Chair; approved unanimously.

Visitor Guide Policy By consensus, the Board adopted the existing policy with one addition that specifies including lodging properties that opt in to the VCB's "Expand the Tent" marketing programs.

Walker Field Airport Authority Update Rex Tippetts, WFAA Manager, reported that the VCB has taken over management of the airport's ambassador volunteer program. Vivian Brodine was recognized for her excellent efforts in re-organizing and managing the ambassador program during the Airport's staff transition period. The Airport expects to resume management of the program in January.

The airport commissioned a study that provides origination and destination details of our passenger traffic. The research indicates that Houston and Dallas/Ft. Worth are the #4 and #5 destinations, respectively, and the airport has gathered additional information for the next step in pursuing service to those markets. Continental Airlines, which serves Houston, has no seat capacity available and has been dropped from active consideration at this time. American Airlines, which serves Dallas/Ft. Worth as one of its major hubs, has agreed to talk with airport representatives regarding the potential of service to Grand Junction; the cost to prepare a proposal/presentation is estimated at \$15,000. Frontier Airlines recently issued an RFP that was sent to 150 communities and responding cities will compete for service. Estimated cost of responding to the RFP is \$10,000; Walker Field will respond. Traffic is strong and yields are good. Most flights are running over 100% load factor, which drives fares up.

American Airlines represents the strongest potential for Grand Junction. Dallas/Ft. Worth could re-route some load from Salt Lake City and Denver, giving American year-round access to western Colorado. (Current flights from Dallas to Eagle/Vail are only during the ski season.) Rex is cautiously optimistic but stated that it would take 6 – 12 months to get flight schedules changed and aircraft moved to/from different markets. WFAA is seeking financial support from several community and corporate partners and is requesting the VCB contribute \$5,000 toward preparing the proposal and presentation. A meeting with American Airline representatives is scheduled for mid-January and Rex asked that the VCB Director be a member of the presentation group. It is very important for the airline representatives to hear directly from users. The VCB can provide input on target markets and the advertising campaign to reach those markets.

Jane Foster moved that the VCB contribute \$5,000 toward the cost of preparing Walker Field Airport Authority's proposal to American Airlines, Eric Feely seconded, passed unanimously. By consensus, the Board also approved the necessary travel expenses for the Director to accompany the WFAA contingent to the presentation.

HILL & COMPANY: Ryan Kopcic, media buyer, reported that the agency has researched the co-operative advertising opportunities presented by the Colorado Tourism Office. The CTO's media list was reviewed to best complement the GJVCB's 2007 strategic plan. Ryan presented recommendations for magazine, newspaper and integrated online marketing campaigns at a cost of \$80,000 - \$100,000. The Director stated that the cost of these media buys will be made from the \$150,000 supplemental advertising dollars in the 2007 budget that the Board approved at the September 12 meeting.

STAFF ITEMS Sales: Barb Bowman reported on a successful first year contracting with Donna Horii as the VCB Front Range Sales Representative. Donna has established herself as the Grand Junction sales representative; attended 30 monthly association meetings and five industry trade shows; exceeded her goal for follow-up trace calls; and is two sales leads short of the 2007 goal. Staff recommends renewing this contract for 2007. Deb Hoefler moved that the Front Range Sales Representative contract with Donna Horii be renewed for the period January 1-December 31, 2007; Bill Hill seconded, passed unanimously.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Sales Meeting was well attended and the major discussion item was submitting bids to host large meetings/conventions. Barb Bowman discussed the process of preparing and submitting a bid for a large group. When an RFP is received, it is forwarded to lodging and meetings properties as a sales lead with a due date for properties to return their bid documents to the VCB; hotels normally have two weeks to respond. Staff sets aside 3-4 days to review all the individual bids to ensure the responses are complete, compiles a package and submits the bid on behalf of Grand Junction as a destination.

During the past two years, it has become increasingly difficult to get properties to turn their bids in on time and the submittals are often incorrect or incomplete. In the most recent instance, two properties' bids that were integral to the proposal were delivered – incomplete – to the VCB at 4:15 pm the day the bid package had to be expressed shipped to the meeting planner. This particular group we were bidding on would have utilized 3 – 4 hotels and Two Rivers Convention Center for 3 – 4 full days. Delays in receiving properties' bids have become an administrative problem and is making it difficult for the sales staff to be effective.

At the Quarterly Sales Meeting, staff advised the attendees that the VCB will only submit bids that are comprehensive and competitive. Bids that are not received on time and do not represent the required number of rooms will not be submitted. All properties will be notified in writing why the bid was not submitted and which properties did not respond on time. All hotels and Two Rivers Convention Center will be informed in writing of this policy on bid submissions or declinations. The Board supported staff in making this change.

By laws Council requested further review of the Board's recommendation regarding the make-up of the Board. The Chair has placed a call to Mayor Doody requesting direction on how Council would like the Board to proceed.

Building Remodel Project Pilings will be drilled December 14-15. The City traffic division is assisting with signage changes during construction: the RV turn-around sign has been removed and a new sign prohibiting truck traffic will be placed.

PR and Marketing: Miles Media will present their proposal for 2007 work on December 13; the proposal will represent a continuation of the 2006 newsletter and email campaigns as well as a re-design of the site.

Jennifer Grossheim-Harris reported that 2006 presented many challenges in providing complimentary lodging for travel writers in that a few properties are providing a majority of the rooms. Staff will send a letter to all properties asking for one comp room for each 100 rooms at a property to be used in 2007. Staff is working to find an equitable solution; some visiting media will be asked to pay an industry rate for their room, to limit the number of nights in Grand Junction and/or to change the dates of their visit.

Rocky Mountain PBS will sponsor an Art & Jazz Festival Wine Train. This will be a fundraiser for PBS and will give the VCB access to a very high demographic.

Other Business: Both the Director and Director of Sales will attend the Go West Summit the week of February 12, the week of the regularly scheduled Board meeting. By consensus of the Board, the date of the regular monthly meeting is changed to February 6.

The Chair recognized Jane Foster and Kevin Reimer for their service to the VCB and the community during their two full terms on the Board. The Vice Chair recognized Lynne Sorlye for her leadership and guidance as 2006 Chair.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m. on motion of Jane Foster and second of Kevin Reimer.