

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JULY 10, 2007

PRESIDING: Eric Feely, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Deborah Hoefler, Lynne Sorlye, Brunella Gualerzi, Paul Petersen, Steve Meyer, Rick Martindale, Bill Hill

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brian Barry

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

GUESTS: Gae Crisman, Allison Sarmo

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.

MINUTES OF JUNE 12, 2007: Deborah Hoefler moved the minutes be approved as written, Brunella Gualerzi seconded, passed unanimously.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: Vivian Brodine introduced Gae Crisman, who has given 2,000 hours of her time to the Visitor Center over the past 12 years. Having lived in Grand Junction for 37 years, Gae has a wealth of information about our community to share with our visitors.

CULTURAL ARTS: Allison Sarmo, Cultural Arts Coordinator for the City's Commission on Arts and Culture, provided an overview of the cultural arts community. The Commission on Arts and Culture, a division of the Parks & Recreation Department, works with all 64 arts organizations/entities in the area. In cooperation with Mesa State College, the Commission recently released a report on the "Economic & Social Importance of the Arts in the Grand Valley". The report quantifies the economic impact of the arts, e.g., Art on the Corner, Art & Jazz Festival, Mesa State College, etc. The economic impact has more than doubled in the 6 years since the last report:

- \$27 million impact on the local economy in 2006
- \$10 million in total operating expenditures
- \$1 million in capital projects
- 137 FTEs serve over 500,000 visitors/attendees at facilities and events
- Estimated 100,000 attendees from out of town

Bill Hill asked what the VCB could do for the cultural arts community. Allison responded that the VCB has been very supportive and pro-active in promoting the arts and the Commission is very pleased with the partnership. Recent VCB projects include producing the Cultural Passport; advertising for the Art & Jazz Festival and hosting the artists' reception; coordinating and

hosting the RMPBS Art & Jazz Wine Train; and including arts and cultural events on the VCB's website. Bill also asked what kind of new cultural event might be held in the off-season. Allison said that ongoing efforts to bring together the performing arts groups to create an event have not yet been successful, but the Commission continues to work with their constituents to create cultural events.

BOARD ITEMS: Special Events Committee Deb Hoefler reported that the Downtown Car Show requested the VCB place ads in resort area newspapers (and possibly Moab) in the amount of \$3,000. That amount is in line with cash awards the VCB historically provided to the Car Show. Deb Hoefler moved to approve \$3,000 in marketing assistance to the Downtown Car Show, Paul Petersen seconded, passed unanimously.

Today an application was received from the Pork & Hops Challenge, a state championship barbeque cook-off and micro-brew; this is a new event scheduled for September 21-22 at Lincoln Park. Organizers are requesting \$3,000 advertising in regional and resort newspapers. The committee asks the full Board for direction on how to proceed with providing a recommendation on whether to fund advertising for this event since the next Board meeting is not until August 14. If a funding recommendation were made and approved August 14, there would not be adequate time to design and place advertising that would be effective.

Rick Martindale moved to authorize the Special Events Committee to approve funding for the Pork & Hops Challenge, Lynne Sorlye seconded. Discussion: The By laws provide for the Board to act (provide approval) via email communication. Steve Meyer asked for clarification on the revised Special Event Policy: Is the Committee authorized to approve funding awards or does the Committee make recommendations for approval by the full Board? The policy does not specifically address the approval process. Steve stated his preference is for the Special Events Committee to review applications, research events and make recommendations which will be presented to the full Board for a vote. As a matter of policy, funding decisions should be made by the entire Board rather than a committee.

Rick Martindale withdrew his motion. Lynne Sorlye moved that the Special Events Policy be amended to include: The Special Events Committee shall review applications, research events and make recommendations on marketing assistance. The full Board will vote on the Committee's recommendations. Steve Meyer seconded, passed unanimously.

The Director presented a request from the Chamber of Commerce for financial assistance toward a research project. This will be the second segment of the Listening to Business survey and will focus on the services sector, particularly tourism-related businesses. Other community partners will contribute in the range of \$2,500 - \$5,000; the Director suggested the VCB provide \$5,000 which would leave approximately \$7,000 in the research budget. Brunella Gualerzi asked if \$7,000 would be adequate for the VCB's research needs through the end of the year. Paul Petersen stated that the Chamber study has credibility with businesses and government offices. The focus on services and tourism could provide valuable information to the entire community. Brunella Gualerzi moved to fund the Chamber of Commerce's services/tourism-related study in the amount of \$2,500, up to a maximum of \$5,000; Deb Hoefler seconded, passed unanimously.

Budget The Director distributed a budget report showing expenditures through July 5. The 2008 City budget process is not yet defined; staff will meet with the Finance Committee review group July 11 and expects to have clearer direction on developing the 2008 budget. The deadline to input figures in the City's accounting system is Friday, August 10 and the next monthly Board meeting is August 14. Timing of the deadlines and scheduled meetings present an unusual circumstance: normally, staff presents recommendations, makes revisions based on Board input, and then the Board votes to adopt the budget. Because that three-step process will not be possible this year, the Director requested that the Board meet in workshop session prior to the August 10 deadline to provide direction. The Board agreed to hold a budget workshop Monday, July 30 from 3:00 – 5:00 pm at the Visitor Center. Staff will forward a draft budget to the Board in advance of the workshop.

Community Awareness Committee No report.

STAFF REPORTS: Sales Barb Bowman attended Travel Alliance Partners trade show in California. The Sales Division is 57% to goal on sales leads; our Denver contractor has issued 12 leads, exceeding her 2007 goal of 11. Staff continues to investigate new sales database software and will meet with vendors at Destination Marketing Association International annual conference later this month.

Erin Chapman presented results of the Front Range meeting planner focus group. The purpose was to determine meeting planners' needs and how they use CVBs. Attendees are familiar with Wine Country, peaches and the fact that Grand Junction is the largest city on the Western Slope. Accessibility is a negative perception as well as hotels' inability to fulfill clients' needs. Planners use CVBs and Chambers for overall destination information but often communicate directly with hotels. Their biggest challenge is receiving incomplete RFPs that are unresponsive to detailed specifications. Important incentives include:

- Free parking
- Government discounts
- Reduced rates on meeting space
- Wireless access in meeting rooms

Participants reported that they use the web almost exclusively and prefer email contact; 99% had been to Grand Junction in the past three years.

Promotions The Front Range peach promotion August 7-9 will be expanded to include media in Colorado Springs. Lodging packages will be posted on the web and promoted in print advertising.

Administrative Lodging tax receipts are up 24% for the month, 22.5% YTD. Internet usage continues to be strong with a 17.5% increase in unique users YTD.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm on motion of Deborah Hoefler and second of Paul Petersen.