

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FEBRUARY 6, 2007

PRESIDING: Eric Feely, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Hill, Deborah Hoefler, Brunella Gualerzi, Brian Barry, Rick Martindale, Paul Petersen

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Meyer, Lynne Sorlye,

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

HOST REMARKS: Eric Feely stated that the Red Canyon Grille had a very good January. The course will open Saturday, February 10. Thursday Afternoon Club will resume February 8, with live music from 5:00 – 7:00 pm.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2007: The minutes were corrected Lynne Sorlye was appointed to the Community Awareness Committee to replace Denise Henning. Paul Petersen moved that the minutes be approved as corrected, Brian Barry seconded, approved unanimously.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Annual Retreat Lodging prices at Gateway Canyons and Powderhorn are very similar; lodging rates at Hotel Colorado are less but food and beverage costs are much higher. By consensus, the board selected Gateway Canyons for the retreat to be held April 9-10. Potential agenda items include:

- Biennial budget process
- Role of the VCB; economic impact
- Challenges, opportunities for the Grand Junction product
- Measures of influence/success
- Allocation of resources
 - Leisure
 - Group travel/conventions
 - Visitor Center
 - Packages/promotions

Brunella Gualerzi requested the retreat include a brief segment on what staff members do. She feels that more information regarding operations is necessary to have a meaningful discussion on resource allocation. This would be about staff functions and big-picture operations, not details of individual activities.

Brunella Gualerzi moved the regular monthly meeting for April be canceled in lieu of the retreat; Bill Hill seconded, approved unanimously.

By laws Committee At Council's request, the Committee reviewed and revised the section that specified a majority of the board would represent the tourism industry. That section now states that the tourism industry shall have representation on the board. Brunella Gualerzi moved that the By laws, as revised, be adopted and forward to Council for approval; Deb Hoefler seconded, approved unanimously.

Special Events Committee In June 2006, the policy was revised to provide marketing assistance from the VCB rather than cash disbursements to event organizers. The Committee met before this Board meeting to clarify procedures for reviewing applications.

1. Applications will be submitted to the VCB office.
2. Staff will review and forward to the committee with comments/checklist items
 - a. Confirm marketing assistance already being provided (e.g., website calendar, Visitor Guide event listing)
 - b. Timeliness of advertising requests (e.g., can ad deadlines be met; is the time frame for rack card distribution realistic)
 - c. Accuracy of estimated ad costs
 - d. Note any conflicts with other large events that might impact lodging availability
3. Committee members screen applications and report to Board at next monthly meeting
4. Committee Chair will email the Board of the committee's decision or if a recommendation will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Staff will prepare a written report to council regarding the policy changes and implementation. Staff suggests launching a public information campaign of the new process via a press release, Grand Junction Chamber newsletter, email to the DDA's list and holding a public forum to explain the new process.

PROMOTIONS/MARKETING: Jennifer Grossheim-Harris distributed the 2007 Marketing Plan. Industry trends cited in the document were gathered from a variety of sources, including Longwoods International and Yesawich. (It was noted that trends identified in 2006 research reports are based on 2005 data.)

A budget for the Colorado Tourism Office co-op funds (\$150,000) was distributed. The Board previously approved \$71,000 of the total and staff presented recommendations for an additional \$60,000; \$11,000 will be held in reserve as more information is received from the CTO.

Hill & Company is working on the Community Awareness campaign.

STAFF REPORTS: Building Remodel The addition is "weathered in" and the contractor will soon make the door cuts through to the existing building. On February 20, the Director, Barb Bowman and Jennifer Grossheim-Harris will relocate to offices in City Hall. Access to the storage room and two staff work areas is sealed off; Layne Whyman's and Vivian Brodine's workstations have been moved to the conference room. The March Board agenda will include a

discussion of holding an open house, possibly during National Tourism Week. No changes are being made in the Visitor Center.

Statistics The 2006 year-end statistics were distributed; January figures are incomplete because December lodging tax receipts have not yet closed. The Rocky Mountain Lodging Report regional information (Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, Utah) was distributed.

Sales The Residence Inn will have its final building inspection February 7 and plans to open with 48 hours. Opening of the Courtyard is not determined at this time.

The Director and Barb Bowman will attend the Go West Summit in Portland, Oregon. This is a regional international trade show with pre-scheduled appointments with tour operators and receptive operators.

Barb Bowman has met one-on-one with lodging properties; all are reporting higher average daily rate and occupancy (some properties' occupancy is 80% year-round). VCB programs that were rated high by the properties included packages, Fast Facts and weekly calendar of events. One property suggested the VCB do winter marketing.

Colorado Municipal League (CML) solicited bids for its annual convention for the years 2009-2013; this would be a city-wide convention, defined as utilizing three or more hotels. The sales staff hosted a meeting with all potentially interested hotel properties to discuss CML's requirements. At that meeting, the hotels decided not to submit a bid for the following reasons:

- CML wanted free meeting space
- Meeting space had to be within walking distance of hotels
- 10% commission must be paid to the 3rd party meeting planner
- Hosting CML is very time-intensive and hotels did not support VCB staff spending so much time on one convention

The CML convention is in mid-June when the hotels don't need group business because of high occupancy. Rick Martindale stated that the properties are going to be full anyway and there is no need to put that much effort into one group with no noticeable impact on the bottom line. He also stated that Friday-Saturday-Sunday are now the slowest days.

Specials and Packages Layne Whyman reported that 170 Holiday Shopping Packages were sold, the highest number ever. The wine trains are currently featured on the website Special & Packages, 2 in the Spring and 2 in the Fall. Rocky Mountain PBS will sponsor the Art, Jazz & Wine Train during the Art & Jazz Festival. This will be a PBS fundraiser which will be marketed to their largest corporate sponsors. RMPBS has asked for two consecutive years' commitment.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Colorado Tourism Office and its advertising agency MMG Worldwide will present the state's summer marketing campaign February 27 at the Doubletree Hotel.

Bill Hill asked at what point do Board members become concerned about the declining statistics? The Director responded that we monitor Internet usage and consumers' increased use of the

Internet; telephone calls and Visitor Center visits are expected to continue to decline as a result of the switch to using the Internet. At Bill's suggestion, staff is now tracking and reporting in-state, out-of-state and international visitors as a percentage of the Visitor Center totals. This is a better indicator of our visitors as we see the percentage of out-of-state visitors increasing. Additionally, hotels are reporting increases in international visitors although our Visitor Center statistics may not reflect that.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.