

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JUNE 10, 2008

PRESIDING: Paul Petersen, Vice Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nathan Knoll, Lynne Sorlye, Brian Barry, Brunella Gualerzi, Steve Meyer, Rick Martindale

MEMBERS ABSENT: Deborah Hoefler, John Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Holly Prickett, Melanie Wiseman, Erin Chapman, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Carol Tadvick, Karin Mast, Tim Seeberg

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 pm.

MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2008: Lynne Sorlye moved the minutes be approved as written, Rick Martindale seconded, passed unanimously.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: Melanie Wiseman introduced Carol Tadvick, who achieved 2,000 hours of volunteer service in January. Carol began volunteering at the Visitor Center in 1993 after earning her degree in tourism/recreation management from Mesa State College.

STAFF RECOGNITION: The Director introduced Holly Prickett, who joined the staff as Marketing & Public Relations Administrative Assistant. Holly grew up in Hotchkiss and earned her marketing degree from the University of Denver. Her marketing background is in retirement communities, most recently with The Commons.

HOST REMARKS: Sarah Russell welcomed the Board to The Courtyard by Marriott. Rising gasoline costs have not affected the market and the hotel has been nearly full all this week. The property has a strong corporate clientele, not necessarily the energy industry; leisure travel started picking up at the end of May.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Special Events Committee Brian Barry reported on a combined application from the Downtown Car Show/Air Show/Fruita Fall Festival; \$5,000 in regional marketing assistance is requested. (The Air Show submitted an individual application and was awarded \$7,500.) The committee recommends \$4,500 for regional newspaper and radio; the purpose would be to increase drive traffic/day trippers since hotels are expected to have high occupancy the weekend of these events. Lynne Sorlye moved to accept the committee's recommendation to award \$4,000 for regional newspaper and radio advertising, Steve Meyer seconded, passed unanimously.

The Palisade Peach Festival's application was received after the Committee had met; \$6,000 is requested -- \$3,500 for printing posters and \$2,500 for printing brochures. City Market is the premier sponsor and Kroger/King Soopers has agreed to display these materials in their Front Range stores. Brian Barry moved that the Board award the Palisade Peach Festival \$6,000 for printing posters and brochures, Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously.

Plateau Valley Heritage Days Rodeo also submitted an application after the Committee had met. The event is in Collbran July 3-4. The consensus of the Board is that the intent of the Special Events policy is to promote events that are held in the Grand Valley, primarily in shoulder season, which will impact hotel occupancy. Staff is directed to include this event on the VCB's website.

Expand the Tent Committee Barbara Bowman and Irene Carlow will represent staff in assisting the committee. Paul Petersen will communicate via email with possible meeting dates.

Contingency Marketing A discussion topic at the April Board retreat was additional marketing that may be necessary in the event of an economic downturn resulting in a decrease in business. The Board will need to have additional discussions and establish parameters of what business impacts would trigger the need to take additional monies from the fund balance. The retreat facilitator had suggested retaining a third-party consultant to monitor and advise that trends indicate a coming downturn. Leading, rather than lagging, indicators need to be identified so that marketing efforts could be pro-active instead of reactive.

The Director reviewed the 2008-2009 financial plan staff developed in 2007 as part of the budget process. If those projections are accurate the 2008 year-end variance would be \$319,000 and the 2009 year-end variance would be \$380,000. Two scenarios were presented for drawing \$250,000 from the fund balance for contingency marketing – utilizing the entire amount in 2008 and no additional fund in 2009, or making no contingency expenditures in 2008 and utilizing the entire amount in 2009. Staff will contact other CVBs for examples of these types of contingency plans. Brian Barry commented that solid economic research is definitely the first step toward developing any contingency plan. Staff was asked to bring additional financial information and suggestions for consultants to the July meeting.

City Administration Update The Director commended the Two Rivers Convention Center staff for their flexibility and quick response to the unanticipated number of attendees at today's Colorado Oil & Gas Commission public hearing. Three hundred people were expected to attend this hearing but the actual number was estimated at 2,000.

The Director stated that the VCB Department will now consist of two divisions: Two Rivers Convention Center/Avalon Theater, with Tim Seeberg as manager and the VCB with Barb Bowman as manager.

STAFF REPORTS: Promotions/Marketing Jennifer Grossheim-Harris reported on the 1,200 responses received in the online survey:

- 93% do not use travel blogs
- 76% are not influenced by travel blogs
- Highest response rate was received from empty-nesters and double-income/no kids demographics
- Expedia and Travelocity were the most commonly used travel sites

Karin Mast reviewed the new site analytics module. Website statistical reports under this new software will be more accurate than the previous system, which was log-based and tended to overstate the number of users. Consequently, year-to-year comparisons will likely appear that visitation is down; a full year of reporting under the new system will be necessary for comparisons to be valid. This advanced analytics module will provide detailed information that was not previously available:

- Geographical – country, state, metropolitan area
- Campaign reporting
- Repeat and first-time visitors
- Organic search terms to identify how visitors found our site

Sales Barb Bowman and Tim Seeberg are surveying 14 CVBs as part of the CVB/convention center best practices evaluation. Preliminary results indicate that most of the entities have separate funding sources and that some organizations do share resources (especially marketing). Results will be presented when all the surveys are complete.

Staff reports, statistical summaries and the 5/31 budget report were distributed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm on motion of Steve Meyer and second of Nathan Knoll.