

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
AUGUST 12, 2008

PRESIDING: Deborah Hoefler, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Brian Barry, Brunella Gualerzi, Rick Martindale, Paul Petersen, John Williams, Steve Meyer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nathan Knoll

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

GUESTS: David Brown, Tim Seeberg

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

MINUTES OF JULY 8, 2008: Lynne Sorlye moved the minutes be approved as written, Paul Petersen seconded, passed unanimously.

HOST REMARKS: David Brown, Executive Director of the Western Colorado Botanical Gardens, welcomed the Board and reported that the Gardens are in the best condition ever. The Gardens comprise a total of 15 acres, 5 of which are developed. The summer concert series has been successful; the final concert of the year is September 13. Admission will be free August 15 as part of the Riverside Parkway opening.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Budget Presentation Barbara Bowman presented final budget recommendations and reported that the budget review team approved the CIP request for upgrading the Visitor Center exhibits in 2009. John Williams moved to accept the 2008 (Revised) – 2009 Budgets as presented, Brian Barry seconded, passed unanimously.

Community Awareness Committee No report. A meeting will be scheduled in the next few weeks.

Expand the Tent Committee The committee met July 7 to review the existing program and consider revisions in relation to overall growth in the Valley and the potential for several new hotels. The committee discussed a variety of options if the program were to be changed, including a fee structure for participation at different levels, e.g., listing in the Visitor Guide, listing on the VCB website, access to sales leads, etc. Entering into a coalition/partnership with Mesa County, Palisade and Fruita was not considered a viable option because it would require creating a new entity to plan, implement and administer such a program.

Rick Martindale, a member of the committee who was not able to attend the July 7 meeting, stated that he would like the Wine Country Inn to be in the Expand the Tent. (The owners have decided not to opt in to the program.) Rick stated that, as a sister City property (Quality Inn) that collects the lodging tax, he does not want hotels outside the area to have access to the VCB's information. Barb Bowman brought to the Board's attention that Rick called staff on behalf of the Wine Country Inn regarding a sales lead received by Quality Inn. Rick felt this particular group would be a good fit for the Wine Country Inn and asked staff if the Wine Country Inn could respond. Barb thanked Rick for calling and recognizing that this could be a potential conflict.

The committee acknowledges that the local market is expected to change in the near future with more hotels being built. If some of those new properties are outside the City limits, there may be greater interest in considering revisions to the policy. At this time, the committee recommends that there be no changes to the Expand the Tent program for 2009.

Special Events Committee Brian Barry reported that the committee has discussed streamlining the application process to reduce the amount of staff time spent on marketing special events. The committee suggests that applications be accepted only two times per year (mid-March for events scheduled July 1 – December 31 and mid-September for events scheduled January 1 – June 30).

Discussion topics included:

- Cut-off dates may tend to discourage new events from applying
- The Board wants to remain flexible in reviewing/selecting events for funding
- The Board could identify “marquee” events that will be supported; those events won't need to go through the application process
- Long-standing successful events are doing well without VCB funding, but the VCB does want to be identified with those events (e.g., Winefest, Peach Festival, Art & Jazz)

The Board asked the committee to meet again and report back with more options, including identifying “marquee events” and how the VCB would support them.

City Administration Debbie Kovalik reported that a new name has not yet been chosen for the Department; the Visitor & Convention Bureau and Two Rivers Convention Center will be separate divisions of the Department.

Council approved a one-year operating agreement for Cinema at the Avalon. The Cinema will be required to pay a fixed monthly rent, submit a business plan, submit monthly financial reports and conduct two fundraisers. The Avalon Advisory Board was appointed by Council to work on capital advancement. The Advisory Board was tasked with submitting renovation or expansion plans along with funding sources to execute those plans. The current plan is to expand the building to house a small movie theater for the Cinema and the larger area to be used by the Symphony and other events that book the facility (approximately 40/year). An economic feasibility study that was conducted suggests a several million dollar project but only about 1/3 of the project total can be substantiated. Some options include continuing the City's ownership

of the facility, selling it, or the City partnering with sponsors; perhaps there would be more community support if it were privately owned.

STAFF REPORTS: Sales The Triple Crown tournament in July was down from 32 teams to 20; as a result, tournament organizers will move the 2009 event to Denver. The Triple Crown tournament in May will continue in Grand Junction.

Other recent activities include:

- Lodging packages for the peach promotion will run all month
- VCB staffed a booth at the Mesa County Fair
- Zip code surveys will be done at the Peach Festival
- Staff will assist Grand Mesa Youth Soccer Association (GYMSA) with the annual room placement for the October tournament; the number of out of town teams is expected to decline from previous years

Marketing/PR Staff will meet with Hill & Company and Miles Media August 13 to begin planning the 2009 Marketing Plan. The Denver/Colorado Springs peach promotion was very successful. Three travel writers are confirmed for Peach Festival weekend.

July lodging tax collections were up 13.9%; YTD collections are up 18.6%.

Invitations were distributed for the annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet; the banquet will be held at Two Rivers Convention Center on September 9, immediately following the Board meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm on motion of Brunella Gualerzi and second of John Williams.