

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
AUGUST 11, 2009

PRESIDING: Paul Petersen, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Barry, John Williams, Donia Moore, Brunella Gualerzi, Deborah Hofer, Nathan Knoll, Steve Meyer, Rick Martindale

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

HOST REMARKS: Tammy Thompson Booker welcomed the Board to the Holiday Inn & Suites, which opened June 16. This property is Holiday Inn's new prototype with very modern rooms and a complete re-design of the public areas. The hotel has 120 rooms (25% are suites), two meeting rooms, plus a Board room. The restaurant serves both breakfast and dinner and features wines by Two Rivers Winery. The owners also have properties in Casper, Wyoming; Vernal, Utah; and Limon and Craig, Colorado.

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm.

MINUTES OF JULY 14, 2009: Donia Moore moved to approve the minutes as written, Deborah Hofer seconded, approved unanimously.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Special Events *Western Slope Concert Series* – Brian Barry talked with the applicant and relayed the Board's concerns that were raised at the July meeting. Based on that discussion, the applicant has scaled back his request to \$3,000 for two events, The Nutcracker and the Celtic Symphonia (March 2010), both of which will be held at the Avalon Theatre.

This is an established concert series and Board members have received good feedback from people in the community. It appears, however, that a majority of attendees are local. The applicant has a successful event but needs help with marketing and does not know how to expand his market or how to track attendees. The committee recommends an award of \$3,000 for print and radio (NPR) for the two events with the requirement that the applicant track ticket sales/attendees and document overnight stays. Nathan Knoll commented that the Board should consider cutting established events loose so that newer events such as this can be brought online.

Rick Martindale moved to award \$3,000 in Special Events Marketing Assistance to the Western Slope Concert Series for The Nutcracker and the Celtic Symphonia, Donia Moore seconded, passed unanimously.

Budget Planning Debbie Kovalik and Barbara Bowman presented the 2009 Revised and 2010 Proposed budgets that incorporate direction received from the Board at the July monthly meeting. 2009 lodging tax collections are projected to decline 15% from 2008. Based on that projection, 2009 non-personnel operating expenses have been reduced to \$1,277,653 which is 18% less than 2008 but 6.5% more than 2007. The revised budget preserves the core marketing programs that have successfully established our brand in the regional market, while maintaining flexibility to respond to new opportunities. 2010 lodging tax is projected to increase 4.5% and non-personnel operating expenses are budgeted to increase 6%. No capital outlays are planned for 2010.

It was noted that the original 2009 total budget was \$1 million more than 2006. Record revenues of 2007-2008 provided the funding to invest in assets that will serve the VCB for the long term (website re-design, photography, videography, sales database software, Visitor Center exhibit remodel) and allowed the VCB to participate in co-operative national advertising through the CTO. The original 2009 budget cut back included national advertising expenditures because the response/return (in 2008) was lower than expected.

Paul Petersen moved to approve the 2009 Revised and 2010 Proposed budgets as presented, Deborah Hoefler seconded, passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS: Barbara Bowman distributed the monthly reports. July lodging tax revenue was down nearly 20% vs. July 2008; YTD collections are down 13%. (2009 YTD collections are up 2.9% over the same period for 2007.)

Staff hosted a meeting of bed and breakfast owners/managers to discuss the VCB's marketing efforts and package promotion opportunities. An upcoming e-zine will feature a story on the bed-and-breakfast experience. The group is pleased with the VCB's efforts on their behalf and would like to meet again in the fall.

Sales Erin Chapman reported that we are 53% to goal for sales leads issued. Grand Valley BMX is hosting three events this year, including the nationals for the Mile High Region. National event officials will be on hand for that event and will decide if Grand Junction will be the host location again next year. Twelve hotels and Two Rivers Convention Center will participate in the VCB's Denver meeting planner reception at the University of Denver on Thursday, August 20; 200 guests are expected.

Convention Servicing Layne Whyman reported that there are fewer events in July than June, but the July groups are larger. Rocky Mountain Women in Law Enforcement is one of the larger groups booked for next month. Grand Junction is bidding on a variety of events for 2010 including a motorcycle club; car tour; go kart events; and mining, agricultural and pyrotechnic conferences.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm on motion of Steve Meyer and second of Brian Barry.