

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
March 3, 2009

PRESIDING: Paul Petersen, Chair

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Deborah Hoefler, John Williams

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

The Chair introduced Donia Moore, who was appointed to the Board to fill the vacancy created by the expiration of Lynne Sorlye's term, and welcomed back Nathan Knoll, who was re-appointed to a full 3-year term. The Chair appointed Donia to serve on the Special Events committee.

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

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10, 2009: Brian Barry moved to approve the minutes as written, Nathan Knoll seconded, approved unanimously.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Special Events Committee Brian Barry reported on the \$5,000 request from Palisade Bluegrass & Roots Music Festival. This event has been held in Hotchkiss for many years but will move to Palisade's Riverbend Park beginning this year, June 12-14. Organizers reported 2,000 out-of-town attendees last year; approximately 30% camp and 40% stay in hotels. Marketing assistance is requested to help launch the festival's inaugural event in Palisade; funds would be spent on printing posters and postcards, mailing expenses and radio ads. The committee recommends supporting this new event with an award of \$5,000. Nathan Knoll moved to award the Palisade Bluegrass & Roots Music Festival \$2,000 for printing and \$3,000 for mailing expenses, contingent upon using the City's printing contractor; if that printer is not used, the \$2,000 is for radio advertising; Donia Moore seconded, passed unanimously.

City Administration Debbie Kovalik reported on the City Manager's budget presentation to Council on March 2. Sales and use tax revenues for January-February declined nearly 10% as the effects of the nationwide recession have reached Grand Junction. The management team identified approximately \$5 million in appropriated expenditures that will be put on hold. Personnel costs represent \$2 million of the total; savings will be realized through attrition, reductions in overtime and not filling approved new positions. Budgeted capital construction projects will be continued and several will be

brought forward from 2010 to 2009 in an effort to continue providing employment for the local labor force. The City Manager recognizes that tourism is also economic development and she is supportive of the VCB's ongoing programs to bring outside dollars into our community.

Annual Retreat Board members were asked to send their suggested discussion topics to Barb Bowman and Paul Petersen so an agenda can be developed of the highest-priority items. The financial outlook for the rest of this year will be a main discussion item. Staff is directed to develop budget scenarios based on decreases in lodging tax and vendors fee. Staff and the contractors should bring ideas for short-term marketing that could bolster anticipated declines in visitors and revenues. Regional advertising has already started but national advertising was scaled back for 2009 because there was very little return.

Debbie Kovalik reminded the Board that we will begin planning the 2010 budget in June and we may need to budget into the fund balance if revenues decline significantly. The CTO 2010 budget (July 1 – June 30) is likely to be cut from \$20 million to \$15 million.

Hill & Company and Miles Media representatives should attend the Monday session and present information on trends as well as what other destinations are doing.

The group will meet at the Visitor Center at 9:00 am Monday, March 30 to depart for Gateway Canyons.

STAFF REPORTS: Visitor Center The major exhibit installation is complete and staff and volunteers are undergoing training this week. Eight of our volunteers assisted with the exhibit installation, some worked as many as 3 days. An open house will be held March 13 for Council, Board, City employees and tourism partners. Cumulus radio will do a remote broadcast during the public open house March 14 from 1:00-4:00.

OTHER BUSINESS: Congressman John Salazar is sponsoring legislation to designate Dominguez and Escalante Canyons as wilderness areas. Staff will forward to the Board an informational email for those who wish to support the Congressman's efforts.

AAA wine trains are scheduled for April 17-19 and October 17-19 (President's Train). AAA wanted a second train in the fall but was unable to get space from Amtrak.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm on motion of Nathan Knoll and second of Brian Barry.