

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

May 11, 2010

PRESIDING: Paul Petersen, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Williams, Deborah Hoefler, Brunella Gualerzi, Jessica Stimmel, Per Nilsson, Nathan Knoll, Glen Gallegos

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rick Martindale

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Debbie Kovalik, Holly Prickett, Melanie Wiseman, Layne Whyman, Erin Chapman

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

MINUTES OF APRIL 13, 2010: Jessica Stimmel moved to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Deborah Hoefler, passed unanimously.

HOST REMARKS: Tonia Masse, General Manager, LaQuinta Inn & Suites was unable to attend. Barb Bowman reported LaQuinta is in process of redoing all soft goods. Their primarily corporate business remains strong and overall occupancy is improving. They continue to have the highest occupancy for La Quinta's in the region.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS:

RFPs: Marketing/Website – Paul Petersen will be sending a calendar with meeting dates for both the Marketing RFP and Website RFP committee members John Williams, Rick Martindale, and Brunella Gualerzi by the end of the week. Finalists will make presentations to the entire Board in August.

Sales Contractor – Barb Bowman advised the RFP is out and there have been inquiries, but no responses have been received yet. This is a \$25K one-year renewable contract for a part-time sales person to be based on the eastern slope.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Nathan Knoll reported on the committee's Annual Retreat follow-up discussion on Special Events Policy Review:

The Special Events Committee met on April 30th and today prior to the Board Meeting. They agreed the application will be revised to include more detailed information the committee needs to make an award recommendation (this will cut down on the amount of staff follow-up time) as well as stronger enforcement of the 45 day reporting requirement. The committee will look at a stand-alone budget line item (with no committee approval needed) for those annual events that regularly get funding (this would be considered for the 2011 budget and movement of money may occur to

accommodate; the 2010 budget is already set). The committee is concerned about committing to a certain dollar amount, as they don't want to leave too little money for other events.

Applications reviewed by the committee:

Palisade Peach Festival – Requested \$6K for King Soopers/City Market promotion. Committee recommended \$6K be approved with the criteria that a lodging link to GJ hotels be added and that the tracking of out of town visitors be improved, perhaps with the assistance of an intern. The total cost of the promotion is \$6.5K (without VCB help, they most likely would have to discontinue promotion). In response to questions the Board raised at the last meeting in other sponsorship for this event – the Town of Palisade charges \$9K for use of the park but the town annually gives the Chamber \$15K. Peachfest raises 55% of the gross revenue for the Palisade Chamber of Commerce. Motion was made by Brunella Gualerzi and seconded by John Williams, passed unanimously, to approve \$6K for the Palisade Peach Festival King Soopers/City Market promotion with the criteria that a lodging link be added (current link is difficult to find) to the website and that more accurate tracking of attendance be implemented.

Colorado Pork & Hops Challenge – Requested \$3K for advertising in the Kansas City Barbeque Society's newsletter *The Bullsheet*. Committee recommends a total of \$5K for the event: \$3K is for an ad in *The Bullsheet* and \$2K is for advertising in another market they feel will continue to grow the event (i.e. Salt Lake or Denver). This is a successful event that continues to grow. It was noted they have moved off the very busy WineFest weekend. Other sponsors include Kingsford, KC BBQ Sauce, City of Grand Junction and Cumulus Broadcasting. Concern was raised if the event could outgrow its Lincoln Park site; Holly was asked to call Parks & Recreation office for their input. Discussion of using the extra \$2,000 to partner with another of their sponsors in marketing efforts was discussed. Motion was made by Jessica Stimmel, seconded by Per Nilsson, passed unanimously, to approve \$5K for the Colorado Pork & Hops Challenge.

Independence Film Festival of Colorado – Requested \$10K to be used for advertising in special interest publications or regional newspapers. A returning event (from 2008) that is scheduled for October 1-3. In 2008 they had events in four Colorado communities; 2010 they plan only Grand Junction. Event was a bit disorganized in 2008, but an additional professional organizer has been added to the team and they feel they'll be in better shape this time. They hope to bring in Morgan Freeman as well as Frank Darabont, director of *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile*. The Board's desire is for this to be a successful event and they feel with some extra emphasis on early planning and organizational details the event can be successful and draw visitors. Motion was made by Paul Petersen, seconded by Glen Gallegos, passed unanimously to approve \$3K with following criteria: by August 1st the event's website must be up, promotional materials must be printed, the guest speakers contracted and a schedule timeline completed.

Nathan advised that to date, \$40K has been awarded from the Special Event Fund with \$10K remaining for rest of year.

JUCO SPONSORSHIP: Jamie Hamilton thanked the Board for their past and present sponsorship of \$10,000, which enabled JUCO to secure Dale Murphy as last year's banquet speaker and Altitude Sports to broadcast the championship game(s), which was televised to 5.5 million homes in 2009. JUCO is partnering with St Mary's and their blood drive by donating a one game pass to each person who donates one pint of blood and allowing St Mary's to set up their bloodmobile at the tournament itself. St Mary's was recognized on a state wide level for this innovative blood drive idea.

JUCO continues to secure sponsorships to keep the cost of ticket pricing at a reasonable price. Currently a child series ticket is \$20 and an adult is \$25.

A new Executive Director for the NJCAA was hired last year who works with a 32 member board of directors. The current board is much younger than past years and they are looking at the bottom line – the amount of the check that the local committee writes back to NJCAA (2009 was ½ the amount of 2008 due to lower attendance brought on by inclement weather).

JUCO has begun sending out periodic newsletters and the next issue will highlight the GJVCB'S sponsorship.

A 10 year contract between our local JUCO committee and the NJCAA had been previously signed, but the more recent NJCAA staff has been unable to locate that contract. The NJCAA organization is suggesting an "MOU" be signed, as this will give Grand Junction a 25 year extension, as long as there will be improvements made to Suplezio Field, which was estimated at \$16 million. A more recent bid for these improvements has been received (in light of current economic conditions) and has come back at \$8 million. Between JUCO cash flow and various grants and donations, it is felt that this goal is reachable. Other communities interested in hosting JUCO are Disneyworld, Tempe, AZ and Tyler, TX.

Debbie Kovalik interjected that JUCO was suggested originally in 1992 for Special Events Funding, but, at that time, Mr. Hamilton suggested VCB funding be used for new events. The VCB's support of JUCO the last 2 years is now more critical than years past.

All 19 games will be streamed and broadcast and local supporters will be interviewed.

John Williams asked Jamie Hamilton what the dollar amount of sponsorship was for this year and it is \$200,000. A new sponsor this year is Cabela's. For media sponsorship they are contracted with The TEAM radio and the Sentinel.

Glen Gallegos asked what JUCO's impact was on the hotels and Per Nilsson said it was "definitely a demand generator." Debbie Kovalik added that the economic impact of

travel related expenses is approximately \$500 thousand, but the total cost associated with the event generates more than \$1 million to the area.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE: Laurie Kadrich gave a presentation on the City budget. Additional points that Laurie discussed included:

- *Major revenue source for the City of Grand Junction is the Sales and Use Tax
- *In 1998 a $\frac{3}{4}$ cent tax was approved for capital improvements, but this still didn't meet the demands, so \$7-14 million has been taken from the general operating fund to keep up with necessary capital improvements
- *When the local economy downturned, the City made necessary financial adjustment right away and feels it will take a long time to bounce back, but feels it won't take the City as long as the rest of the country
- *This year's development application value is better than the number from last year (2009)
- *Employment/Unemployment: The quality of work force is better than prior to 2009
- *We lost the high paying jobs, but replaced with low paying jobs
- *Oil & Gas: There has been a reduction of well set-up, but production has remained
- *When jobs diminished in other parts of the country and the Grand Valley still had work, they came here for work, but now there is no job for them to move to
- *The bulk of lost employment dollars came out of the construction industry
- *When the Purchasing Managers' Index is above 50, the manufacturing industry gears up for new orders (first time in 20-30 years that it's been this many months above 60, which is a positive indication for corporations of America-not necessarily for the unemployed)
- *Rex Tippetts of the Grand Junction Regional Airport has secured over 200 million dollars of Federal Aviation Administration grant money that was "left over for the airport."
- *1st Quarter 2010 an additional 5.5 million dollars in budget cuts made, amounting to 30 million dollars reduction in general government spending since 2008
- *Council policy direction is to provide local stimulus, continue to provide essential services/preserve public safety, and preserve the fund balance

Per asked what the first quarter expectations were and Laurie said it was down 2.4 million more than planned, but 20 days into the year the City made necessary adjustments.

- *74 full time positions have been eliminated – over 10% of work force
- *Explained why early retirement incentive was offered instead of lay-offs – this way you would get those who were planning on retiring anyway and the city wouldn't experience a double hit. The bulk of the City jobs have certifications tied to them and are not easily replaced.
- *The City looked at the history of staffing to see if it was currently over-staffed and found that city staff per-capita is the lowest it's been in 37 years.

Glen asked how we compare to other cities and staffing counts and Laurie said it was difficult to compare because of square miles.

Paul asked about the potential Clifton annexation and Laurie said in Monday's joint meeting of Mesa County Commissioners and Grand Junction City Council, the Clifton Annexation was taken off the table. Annexation will only occur if the property owner requests it or if the new urban development is within the sewer boundary.

Paul asked how Laurie saw the City budget in regards to the VCB budget and she explained they look at a variety of forecasting situations, that way we're not slashing to the dollar amount.

*Right now the City is delivering services needed with a leaner staff

Paul asked about capital expenditures for 2010 and she said it's down, but not significantly (within 3 or 4 million, because the City bonded Riverside Parkway).

*Capital projects are a priority for Council

*Federal and state dollars coming into local cities is down significantly. Grand Junction City capital projects budget remain about the same as 2009 levels.

Laurie passed along a citizen's suggestion that in tourism marketing we could add "and a great place to do business" to build economic development interest.

NEXT MEETING: June 8 at Mesa State College. Deborah Hoefler will email parking information.

ADJOURN: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm on motion of Deborah Hoefler and second of Jessica Stimmel.