

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

February 1, 2011

PRESIDING: Per Nilsson, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Williams, Paul Petersen, Glen Gallegos, Jessica Stimmel, Nathan Knoll, Renae Phillips, Ron Beach

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

GUESTS: Catherine Robertson, Katie Stevens

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

MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2011: Jessica Stimmel moved to approve the minutes as written, Paul Petersen seconded, approved unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTEES: The Chair introduced Ron Beach and Renae Phillips and welcomed them to the Board. John Williams was reappointed and will serve as Vice Chair for the coming year. Eric Feely declined appointment to the Board because he has accepted a position in Montrose and will be relocating. Council will re-evaluate the other candidates who were interviewed in January.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT: Catherine Robertson welcomed the Board and thanked them for their interest in BLM activities. She noted that the BLM and VCB have enjoyed a strong working relationship for many years and have partnered on numerous projects. Local areas that were discussed include:

- Tabeguache Trail – the first freestyle bike trail on public lands in the country; expect 90,000 people this year
- Wild Horse Range – working on improving trail access
- North Desert – open area that is very unique to BLM lands; extremely popular with mountain bikers, Mesa State is doing an economic impact study
- 18 Road/North Fruita Desert – additional trail enhancements, size of campground will be doubled
- Bangs Canyon area – potential for shared use trails: motorcycles, bikers, hikers, ATVs

An estimated 1 million people visit lands managed by the Grand Junction Field Office each year.

Katie Stevens presented information about the National Conservation Areas:

- McInnis Canyons – 10 year anniversary; usage is increasing in nearly all areas: day usage, paleo-tourism, mountain biking
- Dominguez-Escalante – management plan is being developed

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Special Events Nathan Knoll reported on four applications reviewed by the committee.

Palisade Bluegrass & Roots Music Festival \$7,000 requested – The Town of Palisade is the applicant for this three day event at Riverbend Park. Attendance estimates are unclear: figures reported on the post-event report conflict with this year's application. 2010 room nights were concentrated in Palisade but organizers are also working with Grand Junction properties for the 2011 event. This event does have potential to grow and many attendees are an older demographic with discretionary income. The committee recommends an award of \$2,500 with the requirement that organizers provide zip code data from online ticket sales as well as better tracking of the number of campers and room nights. Funds are to be used for print and/or radio advertising outside of a 200 mile radius of Mesa County. Paul Petersen moved to accept the committee's recommendation to award the Palisade Bluegrass & Roots Music Festival \$2,500 in Special Events marketing assistance, Renae Phillips seconded, passed unanimously

Grand Valley Marathon \$4,000 requested – This is the third year for the event in Palisade; attendance has doubled every year. Organizers do five races in the region. This event will be marketed at three bigger marathons (St. George, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas). No local sponsors are listed on the application. The committee recommends \$875 for printed materials to hand out at the other marathons. John Williams moved to accept the committee's recommendation to award \$875 in Special Events marketing assistance to the Grand Valley Marathon, Jessica Stimmel seconded, passed unanimously.

Rim Rock Marathon \$6,740 requested – This one day event in November is an official qualifying marathon. The field is limited to 400 runners, about 20% are from outside Mesa County. The committee recommends an award of \$1,800 for an ad in *Colorado Runner*. Glen Gallegos moved to accept the committee's recommendation to award \$1,800 in Special Events marketing assistance to the Rim Rock Marathon, Renae Phillips seconded, passed unanimously.

Western Slope Animal Expo \$1,808 requested – This will be the 4th year of the one day expo of educational exhibits, demonstrations, contests and entertainment. Attendance the first 3 years has averaged 800, with perhaps 50 from out of town. Organizers have not marketed the event outside the area in the past but would like to begin that effort, as they have developed an alliance with the Grand Valley Zoological Qwest. The committee recommends no funding award. The expo appears to be just a local draw and the event hours of 10 am – 4 pm offer no potential for overnight stays.

Glen Gallegos moved to accept the committee's recommendation not to provide Special Events marketing assistance to the Western Slope Animal Expo, Paul Petersen seconded, passed unanimously.

Committee Assignments: The Chair appointed Renae Phillips and Ron Beach to the Special Event Committee. The committee generally meets at 10:00 am the day before the regular monthly Board meeting.

Annual Planning Retreat: Setting priorities for 2012 will be the focus of the planning session. The agenda will be finalized at the March 8 Board meeting.

STAFF REPORTS In 2010, the VCB provided a letter in support of the Mesa County Land Trust's application for GOCO funds to purchase three parcels of land; that application was unsuccessful. The Land Trust will re-apply this year (adding a fourth parcel) and has requested a new letter of support. The Board directed that Debbie Kovalik and Barbara Bowman send a letter of support on behalf of the VCB.

Barbara Bowman distributed a copy of the *Denver Post* January 23 article about the Quiznos Pro Challenge. The local organizing committee is working on a letter of intent to host the event in 2012.

Barbara Bowman, Debbie Kovalik and a representative of Grand Junction Regional Airport will travel to Dallas March 9-10 to meet with American Airlines/American Eagle. They'll also have a booth at the reservations office, promoting Grand Junction to the agents.

Visitor Center: Melanie Wiseman surveyed several VCBs in Colorado and other western states to gather comparison information about trends in visitation and use of volunteers. Visitation to the VCB's center has been declining since 2002, as more information is available on the Internet and travelers' use of the Internet is increasing. Those surveyed are experiencing the same declining trends as Grand Junction. To offset the visitor decline, some have begun partnering with community agencies, businesses, non-profits, etc., and hosting events at the center (such as book signings, local artists). Six of the eight centers surveyed do not have any volunteers; those that do always have paid staff on-site. The Colorado Welcome Centers are primarily rest stops – visitor information is secondary. Welcome Centers are staffed by volunteers but each Center has a paid manager on-site; the state-wide manager of all the Welcome Centers is based in Denver.

Marketing/Promotions: Jennifer Grossheim-Harris reported that Arts, Hearts & Tarts continues in a scaled-down form as a local promotion. Staff made all revisions to the calendars that were printed in-house, delivered them to our partners and posted it on our website. The VCB is the wine sponsor of 5280's "Single in the City" event February 18. Board members are invited to attend, travel expenses will be on your own.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Hotline convention (training for linemen) will remain in Grand Junction. This group has met here for over 20 years and will return in May 2011 and beyond, with no set years on the contract. The estimated economic impact of the group is \$600,000.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm on motion of Jessica Stimmel and second of Paul Petersen.