

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

APRIL 12, 2011

PRESIDING: Per Nilsson, Chair

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Glen Gallegos

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Debbie Kovalik, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Melanie Wiseman, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Anna Plessinger, Diane Schwenke, Gaylene Ore, Laurie Kadrich

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2011: Nathan Knoll moved to approve the minutes as written, Lynne Sorlye seconded, approved unanimously.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: Melanie Wiseman introduced Anna Plessinger, who has given 1,000 hours of her time to the Visitor Center. Anna moved to Grand Junction in 1995 and began volunteering in 2004. The Board thanked her for her service to the VCB and the community.

HOST REMARKS: Diane Schwenke welcomed the Board and gave an overview of some of the Chamber's current programs and activities:

- Blue Band Buy Local program, now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 136 participating businesses
- Working on a unified, county-wide economic development plan that Governor Hickenlooper requested from every county
- Greenbacks program, a collaborative effort with the Palisade and Fruita Chambers, encouraging energy conservation and sustainability

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

*Tour of the Valley - \$2,500 requested* This is the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of the Community Hospital event that attracted 800-1,200 riders, 50% of whom were from outside Mesa County. "A Race Across the Sky" will be shown at The Avalon the evening before the ride which could result in additional overnight stays. The committee recommends \$2,500 for either print media or printing expenses. Ron Beach moved to award \$2,500 in Special Events marketing assistance to Tour of the Valley, Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously.

*Palisade Peach Festival - \$5,700 requested* A headliner musical act is being added to Saturday night in an effort to increase out-of-town attendance at the 4-day event. Attendance is hard to track; a survey last year indicated 8,800 at the Festival in the Park, 51% from outside Mesa County. City Market has not been confirmed as the title sponsor. Funding is requested for Denver-area billboards and brochure printing. The committee recommends alternative funding levels/usage pending commitment from City Market: (a) \$3,750 for posters/display materials in front range King Soopers or (b) \$3,500 for other printed materials to be determined. If City Market sponsorship negotiations aren't successful, the Board will rely heavily on staff recommendations for other printed materials because VCB staff has expertise that the Palisade Chamber does not.

Motion by Lynne Sorlye: If the City Market title sponsorship commitment is received by April 30, 2011, award \$3,750 Special Event marketing assistance to the Palisade Peach Festival for posters/displays in King Soopers; if the sponsorship commitment is not secured by April 30, 2011, award \$3,500 for marketing to be determined by VCB staff with input from the Palisade Chamber; seconded by Renae Phillips, passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS Jennifer Grossheim-Harris discussed social media marketing efforts and presented statistics for Facebook and Twitter. She then introduced Gaylene Ore, who has provided public relations services (as part of the advertising contract) for the past 8 years, focusing on national and state-wide media.

Public relations carry the brand throughout the media and is 6-12 times more reliable than paid advertising. Press releases are now being integrated with social media to get the Grand Junction brand out to a broader audience. Story ideas for the Colorado National Monument's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary were being pitched over a year ago which resulted in releases being picked up in numerous publications; a media fam is scheduled for May 20-22 for the anniversary celebration and rededication ceremony. Golf fam co-ops with regional partners (Delta, Montrose) have been successful in securing participation from targeted publications as well as reducing the costs to host the fam.

CITY ADMINISTRATION UPDATE City Manager Laurie Kadrach presented the State of City, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter revenue results, development activities and discussed the outlook for the rest of the year. Use tax collections are nearly triple the same period last year, possibly indicating activity in the energy industry which could be a harbinger of jobs to come. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2010 building permit valuations totaled \$31 million, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2011 totals \$11 million and there are no large projects following the ones currently in progress (American Furniture Warehouse, SpringHill Suites, Candlewood Suites). The City continues to invest in capital projects with \$42 million planned for 2011; capital projects have a significant financial on the local economy in the form of jobs, wages and spending. Additional cuts in services or staff are not anticipated, although

vacancies may not be filled; the exceptions are Police and Fire, both of which are short staffed and those positions cannot be filled internally.

Combining the VCB and TRCC into one department was one of the best decisions she has made; the VCB has a talent/knowledge base that was absent at TRCC. She acknowledged that it is a delicate balance for the VCB to promote TRCC and private meeting space. The City Manager wants the community to be aware of TRCC as an option.

OTHER BUSINESS: World Race 2011 New York-Paris participants will stop at the Fruita Welcome Center/Viet Nam Memorial on April 23, then on to the Colorado National Monument for lunch before proceeding to Gateway. The public is invited to come to either location to talk to the drivers and learn about their cars and the types of fuel they are using.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm on motion of Jessica Stimmel and second of Paul Petersen.