



GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

V I S I T O R & C O N V E N T I O N B U R E A U

GJVCB MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JULY 10, 1990

PRESENT: Vicki Felmlee, Conner Shepherd, Earl Payne, Kathy Voth, Debbie Kovalik, Frank Bering, Tom Ralser, Don Bramer, Juli Henrikson, KJCT TV, KKLY Radio, Drew Munro - Daily Sentinel, Paul Nelson, Jan Ertl, Bill Beckwith

ABSENT: Dan Sullivan

A motion was made by Conner Shepherd and seconded by Tom Ralser that the minutes of the June 19 meeting be accepted as written.

Vicki Felmlee discussed the Tour Around Expo. Total expenditures for our booth and volunteers came in under budget. Approximately 15,000 people came by the booth and perhaps 8,000 of those registered to win free prizes. Winners names have been drawn and they are being notified. Plans for next year should include a new booth and Vicki suggested that a new chairman be appointed so that we can have additional time to plan.

Debbie Kovalik felt that the large number of prizes donated by local businesses shows that there is a very high level of support for the VCB and its mission. She's very proud of the type of support the Board and the volunteers also showed. Taking the dinosaur to the expo gave us the equivalent of two booth spaces for the price of one and gave us additional press in the Rocky Mountain News that weekend.

Vicki thanked all the board members who helped in planning and working at the booth. Juli Henrikson mentioned that she had gotten very positive feedback about Grand Junction from all the people who visited the booth. Don Bramer mentioned that he was surprised at the number of eastern slope people who have no idea what the Colorado National Monument is. Debbie thanked Vicki for all her hard work without which this could not have been done.

Vicki Felmlee began the discussion of advertising agencies by providing background on the decision making process. The Selection Committee met on June 27 to hear oral presentations from 6 agencies. The Committee was made up of 5 board members and 4 community volunteers. The all day process was followed by a discussion. Based on this discussion the committee offered their top three choices to be considered by the Board. These were Tashiro Marketing, Heintz-Barton, and Taylor Christian. Tashiro Marketing and Heintz-Barton were tied for second place in the scores. However, when committee members were asked to rank the agencies based on their feelings, the ranking was different.

Staff developed summaries of all 6 agencies that included their creative, media plans, and budgets. Conner Shepherd requested staff to provide this information to the Board and to display all available creative.

Conner Shepherd began the discussion. He said he had been impressed with the creative of Taylor Christian. But as he looked at the proposals without being affected by the pizzazz and wow factors, he began to see weaknesses in Taylor Christian's approach. The emphasis on billboard advertising is difficult to track. Though he had initially placed them first, he now ranks them lower.

His problem with Heintz-Barton was the reverse type on their ads. He felt it was difficult to read, so he ranked them below Tashiro.

If he were picking an agency based on creativity alone, he would choose Taylor Christian. But when looking at the total mix, he thought that the time and effort placed in billboards might be their way of getting over the problem of being in Texas. Tashiro has much more emphasis on print. Bishop and Bishop and Henry Gill didn't even get to the point. The weakness he saw in Cowden's presentation was too much emphasis on TV. With the limited budget we have he didn't think we could get the type of production we need to make Grand Junction look like a quality tourist destination. He said he would withhold his final decision until the vote.

Vicki Felmlee said that she had considered the level where we would fit when considering their other accounts. With Tashiro we would be their second biggest account, and with Heintz-Barton we would be their third largest. This might be an important factor as far as our importance to them. She had also looked at the themes of the advertising. Tashiro's "Surprising Choices" left her flat, but she liked Heintz-Barton's "Grand Junction."

Conner Shepherd felt that "Grand Junction" was too much tunnel vision. They had made up a dozen of those, but with Tashiro and Taylor Christian, he saw imagination going everywhere rather than focused on one idea.

Vicki noted that there was not much difference in media. Conner noted that Tashiro was about \$10,000 less in agency fees. Debbie pointed out that agency fees were negotiable. The assessed hard costs in the summaries provided had been adjusted where necessary so that equal comparisons could be made.

Vicki said that she had also looked at what she called the "impatience factor." She thought that some of the agencies seemed too laid back. Tashiro, Heintz-Barton and Taylor Christian seemed able to keep up the pace we've set. She shares Conner's concern with the distance of Taylor Christian from Grand Junction.

Juli Henrikson said that she was also taken by Taylor Christian's creative. She thought they had a fantastic billboard campaign and billboards can easily catch the imagination. They do have strong

creative. But she said she really likes Tashiro's "Surprising Choices." She said that the theme needs to be open ended. Their creative showed how easily they can pull in all parts of Grand Junction. She also felt that their locale was very important and that it was nice having them only 2 hours away. She felt they had good rapport with the board. They were open and enthusiastic and were by far the strongest when taking that into consideration. They are very talented. She also felt that they had a very evenly divided media plan. We asked the agencies for their best shot. Though we can negotiate with any of them later and maybe, for example, tell Taylor Christian not to do billboards, we need to look at what it is each agency presented as their best shot.

Tom Ralser said that he thought Taylor Christian had given us what we wanted to hear. They seemed to know we wanted lots of phone calls, and that our tourism market was on the Front Range, so they decided to do billboards.

Debbie said that the billboard idea may have been generated because of their other experience in South Padre and Laredo where billboards are a major part of their plan. Vicki added that we would have been disappointed if they had not done their research.

Don Bramer said that Taylor Christian is very creative. His concern is that for the first year out, their billboard campaign assumes that people know something about Grand Junction. What does it tell someone who doesn't know about Grand Junction?

Conner commented that Heintz-Barton's media plan was certainly complete. Juli and Debbie pointed out that it was basically an overview of all media available and that it didn't make actual media recommendations.

Don said that he agrees that "Surprising Choices" is a good theme. It gives us a blend and lends to future development. He felt that someday the "Grand" of Heintz-Barton would get old.

Jan Ertl, who was a member of the June 27 selection committee was asked to give his input. He thought that the fact that Tashiro's staff seemed personally interested in Grand Junction was a major asset.

Frank Bering said that he had read all the plans and he preferred Tashiro.

Don Bramer asked if there was any further discussion. There was not and he asked if anyone would like to make a motion. Frank Bering moved that the board recommend to city council that they employ Tashiro Marketing as the ad agency for the VCB. Juli Henrikson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Debbie said that the recommendation will go to city council on Monday and that the city manager recommended that the agency be there to do a brief (5 minute) presentation. She felt that the

focus of the discussion should continue to be on the quality of the organization and the outstanding presentation they've put together. They will do a lot for the city.

Earl Payne suggested that the number of hours that has already gone into this process be emphasized.

On behalf of the Board, Vicki Felmlee thanked the community volunteers who had been members of the selection committee.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Debbie will be attending the International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus Seminar July 21 through the 26th in New Orleans. The Seminar gives CVBs a chance to meet and exchange ideas. For two days she will attend seminars with CEOs of agencies with similar size budgets. She will also be attending an IACVB Idea Fair and will have a chance to meet with companies doing computer programming specifically designed for CVBs for research, visitor tracking and group reservation systems.

The Chamber of Commerce is putting out a contract to redo the sign at the front of the building as well as some interior signs. Because the United Way is considering moving to a new location, they do not want to be on the sign which means the portion of the sign allotted to the VCB will be larger.

Visitor Statistics - The VCB has responded to over 6,300 requests for visitor information in June. The Bed Tax in May was up 30% more than Debbie had expected it to be. July collections will reflect June's activity and will tell us more. June seemed to be very strong. The State Welcome Center reports that visitors are up 30% year to date. The Monument reports that visitors are down 3%. This may be due to the hot weather and road construction. Since we have few 1989 statistics, we don't have a lot to compare with. However, it appears that 1990 tourism will equal 1989, and may be better.

NEW BUSINESS

New meeting times were discussed. The Board agreed that meetings will now be the second Tuesday of every month at 3:30. The next meeting is August 14 at the Chamber of Commerce.

Don Bramer said that the Board is very, very happy with the work that Debbie Kovalik and Kathy Voth have been doing and they have both leant a great deal to the promotion of Grand Junction. They have done more in the last 5 months to promote Grand Junction than has been done in the last 10 years. Since he won't be able to attend the July 16 council meeting, he would like Juli Henrikson to convey this to the council.

Juli moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Vicki and the meeting was adjourned.