

Visitor & Convention Bureau
Grand Junction, CO

October 8, 1991
3:30 p.m.
Chamber Building

**MINUTES
of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

PRESIDING: Don Bramer

MEMBERS PRESENT: Juli Cogdill, Cindy George, Frank Bering, Tom Ralser, Dennis Wagner

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Judy Manning, Irene Carlow

GUESTS PRESENT: Jody Kole, Cindy Sherrill, Diane Schwenke

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 17, 1991 MEETING: Frank Bering moved the minutes be approved; Juli Cogdill seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD ITEMS

VIDEO: The VCB video was shown and a discussion followed. Both Cindy Sherrill and Diane Schwenke thought the video was very good. They pointed out, though, that reference was made to "downtown museums" but the picture was of the Arts Center. They expressed concern that the video infers the cultural center of Grand Junction is downtown with no mention of the Arts Center location and other galleries in the area. There was also a discussion about the mall not being mentioned in the video. The VCB Director pointed out that the mall is currently promoted in all the VCB printed collateral material. The video was developed to highlight the City's major assets defined by the Board at the yearly retreat.

The Director pointed out that the video will go to tour operators and meeting groups; many tour buses have VCRs and passengers watch videos while they travel. The intent is to attract visitors to Grand Junction by highlighting the diversity of activities and area attractions -- a "lure brochure on video". Linda Hill reminded the Board of some of the results of the Denver focus sessions: (1) "Surprising Choices" was a good tagline; (2) distances and travel times need to be specified; (3) Denver participants recommended that the VCB remove the mall from advertising; they felt it was not a unique attraction.

The Board unanimously voiced their pleasure with the quality and content of the video. Several members noted that the VCB's mission is to attract visitors to this area. It is then up to individual businesses and attractions to market themselves.

OFFICE SITE SELECTION: The Director explained the rating sheet that was used to evaluate each of the sites and presented the overall ratings. Juli Cogdill asked if the Board would today narrow the list to three or four sites for further inspection. Don Bramer stated that the Chamber has been patient but does have other prospective tenants. The Board should make a decision today so the Chamber can advise their prospect if the space is available or not. The Director gave a detailed report of the ratings of the top five locations and an in-depth discussion followed.

Jody Kole: The Americans with Disabilities Act takes effect January 26, 1992; all city facilities are being evaluated concerning compliance with the Act. Recommends no three year lease on property that is not currently accessible to the handicapped, or does not have a plan to make the property accessible in the near future.

Dennis Wagner: The Chamber knew accessibility would be a concern; in the past, the Chamber has discussed installing an elevator but the cost is not feasible and is not in their plans at this time; his understanding is that anything open to the public will be subject to the ADA, although some phase-in is allowed. Chamber had a tenant prepared to lease the second floor last summer and, from a financial standpoint, it would have been appropriate to lease it at that time. However, it was a Board decision to keep the VCB if possible; response to the RFP was a business decision and available options were in the proposal. This Board must make a decision that is best for the VCB; if VCB does relocate, both organizations are professional enough to continue working together.

Frank Bering: Gave his assessment/overview of the top five locations and he understands why sites were rated the way they were; wanted to be sure that the VCB would be able to maintain its positive working relationship with the Chamber.

Don Bramer: Suggested continued and improved communication with the Chamber; sees strong benefit of having Chamber representative on the VCB Board; perhaps the Chamber would consider having a VCB representative in the same capacity.

Tom Ralser: His long range vision is to have the administrative office and the VIC together; cannot support a long term lease on any of the locations; complimented the rating sheet as being systematic and rigorous, very objective. Supports the number one location -- 200 Grand Avenue -- on a short term, interim basis, i.e., three years.

Director suggested there could be many options to a smooth transition, among which could be compensating the Chamber for handling visitor calls similar to the current situation. She would expect to identify many such options for the Board to explore.

Tom Ralser made a motion that the Board recommend Council approve entering into a three year lease for VCB administrative office space on the lower level of the Colorado National Bank Building at

200 Grand Avenue; Frank Bering seconded. Juli Cogdill abstained; the other four members present approved unanimously.

Juli Cogdill and Frank Bering both noted that they also support a long term vision of combining the administrative office and the visitor center. It would be more efficient from a management standpoint, and volunteers could be used to assist with many office functions.

VIC SITE SELECTION: There was a discussion about possible locations that may be available in the next 10-12 months and the long-range possibilities for the Center. Frank Bering moved the Board recommend that Council authorize the City Manager to negotiate a lease for one year (November 1, 1991 - October 31, 1992) at the current location, in as-is condition; Cindy George seconded; passed unanimously.

TASHIRO: Linda Hill reported on the focus session held this morning. Seven properties were represented to provide input on the 1992 marketing plan. Another session will be held November 12 involving area attractions. Linda recommends that one or two sessions be held in 1992.

Participants feel that the VCB's efforts are right on track and should continue to focus on developing Grand Junction's image. Specific areas of interest that were expressed at the session include: (1) packaging; (2) special events; (3) image; (4) improvements in communication. Cindy Sherrill commented that she is happy with what the VCB is doing; this morning's session was very productive and she thinks the VCB should do more focus groups; most of the advertising dollars are spent on summer visitors and she would like to see more effort toward attracting winter visitors.

STAFF REPORTS

Judy Manning reviewed Visitor Center statistics: there were 3,357 visitors during September, vs 3,842 last year. There has been an increase in international visitors with 106 foreign travelers last month. The top five representative states have also shifted, with Colorado visitors dominant and California second. The VIC is displaying a hat collection on loan from the Museum of Western Colorado. Judy will work with the Museum on getting other exhibits to display at the Center.

The Director reported that, through joint efforts of Barbara Bowman and the Holiday Inn, the SGMP state conference will be held here next year. Other sales and fam activities were highlighted. Don Bramer noted that we have done an extraordinary number of fams this year. While those fams have certainly resulted in a great deal of positive press, he questions how we can use more of Barbara's time for sales and less for fams. He is concerned that we may be exposing both Barbara and the Board to criticism because Barbara is unable to devote the majority of her time to sales. The Director responded that a large portion of Barbara's time is

currently taken up by convention servicing; she will not have that responsibility when personnel changes/additions are made for 1992. The only other alternative is to say no to fams. Don asked if two or three volunteers could be identified/trained to handle fams. Dennis Wagner questioned whether Grand Junction's exposure would be as positive with a volunteer conducting the fam rather than Barbara or Debbie. The high activity level experienced this year may warrant additional staff in the future.

The Director reported that the lodging tax is up 5% over last year; she also reminded the Board that September figures are actually August business. Nearly 23,000 brochures have been mailed to date, vs 9,500 for all of 1990. One of the results of the front range campaign is the change in type of calls on the 800 line. A high percentage of the callers plan to be in Grand Junction within 2-4 days of their call and are requesting specific lodging/activity information. Consequently, the number of brochures mailed is decreasing but the length of each call and telephone costs are increasing. Callers are informed about the VIC location and hours of operation and encouraged to stop at the Center.

NEW BUSINESS

Diane Schwenke had proposed several dates/times for the Chamber Executive Committee and the VCB Board to meet. The Board chose Wednesday, November 6 at 7:30 a.m.; staff will work out the details with the Chamber and follow up with a memo to the Board.

Cindy George moved the meeting adjourn; Frank Bering seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.