

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 16, 2014

High Country Orchards / Colterris Winery
3548 E ½ Road
Palisade, CO 81526

PRESIDING: Per Nilsson, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike, Bell, Brad Taylor, Billie Witham, Sharon Woelfle, Lon Carpenter, Kevin Reimer, Kate Graham, and Sharon Woelfle (arrived at 4:10 p.m.)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Glen Gallegos

GUESTS: Darshann Ruckman – General Manager, Clarion Inn; Marci Kurronen, Front Range Sales Representative

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Mistalynn Meyeraan, Holly Prickett, Kim Machado

The meeting was called to order at 3:11 p.m.

Minutes from the August 19, 2014 Board Meeting: Kate Graham moved to approve the minutes as written, Lon Carpenter seconded; motion approved.

Theresa High, owner of High Country Orchards and Colterris Winery, welcomed the board and thanked them and the VCB for their support of the Colorado National Monument and the wineries. Theresa and her husband, Scott, have been in the wine industry for 30 years. In 2008, they harvested their first grapes and in 2010, their first wine. The pavilion was built in 2008 and is available for hosting weddings and events. The board thanked Theresa for hosting the board meeting.

Board Discussion Items

Front Range Sales Update

Marci Kurronen, the GJVCB's Front Range Sales Representative, introduced herself to the board and provided a brief background of her career. She began her services in mid-March and since then has been working on over 500 tasks which includes phone and email solicitations. She has made 18 personal sales appointments and site inspections to date. In August, she assisted with the Peach Giveaway in Denver. Her focus for 2015 is to qualify our sales database and determine which meeting planners to target to bring to Grand Junction. Future opportunities include sports tourism, affinity groups, faith-based groups, and the Utah market. Per Nilsson said that the biggest challenge is that most people feel that it takes 5 hours to get to Grand Junction from the Front Range. A suggestion was made to research association boards and identify the decision makers for meetings or identify any association board members who live in Grand Junction and speak to them.

Per mentioned that Mesa County no longer qualifies for government per diem because the area's current average daily rate fall below the current per diem rate. Because Grand Junction continues to have the

lowest average daily rate and occupancy rate in the state, Barbara Bowman said she will contact the CHLA about scheduling a revenue session with area lodging properties.

Special Events

Mistalynn Meyeraan facilitated a discussion related to Special Event funding concerns mentioned in previous board meetings. The board agreed that going forward, events the VCB has funded through special event funding for more than three years be reviewed and possibly moved to a “marketing sponsorship” to allow for funding of newer events. The Special Events committee will continue to meet monthly and will rotate members to allow other board members to participate. VCB staff will perform an audit of 2014 events and schedule a separate meeting with the board before the end of the year to discuss which events were funded, how long they have been funded, location of the events (Fruita, Palisade, Grand Junction), and determine how marquee events will be defined.

Other Business

- Barbara Bowman reported that a meeting was held for vacation rental home owners to discuss VCB marketing services, as well as permitting and regulations the City will be drafting related to vacation rental homes. Two vacation rental home owners attended along with Tim Moore, Assistant City Manager, and a few of the VCB staff. The City is proposing an annual permitting process. Properties must reapply and pass fire and safety inspections each year to continue to receive a permit to operate as a vacation rental home and receive marketing assistance from the VCB. The regulations remain under consideration and will eventually be presented to City Council for approval. The board was satisfied with the proposed process.
- Barbara reported that Wine Country Inn in Palisade has approached the VCB to participate in the Expand the Tent marketing services program and has proposed to pay 1% of their gross room night sales instead of the required 3% that other properties are paying. Debbie Kovalik mentioned that if the board agreed to do so, the program requirements would need to be adjusted and brought forward to City Council for approval. The board members discussed the proposal and determined an exception cannot be made for one property. Kate Graham motioned to continue the Expand the Tent marketing program as is with no adjustments; Mike Bell seconded. Motion unanimously approved.
- Barbara mentioned that our 2015 budget has been submitted to the City’s Finance Department, who has requested that all City departments submit a flat operating budget. We have requested an approximate \$24,000 increase in operating based on our projected 2015 lodging tax increase. Further information will follow after the budget has been submitted to City Council.
- Debbie Kovalik reported that the Avalon will reopen on September 17th. Movies are back and will be shown on a new digital projector. There is no artwork but the Arts Commission has applied for a grant.

There being no further business, Kate Graham motioned to end the meeting; Mike Bell seconded, motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.