

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

May 12, 2015

The Avalon Theatre
645 Main Street
Grand Junction, CO

PRESIDING: Brad Taylor, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susie Kiger, Sharon Woelfle, Billie Witham, Kate Graham, Don Bramer, Kevin Reimer

ABSENT: Glen Gallegos, Per Nilsson

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Mistalynn Meyeraan, Kim Machado, Kristin Lynch

Guests: Rick Taggart – Grand Junction City Councilmember, Jamie Hamilton – JUCO, Dave Grossman – Grand Junction Off-Road, Brittney Garcia and Tara Ebarb– Holiday Inn and Suites

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m.

Minutes from the February 10, 2015 board meeting: Don Bramer moved to approve the minutes as written, Kate Graham seconded; minutes approved.

Minutes from the April 8, 2015 board meeting: Susie Kiger moved to approve the minutes as written, Kevin Reimer seconded; minutes approved.

Posting of meeting notices: The State's Open Meetings Law requires a "local public body", which includes the Grand Junction Board of Directors, annually designate the official location of the public place for posting notice of meetings. The location designated is to be the glassed-in bulletin board outside the City Auditorium lobby at 250 N. 5th Street. Don Bramer moved to approve the official designation, Brad Taylor seconded; motion approved.

Brad welcomed the guests and everyone introduced themselves.

Grand Junction Off-Road Event

Dave Grossman, Event Director for the Grand Junction Off-Road, provided a recap of the 2014 event. They did not meet their registration goals. Media impressions were more than 3.5 million. They estimate that visitors to the event came from more than 20 different states and 5 countries. 75% stayed more than two nights. Using the same measurements and assessments from a study of the 2013 Whiskey Off-Road event in Prescott, AZ (provided by the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University), the organizers estimated the following statistics for the Grand Junction Off-Road event:

- Estimated Economic impact: \$360,000 in 2013 and \$650,000 in 2014.

- \$1,320 per rider party (Total of 4 people – 1 rider with 3 people with them)
- \$975 per visitor party

Don Bramer inquired about how many room nights there were. Dave said they do not have that number but will get back with the board on that. Dave added that the partnerships with the City, County, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the business community leverages the success of this event. Registrations for the 2015 event are approaching last year's total 3 weeks from this year's event. They expect 500 – 600 riders. The Pro field is up almost 100% over 2014.

Epic Rides is building a definitive and national mountain bike event series. The Whiskey Off-Road is the industry leading event. The Grand Junction Off-Road is in its 3rd year and the organizers are expanding to a 3rd event in 2016 somewhere west of Colorado. They are developing a global media deal for the series.

The Subaru Adventure Team is sponsoring the music (20 performances) for the event. Maxxis Tires is also a sponsor. Sierra Nevada is the beer sponsor and the beer garden will be 4 blocks long on Main Street, from 3rd to 7th streets. The main bar and mini bars will be serving Kannah Creek and Palisade beers, along with wines from Grande River.

Dave thanked the board and the VCB for their support of the event for the past 3 years.

JUCO

Jamie Hamilton shared a marketing video produced with the aid of a drone. Sponsorships were down last year by \$23,000 but with the help of the video, sponsorships were up this year and made up the difference. He thanked the VCB Board and Staff for their support of JUCO and sponsorship of the JUCO Banquet which helps secure the speaker for the banquet.

Special Events Committee Update

Kristin Lynch reported that the Special Events Committee reviewed 4 applications for event funding and made the following recommendations:

Tour of the Valley – August 29, 2015. *Amount requested: \$1,000.* Recommend: \$1,000. This event was awarded \$2,000 in special event funding in 2012. Kate Graham motioned to approve the recommended funding; Don Bramer seconded. Motion approved.

Western Slope Triple Play – July 24 - 26, 2015. *Amount requested: \$700.* Recommend: \$700. This is a women's golf tournament raising funds for the Latimer House. The event is expected to bring in approximately 70 out-of-town participants. Sharon Woelfle motioned to approve the recommended funding; Susie Kiger seconded. Motion approved.

Tour of the Moon – October 3, 2015. *Amount requested: \$6,420.* Recommend: \$4,070. This is the 3rd year for this event. 2,000 riders are expected to participate with 1,750 from out-of-town. Don Bramer motioned to approve the recommended funding; Kate Graham seconded. Motion approved.

Palisade Peach Festival – August 12 - 14, 2015. *Amount requested: \$6,000.* Recommend: \$1,000. This event was funded at \$2,000 last year. The committee felt that since the VCB does a big peach campaign each year, including promoting this event, that the amount of in-kind marketing services and advertising is equal to the amount the event organizers are requesting. Kate Graham motioned to approve the recommended amount; Don Bramer seconded. Motion approved.

Don asked how long an event should be funded. Kevin Reimer commented that he would like the special event budget to increase for next year to continue these events. Don said the funding mechanism must be reviewed along with developing new policies and procedures. In the past, events had only one or two opportunities per year to apply for funding. Events are having a more difficult time securing sponsors. In the beginning, the philosophy of special event funding was to attract overnight room stays, “heads in beds”. Brad added that these same questions and comments frequently come up for discussion and if any changes are to be made to the policy, it will need to be addressed. The suggestion was made to discuss by July.

Kristin Lynch left the meeting at 4:10 p.m. Councilmember Rick Taggart left the meeting at 4:18 p.m.

Other Business

Brad mentioned that he received an email from the City Manager, Rich Englehart, informing him of a potential change in Debbie’s duties in that, she has been asked to assist the Downtown Development Authority/Business Improvement District (DDA/BID) on a temporary basis. Brad is concerned that this temporary assignment could detract from the VCB’s mission of getting “heads in beds”. Debbie explained that the DDA/BID is in a transition stage with the executive director and marketing director leaving the end of May. The City Manager suggested that since Debbie’s expertise is marketing, that she can help the DDA/BID. Debbie has met with the DDA/BID board chair, Les Miller, to further understand their needs. Les informed her that he would like the DDA to hire a new director then have Debbie help assess, which may be a month from now. She will research other business improvement districts in the state to further learn and understand the operation, purpose, and strategy of Grand Junction’s BID.

The City Manager also suggested that since the GJVCB manages events that some of its resources be shared with the BID. Don Bramer asked what services the GJVCB provides to event organizers. The discussion included updating the board that historically, the GJVCB has had an informal policy of not organizing, managing, and permitting events, but rather provide marketing assistance, special event marketing funding, and liaison assistance to event organizers. Mistalynn Meyeraan further elaborated on the types of marketing assistance we provide for events. For example, events are not part of our media plan but we will make suggestions and direct them to a media marketing representative. We do not write press releases for event organizers, but will give examples and distribute their releases for them. Barbara Bowman added that there is a Special Events Task Force made up of representatives from several agencies, including City and County representatives, Public Land representatives, and Public Safety representatives. This Task Force provides assistance and communication to events, and helps with permitting.

Brad added that the City Manager suggested the VCB have an office with the DDA/BID since it was stated in our Strategic Plan. The board’s intent was to have a visitor services presence downtown but no decisions have been made yet where the services best meet visitors’ needs. Sharon Woelfle

mentioned that we should consider whether or not there is an equal benefit for all lodging properties if we take a GJVCB resource away to only benefit downtown. Don stated that he does not want this temporary DDA/BID assignment to last more than 6 months to a year. Kevin Reimer (former DDA/BID board member) stated that this is a time of transition to improve things at the DDA/BID and they can benefit from the expertise of the GJVCB. There are shared interests on both sides and this should be looked at as a partnership. The DDA/BID has money to spend to improve the marketing of the downtown area. He further stated that partnering with the marketing experts at the GJVCB is an opportunity to benefit everyone including downtown and Two Rivers Convention Center. Don agreed with the partnership but doesn't agree that the GJVCB should be housed downtown. Visitors are coming in at the entrances to the city and the GJVCB should remain on Horizon Drive.

Debbie asked for general direction from the board as to what they want the main areas of focus to be for the GJVCB. Billie Witham suggested the direction be addressed in the Strategic Plan. Brad added that our efforts should be focused on bringing visitors to the area.

Don said the board will need to discuss the GJVCB's role in special events as well. The GJVCB should help with events but not own and manage them. The board agreed that it is not appropriate for the GJVCB to manage and run events. Kevin said that special events is not the problem for downtown but rather since the marketing director and executive director are leaving the DDA/BID, they need experts to assist with marketing the downtown area until a director is hired. There is also a need for better outreach to the downtown businesses but in the meantime there is a marketing budget that needs to be used. They need guidance and expertise to not lose the momentum.

Kate Graham added that the board should also advise the staff on their expertise with special events which is, providing marketing assistance, special event marketing funding, and liaison assistance to event organizers. She suggested that the event planning for downtown be outsourced, however, there may be a missed opportunity to use the BID's marketing budget to attract convention business to the downtown area.

Debbie thanked the board for their direction and added that Les Miller will further advise her on what help the BID needs from her.

Billie Witham left the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

Strategic Plan

The board will review the current draft of our Strategic Plan and send any comments to Barbara. Approval and adoption of the plan will take place via an email vote. All board members were encouraged to continue their outreach to community leaders as assigned at the board retreat. Kim will send out the assignments again. This will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

As per the board's request, the GJVCB Staff will draft a formal events policy which will outline the GJVCB's role in events.

There being no further business, Don Bramer motioned to end the meeting; Susie Kiger seconded, motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.