

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
December 13, 2011

PRESIDING: Per Nilsson, Chair

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ron Beach

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Debbie Kovalik, Erin Chapman, Holly Prickett, Melanie Wiseman, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Mike Bell, Gaylene Ore

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 8, 2011: Jessica Stimmel moved to approve the minutes as written, Nathan Knoll seconded, passed unanimously.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Special Events Nathan Knoll discussed three applications reviewed by the Committee on December 12:

Tour de Vineyards \$2,000 requested The VCB funded this event a number of years ago, but the organizer has not applied for funding since 2004 or 2005. This is a 25-mile bicycle ride held on Saturday of Winefest weekend; approximately 900 people participate, most of whom are from out of town. This event is owned and operated separately from the Winefest, although organizers of both events use similar marketing lists. The Committee feels this event would not result in additional room nights because most participants are coming for the Winefest. The VCB provides \$5,000 in marketing assistance to the Winefest and additional funding for the Tour de Vineyards is unlikely to result in additional visitors/economic impact. Therefore, the Committee recommends no funding for this event. John Williams moved to accept the Committee's recommendation not to provide marketing assistance to the Tour de Vineyards, Jessica Stimmel seconded, passed unanimously.

Viva el Vino \$3,050 requested This fundraiser for the Junior Service League is in its 23rd year; attendance is 600, with an estimated 1/3 from out of town. This is the first time organizers have applied for Special Events funding and, to this point, the event has been advertised only in the Grand Valley. In the early years of this event, the focus was on local wines but there have been few, if any, local wines represented in recent years. The Committee feels that this event generates few room nights and does not recommend funding. Organizers are encouraged to do a zip code survey to verify

out-of-town attendance and track room nights sold. Glen Gallegos moved to accept the Committee's recommendation not to provide marketing assistance to Viva el Vino, Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously.

Art Space and Open Studio Tours \$4,000 requested This is a two weekend event (May and October) that has received Special Events support for several years. The event has grown and benefitted from the Special Events marketing it has received and organizers do a very good job of track out-of-town attendees. The Committee recommends \$3,500 in marketing assistance. Paul Petersen moved to award \$3,500 in Special Events marketing assistance to Art Space and Open Studio Tours, Renae Phillips seconded, passed 7 in favor, 1 opposed.

Staff reported that the Peach Festival and Tour of the Valley have not submitted invoices for marketing activities approved by the Board. Staff sent two communications to each event advising that invoices for 2011 Special Events marketing awards must be received at the VCB by December 20 in order to be paid from this year's budget. Expenses incurred in 2011 cannot be paid from the 2012 budget; any savings/unspent funds in the operating budget go into the VCB fund balance. The Board asked if we have any proof that the advertising, printing, etc. that was approved was actually done. Staff responded that no monies are disbursed to an event, all invoices must come from the advertising outlet (or printer) and none have been received. The Board supports and is in agreement with the cut-off date of December 20; invoices received after that date will not be paid by the VCB.

Board Appointments The Chair reported that City Council appointed Lon Carpenter and Mike Bell to three-year terms on the Board. The Chair thanked Nathan Knoll and Renae Phillips for their service as Board members, especially for their good work on the Special Events Committee.

In view of the fact that Grand Junction was not awarded a stage of the USA Pro Cycling Race, the Board asked if the 2012 budget will be reduced by the amount committed to that event. Debbie Kovalik stated that final approval of the 2012 City budget is on Council's December 19 agenda. The \$15,000 cash award to the event was an approved budget increase and that amount is included in the total budget appropriation. Debbie Kovalik and Barbara Bowman recommend re-directing those additional funds into Special Events.

Election of Officers Per Nilsson reported that no other members had expressed an interest in serving as 2012 Chair and stated that he would be honored to serve as Chair again. John Williams declined to serve as an officer because he will be 2012 Chair of the GJEP Board. Paul Petersen volunteered to serve as Vice Chair. Glen Gallegos moved to elect Per Nilsson as Chair and Paul Petersen as Vice Chair for 2012; Jessica Stimmel seconded, passed unanimously.

Public Relations Update Gaylene Ore distributed results of 2011 media posted and discussed the importance of integrating a public relations campaign as part of the overall marketing plan. Consumers perceive a first-person article as more credible than paid advertising. Working with the media is all about relationship-building and it can take several years from the first contact with a journalist to a printed article.

2012 PR strategies include targeting bloggers, special events (and fan sites for those events, such as the Blue Angels) and other web opportunities. We will work with Miles Media to develop better tracking methodologies of Google ads and other websites to find and identify articles and stories about Grand Junction.

STAFF REPORTS: Sales Erin Chapman reported that the number of sales leads issued is at 99% of goal for the year. Erin attended National Tour Association Annual Convention the week of December 4 and met with 27 tour operators. Barb Bowman and Paul Cain, Activities Director for School District 51, traveled to Denver December 5 to present Grand Junction's bid to host the 2012 boys' state tennis championships in October. The Colorado High School Athletic Association selection committee was supportive of awarding the tournament to Grand Junction but final approval will be determined by the athletic directors.

The VCB will subscribe to an economic impact reporting program offered through Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI). The data sources currently available draw on national figures that have not been updated for several years. In the future, this program will interface with our sales database, IDSS, and will use more local costs as well as include ancillary spending which other data sources do not include. Subscribing to this service will change what we report and how, but it can provide a more accurate picture of the economic impact of meetings and conventions in Grand Junction.

Barb Bowman reported that November lodging tax collections were up 4.8% compared to last year. Year to date collections are down 1.6%; were it not for the refund issued in September, collections would be even with last year.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Chair appointed the following members to the Special Events Committee for 2012:

Jessica Stimmel, Chair
Ron Beach
Mike Bell
Lon Carpenter

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.