

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

October 13, 2015

Ute Water
2190 H ¼ Road
Grand Junction, CO 81505

PRESIDING: Brad Taylor, Chair

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

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Mistalynn Meyeraan, Kristin Lynch, Erin Chapman, Katharina Morrison, Kim Machado

GUESTS: Gaylene Ore – Ore Communications, Stuart Taylor – Two Rivers Convention Center and the Avalon Theatre

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes from the September 8, 2015 board meeting: Kate Graham moved to approve the minutes as written, Don Bramer seconded; minutes approved.

Host Remarks

Joe Burtard, External Affairs Manager for Ute Water, welcomed the staff and board to the facility. He briefly explained the history of the Ute Water Conservancy District as well as past and future projects. The District provides water to half of the Grand Valley's population and continues to exceed all water quality standards.

Staff Reports

- Marketing and Public Relations – Mistalynn Meyeraan provided the following update:
 - Hill Aevium will provide an update on 2015 campaigns and plans for 2016 during the November 10th board meeting. Miles Media will reveal the GJVCB's redesigned website at the December 8th board meeting.
 - We are hosting a Grand Circle Association familiarization (FAM) tour on October 21st that includes journalists from all over the world.
 - In partnership with Powderhorn Mountain Resort, we will be submitting an \$8,000 matching grant request from the Colorado Tourism Office. The grant will be used towards marketing ski traffic in March.
 - The 2016 Grand Junction Official Visitor Guide is in production.

The board agreed to add an additional booking engine through aRes Travel that is commission-based for packages only. The first package offering will begin using Powderhorn Mountain Resort lift tickets.

- Group Sales – Erin Chapman reported that the Group Sales Department hosted 5 FAMs in September, which included meeting planners and Colorado Tourism Office representatives from other countries.
- Convention and Event Services – Kristin Lynch reported that staff has been very busy with events during the last 2 months. These included the BMX Nationals, two Wine Trains, Tour de Vineyards, WineFest, and Tour of the Moon. In addition, there have been several weddings and reunions which are typical during this time of the year. Kristin attended the 2015 Governor’s Conference on Tourism and the National Association of Sports Commission Market Segment meeting. Both events included sessions on special events. A common theme was how to manage event fatigue and included ideas and best practices from other destinations.
- Visitor Center – Katharina Morrison reported that visitors to the Visitor Center has slightly decreased over last year. With the road construction on Horizon Drive, we expect that trend to continue as access to the Visitor Center has been a challenge.

Stuart Taylor, General Manager of Two Rivers Convention Center (TRCC) and the Avalon Theatre, reported that utility and laundry costs have significantly decreased from 2014. The “Dinner and a Movie” events are doing well and have seen a large increase in attendance over previous years. The number of conventions at TRCC are down this year but are expected to increase in 2016.

Stuart also updated the board on the Event Center Feasibility Study. The Interim City Manager, Tim Moore, has approved an additional study on what improvements are needed at Two Rivers Convention Center in case the new event center is not built. Kevin Reimer added that the study will determine if there are enough public funds to build it or if private money is needed. Glen Gallegos said that usually every public project that is planned is funded with public money with no private investments. Don Bramer mentioned that based on his experience, convention centers are not built to make money. Kevin agreed and said that convention centers are a public benefit like city parks and they do bring economic impact to the area.

Public Relations Contractor Presentation

Gaylene Ore, from Ore Communications, provided a recap of public relations activities for 2015. In addition to monitoring and responding to incoming media queries from media outlets and the Colorado Tourism Office, Gaylene and her team have proactively pitched key target media with timely story idea, both long-term and short-term. Pitches include: Romance on Colorado’s Western Slope, Spring Wine Events, Lavender Festival, Peach Festival, and unique holiday gifts. Several media and desk-side visits were arranged during the year. Estimated circulation of unique visitors from media coverage is over 300 million.

An additional \$9,000 has been requested for the 2016 budget. Plans for 2016 include:

- Desk-side visits in Seattle, Portland, Dallas, Austin, and Houston
- Small group press trips (3 – 5 journalists) scheduled for March and October
- Media opportunities at the CAVE wine event in February in Denver
- Additional releases/pitches for weddings, meetings, hands on experience, and five happy hour hikes.

Board Discussion Items

- 2016 Requested Budget – Barbara Bowman and Kim Machado provided a recap of the requested 2016 budget. The projected overall revenue is \$2.1 million. Lodging tax revenue is projected to increase 4% over 2015 for a total of \$1.4 million. We are projecting to end 2015 at 7% – 8% over 2014. The overall operating budget is \$2.04 million and includes increases in special event funding (\$25,000), advertising (\$22,000), and the public relations contract (\$9,000). We are also including a capital request of \$20,000 for a mobile visitor center.

Susie Kiger motioned to approve the 2016 requested budget as presented by the GJVCB staff; Don Bramer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

We are scheduled to present our budget to City Council at the October 19, 2015 Council workshop. Some of the board members mentioned that they will attend.

- Contract Renewals – 2016 will be the first renewal of the advertising, website marketing, and public relations contracts. With board approval, staff will submit the advertising and website marketing contract renewals to City Council for formal approval. Brad Taylor motioned to approve renewing all three contracts; Susie Kiger seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Due to lack of time, the topic of the visitor guide will be discussed during the November board meeting.

There being no further business, Don Bramer motioned to end the meeting; Kevin Reimer seconded, motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.