

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

February 9, 2016

Two Rivers Convention Center  
159 Main Street  
Grand Junction, CO 81501

PRESIDING: Brad Taylor, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susie Kiger, Billie Witham, Kevin Reimer, Julie Shafer, Don Bramer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jamie Lummis, Josh Niernberg, Sharon Woelfle

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

GUESTS: Cathy Ritter – Director, Colorado Tourism Office

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m.

Minutes from the January 12, 2016 board meeting: Susie Kiger moved to approve the minutes as written, Don Bramer seconded; minutes approved.

Special Events Funding

Mistalynn provided an overview of the applications that were reviewed at the Special Events Committee meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup>. The committee recommends funding the following special events:

- Colorado Lavender Festival – \$3,600
- Downtown Music Festival – \$3,000. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Business Improvement District (BID) has decided to take the original Art and Music Festival and split it into two events. The Downtown Music Festival will partner with the Grand Junction Off-Road event in May. The Downtown Art Festival will be held in the fall.
- Downtown Car Show – The committee needs more information from the event organizer and will reconsider the application at the next committee meeting.
- MAD Racing – \$5,000. This recommended amount is for 3 events that MAD Racing is organizing. GJVCB staff will follow-up with the organizer to discuss marketing allocations.
- HITS Triathlon – \$2,000.
- Rocky Mountain Women's Expo – The event organizer, Julie Shafer, has withdrawn the request for funding.
- Palisade Blue Grass Festival – The committee recommends no funding due to the fact that the attendees of this event are mainly campers and the event does not drive hotel stays. In addition, the application stated that the total number of out of town visitors are 378.

Don Bramer moved to accept all of the Special Event Committee's recommendations; Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The amount awarded to special events to date is \$22,600, leaving a balance of \$12,400 remaining.

The committee suggested moving the Tour of the Moon event from Special Events funding consideration to a sponsorship of \$5,000 instead. This event has consistently met the criteria of driving a large number of overnight hotel stays each year. Barbara mentioned that staff will take a look at the budget to determine if that move can be accommodated.

### 2015 Annual Report and Performance Dashboard Review

Mistalynn Meyeraan presented the 2015 Annual Report to the board and shared a few highlights for the year:

- Lodging tax collections were up 9.1% over 2014, which is the highest for collections since 2008
- Public Relations produced a 73% increase in impressions with over 300 million and a \$402,349 estimated ad value for earned media
- More than 690,000 total visits to the visitgrandjunction.com website represented an over 30% growth from 2014
- The GJVCB won 2 HSMAI Adrian Awards (Silver and Bronze) in advertising
- 97 sales leads and 17 familiarization tours were generated from the Group Sales Department
- 125 groups were serviced by the Convention and Event Services Department

Barbara Bowman and Kim Machado reviewed the performance dashboard with the board and explained the key indicators by which the GJVCB measures its performance and intent to travel.

### Colorado Tourism Office new Director – Cathy Ritter

Barbara introduced Cathy Ritter, the new Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) Director, to the board and everyone introduced themselves. Cathy gave a background of her career which includes journalism and tourism. She has been meeting with destinations throughout the state and has identified their needs and concerns. These include transportation issues and affordable housing for resort workers. She mentioned that several destinations have formed partnerships with the goal of increasing visitors. One example is the Western Slope Hot Springs Association who received a CTO matching grant to market all of the hot springs destinations.

Colorado, as well as many destinations within the state, has set records in visitation and this is due to extra money received from the Colorado Legislature to promote tourism. Every dollar spent on media returned \$490. Out of all states, Colorado is 31<sup>st</sup> in tourism funding. Cathy encouraged the board to keep informing and convincing local officials about the value of tourism and how it relates to economic development. Cathy will begin writing a column every month outlining what is happening in the tourism industry around the state. The CTO will also be scheduling a webinar before releasing the 2015 numbers to equip everyone with talking points to get the word out.

The board and staff thanked Cathy for coming to Grand Junction and attending the board meeting.

### Other Discussion Items

- The GJVCB staff will be organizing and scheduling the delivery of the 2016 Official Visitor Guides to area hotels and attractions. Brad encouraged all board member to participate once the schedule is sent out.

There being no further business, Don Bramer motioned to end the meeting; Kevin Reimer seconded, motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.