

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 13, 2016

Dinosaur Journey
550 Jurassic Ct.
Fruita, CO 81521

PRESIDING: Brad Taylor, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Don Bramer, Susie Kiger, Julie Shafer, Josh Niernberg, Billie Witham, Sharon Woelfle, Jamie Lummis

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kevin Reimer

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Kim Machado

GUESTS: Darshann Ruckman – Clarion Inn

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m. Brad thanked everyone for being present at today's meeting.

Minutes from the July 12, 2016 board meeting: Don Bramer moved to approve the minutes as written; Josh Niernberg seconded. Minutes approved.

Minutes from the August 16, 2016 special board meeting: Susie Kiger moved to approve the minutes as written; Don Bramer seconded. Minutes approved.

On the notes from the August 9th Board of Directors work session, Jamie Lummis inquired whether staff has completed the analysis on the return on investment for marketing and group sales efforts. Barbara stated this will be completed by the October 11, 2016 board meeting.

Dr. Julia McHugh, Curator of Paleontology at Dinosaur Journey Museum, welcomed the board and gave an update on recent activities and exhibits at the facility. Visits to the facility are slightly down this year. Last year saw record visits to the museum due to the release of the movie *Jurassic World*. They are currently marketing their Dino Dig program internationally and as a result have seen people from all over the world, including, England/UK, New Zealand and Germany. Officials expect that next year's Dino Digs will fill up. Future exhibits include a Titanoboa snake fossil exhibit in 2018. The Titanoboa snake is the largest snake ever – more than 40 feet long and its fossils were found in the country of Columbia. The movie, *Jurassic World 2*, will be released in 2018 and the museum will be planning additional exhibits to correspond with its premiere.

2017 Requested Budget

Debbie Kovalik gave an update on the status of the VCB's requested budget for 2017. Due to the fact that sales tax revenues for the City are down, all departments have been instructed by the City Administration to reduce their 2016 current budget and requested budget for 2017. GJVCB staff have met several times in the past few weeks to review these budgets and have identified areas where reductions can be made. At this time, we are not able to fill the Convention and Event Services position and any future vacant positions will not be replaced. Barring any further direction from Administration, the VCB staff anticipates presenting the final 2017 requested budget to the board at the October 11th board meeting for approval.

Several board members expressed concern about losing marketing momentum and market share due to these required budget cuts since lodging tax revenue is up 5.3% over 2015. Brad suggested that staff put together budget data along with talking points that the board members can use. Staff will work on this.

The discussion shifted to future revenue options that will sustain the GJVCB. Suggestions included increasing the lodging tax and how it would compare to other regional communities. Darshann Ruckman stated that in speaking with hoteliers on Horizon Drive, most are in agreement that any increase in lodging tax should go to the GJVCB to continue its mission of marketing the destination and not to an events center.

Don Bramer suggested that the board meet for a planning session to discuss the topic of increasing the lodging tax further and to establish timelines, tasks, and goals. The board agreed to meet for a special planning session on Tuesday, September 27, 2016 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Clarion Inn.

Special Events Update

Letters have been received by the VCB from Event Marketing Group and BMX America regarding the recent approval for funding the Grand Junction Off-Road event for 2017 and 2018. Concerns were expressed about the amount of funding for this event (\$40,000) compared to the smaller amounts the Tour of the Moon and the BMX bike racing events have received, despite their claim that their events bring in more out-of-town visitors. Both event coordinators will be requesting more money in their requests for special event funding. Following a discussion on this, the board agreed that the special event policy will need to be reviewed and revised again since a precedent was set in funding the Grand Junction Off-Road event. The Special Event committee will meet to discuss this, as well as the agreement for the 2017 and 2018 Grand Junction Off-Road events, and present their recommendations to the board.

Barbara mentioned to the board that the Special Event funding budget for 2017 has been reduced from \$35,000 to \$31,000. So far, \$30,000 out of \$40,000 has been set aside in the 2017 GJVCB budget to go towards the sponsorship for the Grand Junction Off-Road event. The additional \$10,000 may have to come out of the Special Event funding budget which will then reduce the overall budget to \$21,000.

A letter has been received from Allison Blevins of the Downtown Business Improvement District regarding their approved special event funding in the amount of \$1,500.00 for the 2016 Downtown Art Festival. The letter stated that the event will be launched on a smaller scale than originally planned. As a result, the funds are not needed for marketing and will be returned to the GJVCB.

There being no further business, Don Bramer motioned to end the meeting; Josh Niernberg seconded, motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.