

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

November 8, 2016

Marriott – Downtown Springhill Suites
236 Main St.
Grand Junction, CO

PRESIDING: Brad Taylor, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Don Bramer, Kevin Reimer, Susie Kiger, Josh Niernberg, Billie Witham, Sharon Woelfle, Julie Shafer, and Jamie Lummis (arrived at 4:40 p.m.)

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Mistalynn Meyeraan, Erin Chapman and Kim Machado

GUESTS: Kip Turner and Jodi Doney – Grand Junction Regional Airport, Carrie Tomlinson – Miles Media Group

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Minutes from the October 11, 2016 board meeting: Don Bramer moved to approve the minutes as written; Susie Kiger seconded. Minutes approved.

Grand Junction Regional Airport Update

Kip Turner, Executive Director of the Grand Junction Regional Airport (GJT), presented an update on air service at GJT. Out of the 13 commercial airports in Colorado, GJT is one of 4 year-round airports and is poised for growth based on the interstate being adjacent to the airport. Denver and Salt Lake City are GJT's main competition. The main focus for the airport is air service development, products, and economic development.

Customer base retention at GJT is at 82%. The largest markets for direct flights include Phoenix, Las Vegas, Dallas, Los Angeles and Houston. Once GJT reaches 400,000 enplanements, it will be considered a "hub" and connection flights will be further established which will result in different types of traffic coming through. United Airlines and American Airlines captures the largest share of GJT traffic. International traffic is rising. American Airlines will have a GJT to Los Angeles direct, seasonal flight beginning June 3, 2017.

Kip has been meeting with planning teams from United Airlines and American Airlines to sell GJT as a direct flight option from other destinations. He stated that American Airlines is interested in GJT. Because airline planning teams meet with airports from 25 – 30 times per week, GJT must constantly meet with them to build awareness of our destination, which in turn may result in more flights. He further added that the average domestic airfare (not including Allegiant) from GJT is \$246; its second highest point over the last ten years. Each airline has a different pricing model. United Airlines has a new Finance Director and positive changes in airfares are expected within the next 6 – 12 months.

GJT will be investing \$9 million to repair/replace the foundation, HVAC, and roof on the terminal building. Other priorities include partnerships with organizations, such as the GJVCB, and creating attractive packages to sell to airlines that exceed what other competing airports are doing. They also want to get the message out that GJT is the front door to the Grand Junction community. Debbie Kovalik mentioned that since airports are limited on what they can do to market themselves, part of the revenue derived from a possible increase in the lodging tax would go towards supporting GJT's efforts to attract new air service.

Special Event Committee Update

Susie Kiger provided an update from the Special Events Committee meeting held on Monday, November 7, 2016. The Committee reviewed 3 applications for special event funding and made the following recommendations:

- 2017 Dreamcatcher Half Marathon – Requesting \$2,500. This event was awarded \$2,000 in special event funding for the 2016 race. Of the \$2,000 awarded, \$980 was unspent and the event organizer requested that the remaining funds be used for marketing the 2017 race. The board members considered and approved this request at the July 12, 2016 board meeting. Since this request was granted and the fact that the 2017 special events funding budget has been reduced, the Committee recommended no additional funds be awarded for this event.
- Grand Mesa Summit Challenge Sled Dog Race – Requesting \$500. According to the application, the event expects to attract 35 out-of-town spectators. Because of this, the Committee recommended offering in-kind marketing services instead.
- Fruita Fat Tire Festival – Requesting \$2,500. The Committee will reconsider the application at a future meeting once it is known if the event will be awarded funds from the City of Fruita.

Don Bramer motioned to approve the Committee's recommendations as stated above; Julie Shafer seconded. Motion approved. To properly allocate the reduced 2017 special events funding budget, the Committee will be contacting events who have received funding in the past to determine what their funding requests will be. Any remaining funds in the 2016 special events budget will be used for marketing a holiday shopping package.

Brad encouraged the board members to review the special events funding applications before each board meeting. Don requested that training be provided on how the economic impact is determined for each event requesting special event funding.

Follow-up from Joint Meeting with City Council

As a result of the joint meeting with City Councilmembers on November 1, 2016, GJVCB staff created a draft of the potential use of additional revenues derived from an increase in the lodging tax, and this was reviewed. It covers the areas the Board agreed to previously, including air service development, special events, new marketing development, special projects and collaboration. After a lengthy discussion, it was recommended that staff add more substance and reasoning to each of these areas. This document will be included with the letter to the Mayor requesting that an increase in the lodging tax be included on the ballot in the next municipal election in April, 2017. The letter is due on November 18, 2016 and a special meeting with the Board will be set up prior to that date to finalize the letter and attachment.

Other Business

- Erin Chapman explained to the Board that because Cvent (third party meeting planner lead system) had listed the GJVCB within the Rocky Mountain region, we received leads that were intended for mountain resorts. As a result, these leads were counted toward our overall goal for 2016. This will change for 2017. In addition, the GJVCB has purchased a new lead package with Conventionplanit.com to reach qualified prospects and conduct business directly with group market decision makers.
- Board members were encouraged to look at their calendars for possible date availability for the annual board retreat in March 2017.
- Board members were encouraged to attend the annual Tourism Wrap-Up on November 9, 2016 at Two Rivers Convention Center.

There being no further business, Susie Kiger motioned to end the meeting; Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.