

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

July 11, 2017

Grand Junction City Hall
250 N. 5th Street
Grand Junction, CO

PRESIDING: Julie Shafer, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Don Bramer, Susie Kiger, Kevin Reimer, Josh Niernberg, Brad Taylor, Jamie Lummis (arrived at 3:42 p.m.)

Members Absent: Britt Mathwich, Tim Pollard

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Rick Taggart, Phyllis Norris

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Caton, Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Mistalynn Meyeraan, Kim Machado

GUESTS: Mark Achen and Jodi Doney – Grand Junction Regional Airport

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

Minutes from the June 20, 2017 board meeting: Brad Taylor moved to approve the minutes as written; Josh Niernberg seconded. Minutes approved.

Julie Shafer reminded the board members the expectation of attendance at board meetings. The Grand Junction Visitor and Convention Bureau's by-laws state that board members must attend at least two-thirds (2/3) of the board meetings within a 12-month period. She encouraged the Board to attend all the upcoming board meetings as there will be important topics to consider in the months ahead.

2nd Quarter Tourism Business Update

Debbie Kovalik reviewed some of the key performance measures from the newly revised GJVCB performance dashboard. Lodging tax collections in June were up 6.3% over June, 2016. Average daily rate is up 2.7% year-to-date. Mistalynn Meyeraan reported that total visits to the website were up 4.9% and unique visits are up 4.1% year-to-date. New to the dashboard are advertising and public relations (PR) impressions as well as PR value, which is the estimated earned value of a story. Debbie mentioned that the Group Sales staff have generated 61 leads year-to-date with 29 confirmed leads.

Grand Junction Regional Airport Update

Jodi Doney, Business Relations Specialist at the Grand Junction Regional Airport, provided an update on recent activity at the airport. Enplanements year-to-date are up 8.9% over 2016. The airport retains 82% of the traffic generated in its catchment area with 14.5% leakage to Denver. Over the last 10 years, international travelers to Grand Junction have increased 103% at an average of 38 passengers per day. American Airlines capacity in the 2nd quarter was 379 seats per day and continues to surpass United Airlines capacity for the last 1 ½ years. This is due to United's drop of the Houston direct flight. The five

largest domestic markets at the airport are Phoenix, Dallas/Ft. Worth, the Los Angeles Basin, San Francisco and New York. Airfares remain consistent with last year's fares with little to no change.

The recent American Airlines direct flight to Los Angeles has produced positive results. The load factor for June was 50% which is good for a new direct-flight service. This flight is booking the same number of passengers as the Dallas and Phoenix direct flights for July.

Jodi thanked the GJVCB and the Board for the recent partnership of the American Airlines LAX flight advertising campaign.

Staff Reports

Marketing and Public Relations: Mistalynn reported that all the GJVCB videos are uploaded to website and showed a few of the videos. Advertising impressions for June were over 6 million and mainly consisted of billboards and bus ads. 32,000 impressions came from a contest the GJVCB ran in Aspen Food & Wine Magazine. The click-through rate for the contest was 1%; .1% is the industry standard CTR. Mistalynn further explained how online ads are managed through our advertising contractor, Hill Aevium, who consistently monitors the buys through the Ad Network to ensure we are optimizing for the best return. Video ads consistently perform well along with mountain biking and events. Rafting tends to perform lower and is being evaluated for change.

Work is underway for the 2018 Official Grand Junction Visitor Guide. A kick-off meeting will be held on August 4th. Marketing staff is beginning to pitch long range for the winter season with skiing and the holidays. Staff recently hosted a golf FAM (familiarization tour) with stories coming out of Canada, California and Texas. City Manager, Greg Caton, joined the FAM. Julie encouraged the board members to participate with the staff in some of the upcoming FAMs.

Group Sales: Erin Chapman reported that staff is currently servicing 115 groups with their meeting/event and shared a couple of recent experiences on how staff have assisted groups with unusual requests. These include a team building activity for an oil company meeting and a keynote speaker for the Colorado Cattlemen's Association meeting. She also related an experience about a tour operator who called the GJVCB for assistance with arranging a wine maker's dinner two days prior to their arrival. The Group Sales staff was able to meet this request on such a short notice.

Barbara Bowman added that the Colorado Cattlemen's Association 3-day meeting generated an estimated \$159,000 in economic impact to the area. She also related how staff have assisted with a site inspection for a 2018 ballroom dancing regional competition and a FAM for a writer from a luxury Chinese magazine who was here for a shooting experience. Barbara thanked Josh and Kevin for their continuing partnership with hosting GJVCB FAMs.

Visitor Services: Katharina Morrison reported that visits to the visitor center were up 23% over June, 2016 and year-to-date visits are up 11%. Canada, Germany and Australia tops the list of international visitors to the visitor center.

Other Items

- Julie explained to the board about a recent joint meeting she attended with City staff, a couple of City Councilmembers, representatives from Colorado Mesa University and Grand Junction Regional Airport for a general discussion on a possible increase in the lodging tax. Greg Caton added that this initial discussion considered three areas where funds derived from an increase can have a positive impact. The three areas are: GJVCB for increased marketing, the Grand Junction Regional Airport to increase its impact as an economic engine in both leisure and business, and sustainable funding for the Greater Grand Junction Sports Commission. Additional discussions will be held in the near future and the Board will be notified once anything is formalized. A comparative lodging tax study, commissioned by the Colorado Association of Destination Marketing Organizations, is in process and will be reviewed to understand how Grand Junction compares to other competitors in overall checkout rate and to determine an adequate percentage of increase.
- Staff recently completed a site inspection with the meeting planners for the 2017 Colorado Governor's Conference on Tourism to be held in October. The conference is expected to generate \$194,000 in economic impact and will be held at Two Rivers Convention Center and the Avalon Theatre. Several activities have been planned for the event attendees including mountain biking, a wine tour, art tour, yoga at the Avalon and a walk on the Colorado Riverfront Trail. All board members are invited to attend the conference at no cost and some may be asked to participate on a panel discussion.
- Debbie mentioned that the advertising, website marketing and public relations RFP submittals are due on July 17th. Julie Shafer and Don Bramer will represent the Board on the advertising, website marketing and public relations finalist's presentations on September 27th and 28th.
- Brad Taylor asked how the proposed 2018 budget plan/cuts for the Transportation Department will impact Amtrak in our area. Greg mentioned that the City has sent letters to congressional representatives asking them to consider the important economic impact that Amtrak service makes on our community and that the proposed budget would have a severe impact on tourism and the economy in our region. *Update: Greg forwarded the above mentioned letters to GJVCB staff who then forwarded them to the board members on 7/13/17.*

There being no further business, Josh Niernberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Jamie Lummis seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.