

VISIT GRAND JUNCTION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 12, 2017

City Hall Auditorium
250 N. 5th St.
Grand Junction, CO

PRESIDING: Julie Shafer, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susie Kiger, Tim Pollard, Jamie Lummis, Britt Mathwich, Kevin Reimer

Members Absent: Josh Niernberg, Don Bramer, Brad Taylor

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Caton, Debbie Kovalik, Mistalynn Meyeraan, Erin Chapman, Katharina Morrison, Kim Machado

GUESTS: Maria Rainsdon – Pinnacle Venue Services/Two Rivers Convention Center & The Avalon Theatre, Marci Kurronen

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m.

Minutes from the August 8, 2017 board meeting: Jamie Lummis moved to approve the minutes as written; Susie Kiger seconded. Minutes approved.

Debbie Kovalik provided a brief update on upcoming events where the mobile Visitor Center will be placed at, which includes, Colorado Mountain Winefest, Grand Junction Air Show and the Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Two Rivers Convention Center and The Avalon Theatre Update

Maria Rainsdon, General Manager of Two Rivers Convention Center (TRCC) and the Avalon Theatre, reported that operations and sales activities at both facilities have performed well since the management transition from the City of Grand Junction to Pinnacle Venue Services (PVS). A new and comprehensive sales focus has resulted in the awarding of six RFP's to PVS that include the Colorado Outdoor Industry Leadership Summit and Colorado Academy of Family Physicians Annual Summit. An evaluation of the previous operations uncovered opportunities for new flexible and creative processes which have resulted in cost savings. Maria projects that a total of 730 events will have been held between both facilities by the end of this year. While PVS will focus on the marketing activities for both facilities, Visit Grand Junction will continue to market all meeting spaces located within the Grand Junction city limits.

In addition to the management of TRCC and the Avalon, PVS is also managing large ticket events at the Las Colonias Amphitheater on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department. There will be 10 – 12 major events at Las Colonias in 2018 that will cover all genres. With the new ticketing system, zip codes will be obtained and used for future marketing activities.

Staff Reports

Marketing and Public Relations: Mistalynn Meyeraan reported the following:

- Staff have been busy with media familiarization tours, including one with Budget Travel Magazine who is doing a story on a wine trip on a budget.
- With the remaining funds in the special events funding budget, Visit Grand Junction (VGJ) will be doing a post with the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) highlighting Fall special events.
- VGJ, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership and the Greater Grand Junction Sports Commission is partnering together to have a community presence at the 2018 Outdoor Retailers show. A \$50,000 CTO matching grant will be submitted and if granted, will pay for 2 weeks of advertising on the larger billboards and the internal kiosks at the Colorado Convention Center, the venue for the show.
- All videos are completed. Two of the videos were shown to the board members.

Jamie Lummis suggested including videos from a local's perspective. Mistalynn added that staff is being trained on video editing which will allow the VGJ to shoot and edit videos in-house. This will reduce significant cost of hiring an outside agency to work on this project.

Group Sales: Erin Chapman reported that 79 leads have been generated year-to-date which is 69% to goal. She shared an example of the direct mail piece to meeting planners and explained this year's event held in August at the University of Denver. The event showcased how to make convention center food more appealing with local products. Out of the 557 mailings, 49 were present for the event and 3 leads were generated.

Visitor Services: Katharina Morrison reported that overall visitation to the Visitor Center is up 8.5% YTD over 2016. International visits are down slightly due to the exchange rate. After Colorado, the top visiting states are California, Texas, Utah and Arizona. The top visiting country is Canada followed by Germany, France, Netherlands and Australia. Volunteers will be at the mobile Visitor Center for WineFest and the Grand Junction Air Show. They will also assist with the Tour of the Moon event. Katharina shared various comments received from visitors about the wonderful service they received from our volunteers.

2017 Governor's Conference on Tourism Update

Barbara Bowman mentioned that the opening reception for the upcoming conference will be on Wednesday, October 25th from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. at the Avalon Theatre. The reception will feature a taste of the Grand Valley. VGJ has partnered with Fruita and Palisade for this event. There are 308 registrants at this point and is expected to reach 550. The conference will be attended by Colorado Governor, John Hickenlooper, national tourism-based companies and state-wide tourism stakeholders. Roger Dow, President of the U.S. Travel Association, will be the featured keynote speaker. Popular travel writer and television personality, Rick Steves, will speak on Friday, October 27th. All VGJ board members will receive a complimentary registration. Volunteer opportunities are available and the board was encouraged to reach out to Barbara or Katharina.

Other Business

Marci Kurronen, Front Range sales representative for the VGJ, mentioned that she and the VGJ Sales staff is currently involved with a site inspection with the Colorado City and County Managers Association (CCCMA) for the possibility of having their annual conference in Grand Junction in January or February of either 2019, 2020, or 2021. The 2-day conference is expected to generate 500 room nights.

Greg Caton provided a brief update on the City's budget. The City has experienced 5 positive months on sales tax revenue. Lodging tax is not meeting projections but is up from 2016. He is currently meeting with

each department to review their budget by line item. The 2018 requested budget covering the major operating departments will be presented to City Council at a workshop on Monday, October 2nd. The capital plan and budgets of the remaining departments will be presented at a workshop on October 16th. After the public hearing, the final adoption of the budget will take place in December.

Greg also updated the board on the development of the Las Colonias Business Park.

There being no further business, Britt Mathwich motioned to adjourn the meeting; Jamie Lummis seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.