

VISIT GRAND JUNCTION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

November 13, 2018

DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton
743 Horizon Dr.
Grand Junction, CO

Presiding: Julie Shafer, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Brad Taylor, Tammy Anderson, Susie Kiger, Elizabeth Hallgren, Josh Niernberg, Britt Mathwich, Paul Petersen

Board Members Absent: Kevin Reimer

Grand Junction City Council Present: Mayor Pro Tem Bennett Boeschstein

Staff Present: Greg Caton, Elizabeth Fogarty, Michael Bodman, Erin Chapman, Katharina Morrison, Kyle Amann, Kim Machado

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 pm.

Minutes from the October 9, 2018 meeting: Paul Petersen motioned to approve the minutes as written; Josh Niernberg seconded. Motion approved.

2018 Governor's Tourism Conference Recap and Attendee Comments

Elizabeth Fogarty gave a brief overview of the 2018 Governor's Conference on Tourism (GovCon) held in Vail, CO on October 29-31. Visit Grand Junction (VGJ) had the most attendees of any destination marketing organization (DMO) in the state with 14. Nine of the attendees were community members who were sponsored by VGJ through covering the cost of the conference registration and hotel room. The goal of the sponsorship is to help community members see a broader perspective of tourism, network with tourism professionals and further their knowledge of the travel & tourism industry.

Kyle Amann, Michael Bodman, Katharina Morrison (all staff), Irma Adams (CMU), Chandler Anderson (the Courtyard by Marriot and Residence Inn hotels), each gave a brief summary of the breakout sessions they attended at GovCon. Topics included trends in the ski industry, driving tourism through video, selling experiences, crisis management, bicycle tourism, international marketing strategies, branding and digital trends. Elizabeth thanked the attendees for sharing their insights and for representing VGJ at GovCon.

Erin Chapman shared that she attended the National Tour Association Travel Exchange on November 5-8 in Milwaukee, WI. The Travel Exchange brings together buyers who package travel to, from and within North America. Erin met with 39 North American and Chinese tour operators and attended several educational seminars covering the latest trends and research in travel, new technologies, and influencer marketing.

Kim Machado shared that she attended Destinations International's (DI) Finance, Operations and Technology Summit on October 28-31 in Cleveland, OH. The sessions focused on cross-functional disciplines to increase operational performance at DMOs through successful HR and finance strategies,

destination crisis management, current regulations, project management and effective use of DI's tools, including their economic impact modules.

Lodging Tax Ballot Results

Julie Shafer thanked the board members for their campaigning efforts toward the lodging tax ballot. She also thanked City Manager, Greg Caton, for his support of Visit Grand Junction. Greg explained the benefits of having Visit Grand Junction as part of the City's infrastructure and recapped the funding arrangement as a result of the passing of the lodging tax ballot. VGJ's budget will be updated to account for the additional revenue prior to City Council's adoption vote of the 2019 requested budget scheduled for December 5. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) will be established with the Greater Grand Junction Sports Commission and the Grand Junction Air Service Alliance to outline the expectations and roles for each organization. Greg thanked Julie for her involvement with the campaign.

Future Board Member Prospects

Julie Shafer reported that five applications have been received by the City Clerk's office for the 4 available board seats effective January 1, 2019. Interview dates have not yet been scheduled.

Visit Grand Junction Reorganization Update

Elizabeth reported that a conditional offer has been made for the Social Media Specialist position. Interviews for the Group Sales/Business Development, Content/Partner Development Coordinator and Visitor Center/Administrative Coordinator will take place the weeks of November 12 and 26.

Visit Grand Junction 2019 Requested Budget

Elizabeth began the presentation by explaining the positive impact and benefits that tourism brings to Grand Junction and surrounding area. Tourism generates a virtuous cycle of economic benefits, drives future business development, attracts new residents and jobs, improves the quality of life for residents and reduces their tax burden, and is one of the most powerful drivers of Colorado's economy. VGJ's 2019 marketing strategy includes a sophisticated and progressive marketing department, new and innovative technology, data-based analysis, actionable insights, agency driven proprietary programming, unlimited lead generation, a new content plan, new regional and community partnerships, and a formal branding process.

The requested 2019 operating budget for Visit Grand Junction is \$2.34 million. The majority of increase over 2018 is the new technology.

Britt Mathwich commented that part of destination management should include a culture of hospitality embraced by the locals. Elizabeth added that after the branding process is completed, VGJ will institute programs to educate the community on how best to represent the brand and how to develop brand ambassadors.

Julie asked if other Colorado communities have passed an increase in lodging tax during the last election. Elizabeth stated yes but is waiting on the final list.

There being no further business, Tammy Anderson motioned to adjourn the meeting; Britt Mathwich, seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:07 pm.