



Visit Bend Board of Directors Meeting Minutes January 17, 2017

Location: Bend Visitor Center

Present: Kevney Dugan, Valerie Warren, Hank Therien, Nate Wyeth, Tawna Fenske, Michelle Mercer, Matt Williams, Alan Dietrich, Erick Trachsel, Dave Nissen, Jodie Barram, John McLeod, Scott Greenstone, Lisa Sidor, Jason Lusk.

Guests: Olivia Inman, Brett Graham, Ann Cook, Wendy Puller, Belinda Liskh, Carolyn Eagan, Joey Hamilton, John Flannery.

Call to Order

Kevney Dugan called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Introduction of guests followed.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Jodie Barram made a motion to approve the November Board Meeting Minutes with no changes. Michelle Mercer seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Financial Report

Scott Greenstone reviewed the most recent half-year financials ending December 31, 2016. Everything is tracking closely to budget. Revenue is close to budget - 2% over budget. Personnel expenses are within a percentage point under budget. Sales and marketing expenses are under budget due to timing differences with the billing cycles. Overhead expenses are also close to budget. There is a surplus of \$675,000. This is over budget at this point in the year, but these funds will be spent so that the fiscal year will end with close to a zero net income, as is the plan.

Alan Dietrich moved to approve the financial report. Jodie Barram seconded. The financial report was unanimously approved.

New Board Member

John McLeod of Mt. Bachelor has been nominated and selected by the Board of Directors to serve as a member of the Board. Dave Nissen made a motion to approve John McLeod as a member of the Visit Bend Board of Directors. Jodie Barram seconded. The vote was unanimous to approve.

Tourism Industry Briefing

Kevney Dugan discussed recent shoulder and winter season growth in the tourism industry. Several related documents are included in the Board Packet.

Over the next few months, Visit Bend will be working on transient room tax collections for the next two years.

In 2017 the Springhill Suites will open. The Residence Inn, the Best Western, and the Element will not open until 2018.

Kevney also noted that the City of Bend is looking to change City Code to allow tourism funds to be spent on tourism-related facilities. This would be in line with the state law defining how tourism funds can be spent. Carolyn Eagan stated that a City Council meeting would need to be

scheduled to start discussion on this issue. There may also be legislative action by the City of Bend during the upcoming state legislative session.

Marketing Update

Nate Wyeth stated that we are halfway through the winter marketing season during which over \$1.5 million will be spent. This is a complete shift from previous years where much more of the marketing funds were spent during the summer season. Nate discussed some of the highlights from the campaign, included in the Marketing Updates in the Board Packet.

Visit Bend has its own Pandora station. More native content has been used this year. The website continues to see growth. Portland continues to be the number one market and continues to show higher website traffic. The top visited pages are listed in the Board Packet.

Bend Ale Trail Month was the most successful yet. Completions doubled from the previous year. Additional statistics are listed in the Board Packet.

Nate showed a list of other destination marketing organizations and compared social media engagement. Visit Bends continues to have very high engagement levels. Kevney stated that Visit Bend has moved away from buying Facebook “likes” and has moved more toward focusing on content and engagement. Additional social media statistics are included in the Board Packet.

Kevney discussed the new Bend destination video that will replace the video created several years ago. It is approximately 90 seconds long.

At the end of the meeting, Nate showed Visit Bend’s new winter TV commercial as well as the new destination video.

Public Relations and Social Media Update

Tawna Fenske presented examples of several recent media highlights. More details are included in the Board Packet. Tawna also discussed a recent collaborative FAM trip.

Tawna also showed some examples of several successful Facebook posts and discussed how Visit Bend is engaging with feedback from the community.

Group Sales Updates

Hank Therien is working on the upcoming Cross Country Nationals. The Hop Growers convention starts today. Snowshoe Nationals will happen in March. Hank will be attending NASC this year and focusing on more wintertime events. More information is available in the Board Packet.

Kevney added that the Hop Growers convention is a great example of collaborative work to bring a group to the area.

Misc. Updates

Kevney said that Visit Bend is working with COVA on changes and plans regarding the RCTP funds from Travel Oregon. The estimated amount is approximately \$680,000 for the region.

Kevney and Nate met with a focus group to look at the current Visit Bend website in anticipation of the upcoming website refresh.

Board Roundtable

Alan Dietrich said the new Bend distillery downtown Bend tasting room should be open in about a month.

Jodie Barram said the Tower Theatre is doing well. They are adding shows in April. She missed the Friday BCTF Meeting due to illness, but is excited to be on the Commission.

Dave Nissen said that the Christmas break was very successful for Wanderlust Tours. They had a 300-person waitlist for their New Year’s Eve Bonfire on the Snow Tours. Dave would like to find a way to increase visitors during the first week of the Christmas break holiday.

Michelle Mercer said they are starting to think about rafting and expect to have a great season.

Matt Williams said they have seen a recent drop in occupancy, probably due to the weather and road conditions.

John McLeod said he agrees that everything during the Christmas holiday break was compressed into the second week. Mt. Bachelor is on pace for the best visitation and snowfall in 10 years. They were at capacity for a couple of days during the break. They had some frustrated visitors and will try to follow up with them and invite them back another time. John said that Bend is different than a traditional destination ski area.

Dave asked what others heard about the long commute coming down from Mt. Bachelor. What other options can be offered - or how can the shuttle transportation be promoted?

John has been working with CET to expand capacity at the Park and Ride and to look at more lodging properties offering shuttle service. They have also created a preferred parking program for those who carpool.

Public Comment

Ann Cook of the DoubleTree Hotel said that she is excited to hear conversation around transportation issues. She is also a member of the Bend 2030 committee.

Carolyn Eagan asked that everyone make sure their fire hydrants and storm drains are cleared. She thanked Tawna for sharing how Visit Bend has interacted with criticism and feedback from the community. Carolyn is interested in partnering with ODOT and others to find out how road maintenance can help the traffic issue.

Brett Graham thanked Visit Bend for its work.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Notes by: Valerie Warren
January 17, 2017