

Bend Cultural Tourism Fund
Commission Meeting Minutes (Approved at January 22, 2015 meeting)
October 27, 2014 - 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Deschutes Public Library
601 NW Wall Street, Bend, OR 97701

In attendance: John Flannery, Kevin Barclay, Noelle Fredland, Marsha Stout, Brian Wagner, Amy Mentuk, Jaimie Aguirre, Matt Schiffman, Julie Gregory, Cassondra Schindler, Rene Mitchell, Chuck Arnold, Shannon Planchon

Absent: Aaron Switzer, The Source Weekly

Guests Doug LaPlaca- Visit Bend, Scott Greenstone- Greenstone Financial Services

Meeting was called to order 2:07pm

Approval of the minutes: Noelle motioned to approve, Rene Second

Introduction and Overview

Doug LaPlaca provided a quick overview of the structure of the BCTF financial relationship with Visit Bend. Commissioners will receive financial reports on a quarterly basis. Monthly there are two separate books – Visit Bend and the Cultural Tourism Fund. The goal is to have a high level of financial management to provide maximum transparency along with budgeting and forecasting tools. Greenstone Financial is contracted for 1.7 hours per month and Visit Bend will reimburse the BCTF for this cost. Everything is built off of a simple budget model, which at first will be filled with many assumptions and forecasts. If the commissioner's decide they need more information different line items are easy to incorporate.

Scott Greenstone presented an overview of the financial report. Budget projection for the fiscal year is \$122,000. This is 7.5% revenue, less operating expenses leaving projected grant availability to \$85,000. This will be updated as actual numbers come in.

Shannon asked what the time lag is for receiving actual figures – it is a one-month lag. By the time it shows up on the P & L the funds are actually in the bank.

Currently, BCTF is +12k above projection. Should this positive Transient Room Taxes (TRT) trend continue the granting monies will rise accordingly. Note next year, June 2015 will see an additional .4% increase moving forward. Of all TRT monies collected, 70% go to the General Fund and 30% goes to Visit Bend for the promotion of tourism. The additional TRT collections of 1.4% fall under Oregon State law to follow an inverse 70% to 30% rule. So 70% of the 1.4% increase will go to Visit Bend and the 30% will go to the general Fund. These numbers are kept separate in the Visit Bend Financials for transparency and clarity. The BCTF is a quasi-independent board of Visit Bend.

Update on grant process. Grants Online (GO!) is live. The Arts & Culture Alliance (ACA) has provided a link on their website. We are using the GO site as our BCTF website, so it is a repository of all the pertinent information. The website helps walk people through the process.

Application Criteria has been established through a public process. Seasonality of the proposal is key. The funding is an excellent opportunity for collaborative projects. Important dates: January 15th letter of intent. Application is due by March 31st and the system shuts down at 5pm. Commissioners will be reviewing applications late May. Grant period is July 1 to June 30.

Letters of intent will generate an email profile to encourage and help applicants through the process and provide reminders regarding deadline notices etc. We want to support and help manage people through the process. This is our opportunity to partner with these folks and assist them in making their applications stronger. Money not granted will roll back to Visit Bend's general tourism marketing fund.

Commissioners asked how we work with programs that work on a longer time cycle. For this first year, we will ask that funds will be utilized during the fiscal year. In future years, depending on success and applicant pool, we can make multi-year commitments, with caveats. We are interested in funding a broad range of applications incorporating small, medium and large grants.

Doug LaPlaca: Direct applicants to think of these funds as Marketing Dollars. Marketing drives awareness, audience and tourism dollars from outside of the area. Drive participation and room nights.

Discussion on what activities are included in cultural tourism ensued. In particular, the question was raised about food and wine activity. Consistent standards are necessary. Need to be careful on being open but not too broad as to not be significant. What does cultural mean? Cultural is a very broad definition. It was noted that many people travel for food and beverage events as part of experiencing an area's culture. This drives tourism. Communities evolve around food. It will be important for any applicant to make the case for the quality of their programming. The question that will need to be asked is "will people travel from outside the area to Bend to see this event"? We might also consider the sustainability of the event. Is there a distinction of the "Bend" culture - beer, skiing and biking. Applicants will need to broaden events to include the arts/culture activity. This will incorporate more partners and creates more community involvement.

As an example, the Ale Trail has been an amazing success, and if we get inundated with food and wine in year one, can we revise our guidelines from year to year? Planchon will offer assistance to applicants as they work on their applications. The Commissioners are able to decide in January, during the public meeting, that additional questions might be necessary to further commission's understanding of applicants.

Planchon asked for confirmation on what Visit Bend expected as its evaluation. Doug: year one will be the update and the statement of activities. Year two will have more teeth in the reporting.

Outreach / Promotion Update: ACA sent invite and distributed at the regional Arts Summit, in paper, Travel Oregon's State plan. We need to work hard to get the word out, as Doug noted, the next

opportunity to fail is not getting the word out. As a Commission we need to identify potential organizations and help them consider applying. As a group let's consider organizations and individuals we hope will consider applying. This will be only a one-year problem once grants are funded. How does the group prove success – by demonstrating year over year numbers, track zip code, results must be measured.

The Commission discussed advertising, but has decided to hold off to see how word of mouth and direct email works. The budget is currently \$1200 per year, so we will need to craft PSA's in the future. Word of mouth, email blasts, meetings, inclusion on Visit Bend's BCTF page on website.

Part of the outreach will include Commissioners identifying 5 different groups and reach out to them prior to January Meeting / LOI deadline. Planchon will locate some examples of successful applications to the Oregon Arts Commission's Cultural Tourism grant program and post them on the BCTF GO! site.

At the January meeting the Commission will review the LOI received, and discuss further outreach.

Next meeting date January 22, 2-4pm at Deschutes Public Library

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm

ACTION ITEMS

1. Update profiles in GO!
2. Reach out to TourWest applicants
3. Reach out to 5 potential applicants – Planchon to provide copy for distribution.
4. Commissioners send contact lists to Planchon so that she may send updates as necessary.
5. Please complete test application.
6. Work with Oregon Arts commission to get list of applicants in the region for notification of availability of funds.
7. Reach out to Rotary.