



## Visit Bend Board of Directors Meeting Minutes January 19, 2021

**Location:** Zoom

**Present Via Zoom:** Kevney Dugan, Nate Wyeth, Tawna Fenske, Kelli Carrow, Laurel Hunter, Serena Gordon, Noelle Fredland, Erick Trachsel, Diana Spring, Matt Williams, Todd Montgomery, Alan Dietrich, Michelle Mercer, John McLeod, Scott Greenstone

**Via Zoom Guests:**

Carla Moore, Raul Ainardi, Dave Nissen, Barbara, Carrie Ramoz, Olivia Evers, JoAnna, James, Courtney Braun

**Call to Order**

Chair Noelle Fredland called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Matt Williams moved to approve the November Board Meeting Minutes; Eric Trachsel seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**Financial Report**

Scott Greenstone presented the current financial report. The amount of city funding revenue we're receiving is significantly higher than we budgeted. You can see for the sixth month period city funding is over budget by 61%, which we don't typically see, but is being driven by the pandemic. Visit Bend is working with the city to determine how we handle the excess since they've reached their limit. Sales and marketing expenses are trailing behind what was budgeted due to the pandemic, and Visit Bend is discussing ways to spend that. Overhead is tracking very close to budget.

The rainy-day fund was suspended for FY21. The BCTF continues to grow each month and have not yet been granted out.

**Tourism Industry Briefing**

Kevney Dugan discussed how COVID has been driving Visit Bend's decisions. Visit Bend may start to be more active around the May/June timeframe based on COVID cases and vaccine rollout.

Transient Room Tax has been slightly lower YOY. Hotel/Motel is down; AirBNB is up. RV parks remit quarterly rather than monthly. STR weekly occupancy data shows that demand is slightly up. AirDNA data shows the vacation rental market has a significant growth in occupancy, as well as an increase in ADR. Length of stay has also grown in this market.

Kevney discussed a few highlights from the recent Destination Analysts Briefing. People are starting to be more optimistic for safe travel in the next 6 months, which is likely due to the vaccine rollout. 60.8% of people are started to be open to seeing travel inspiration. In the next 3 months, most people have an average of almost 2 trips booked, where 1.5 of those trips are within 250 miles of their residence, showing that road trips are still the preferred method of travel for many.

Kevney communicated a few updates within the organization. He reviewed the Board Terms, stating Visit Bend is still within the bylaws, but wanted to get it on everyone's radar that we'll need to discuss in the near future. Staffing updates include a new Sustainability Manager, Serena Gordon, starting on February 1<sup>st</sup>. As part of this position, Visit Bend will be creating a new Sustainability Fund. In addition, Valerie Warren, the VP of Operations, will be managing all Visitor Center responsibilities until Visit Bend can determine the need for a new Visitor Center Manager.

### **Marketing Update & Strategy**

Nate Wyeth reviewed the current marketing timeline. Visit Bend is continuously focusing on campaign development and preparing for advertising when the time is right, which includes extensive research and data analysis so ensure proper targeting. Visit Bend has been able to share some responsible travel messaging in the meantime.

Recent website updates are continually being rolled out, including a new trip planner filter, a new listing layout, the addition of breadcrumbs, an updated footer, a new event calendar, and a new Bend Ale Trail app.

Visit Bend is onboarding a few new research tools to allow them to be more effective and efficient with TRT dollars. This new data shows specific details into who's traveling to Bend and will allow Visit Bend to be more targeted with their media buy.

### **Board Questions & Comments**

Eric Trachsel commented that the Riverhouse has been seeing a pick-up in occupancy, with a strong MLK weekend and has been pleasantly surprised with bookings. He mentioned the booking window is still pretty immediate and short-term, but steady.

Matt Williams mentioned they're also in the same boat, with last-minute bookings.

Diana Springs commented that the vacation rental market is seeing a number of monthly stays.

Michelle Mercer discussed that in the Real Estate market, inventory is at an all-time low.

Alan Dietrich commented that liquor sales are still doing well, but it's becoming hyper-local, and sales outside of the NW has significantly decreased.

John McLeod discussed Mt. Bachelor's status, which has seen strong demand but lower numbers due to their restrictions they had to put in place. Icon pass holders are showing up in higher numbers than expected (mainly from Seattle, San Francisco, Southern California). Parking reservations are typically booked last-minute but are selling out.

### **Community Questions & Comments**

Dave Nissen commented that the holiday season and MLK weekend were very strong for Wanderlust Tours. Long-term bookings are in low-demand and is difficult to predict. They're seeing that people do have the appetite to travel, but with some hesitancy. The most significant change is an increase in larger family group bookings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

Notes by: Kelli Carrow, January 19, 2021