

# WHITEFISH

• MONTANA •

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

## Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, Feb 3 2020

2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Whitefish Community Library, 9 Spokane Ave

The meeting was called to order at 2:33pm by Zak Anderson, Chairman of the WCVB Board of Directors

### **Introductions:**

Board Members in Attendance: Zak Anderson, Erica Terrell, Edna White, Jessie Farnes, Luke Walrath, Nick Polumbus, (late arrival by Rhonda Fitzgerald)

Absent: Mariah Joos, Jenny Cloutier

*Quorum met with six/seven of nine members.*

Staff & Agencies: Dylan Boyle (WCVB Exec. Director), Dan Hanson (WCVB Marketing and Sales Manager), Sarah Stewart (WCVB Office Manager), Brian Schott & Lisa Jones (LJ Communications)

Public Attendees: Sara Seed from Amazing Crepes

**Approval of Minutes: Luke Walrath motioned to approve minutes from Dec 9, 2019. Motion was seconded by Jessie Farnes. Passed unanimously**

Public Comment: No comments

Special Presentation: None

### **Agency Reports**

Winter & Spring Media Update Luke Benz & Christian Folk (DVA)

Luke:

Take-aways home page large buttons working well re: conversions. Facebook Ads are having an effect on Whitefish awareness and opinion - looking positive. Not super strong performance on Search. YouTube stronger than with the Spring campaigns. *On the Snow* doing the best as far on "page performance" & Sojern is performing better than last year.

- Conversions: Book Now clicks are way up with the Book Now button on the home page.
- Email sign up were down MoM and YoY.
- Travel Guide views are up significantly. Clicks on the "Flying to Whitefish" button up 20% MoM, from our biggest direct flight markets.
- Outbound clicks: Under the Big Sky Fest Event had the biggest clicks.
- Other notes: Traffic is way up from the Chicago area. There have been more page views for the lodging page as compared to this time last year.

Christian:

Spring Media 2020 Proposal:

Stay strong in SEA-TAC flight market with new digital elements added to traditional mix. Kootenai Mountain Culture and Coastal Culture adding in more collaborative content. Working with folks on content creation with new distribution channels. Content will be used for prospecting and retargeting and changing the vehicles to drive down the prospecting costs.

Traditional: Display at SEA-TAC airport with value add at Baggage Claim. Kootenai Mountain Culture content can be cross trafficked on our channels. Adventure Cycling is included as well.

New:

*Peloton* was identified because of the opportunity to highlight our seminal spring experience of riding the Going-To-The-Sun Road to a core cycling audience. This includes a 4 part custom editorial Whitefish featured story on the Peloton website, which has 35K unique visitors each month to their site. Distribution would be also include Facebook, Instagram, and email blast.

*Flyfish Journal*: another option but Peloton seems a better choice by the Marketing sub-committee for our Spring campaign. Have worked with other MT offices (Missoula). Custom video to be shown on Facebook, Instagram and email. They are being considered for Fall. We still need info re: web stats, etc.

**Jessie Farnes made a motion to approve the Spring 2020 Media plan as presented [with more demographic information to be provided on the Peloton Opportunity], it was seconded by Erica Terrell, passed unanimously.**

Public Relations Report - Lisa Jones & Brian Schott of LJ Communications

Brian gave the Meltwater Report. Quite a bit of media exposure since our last meeting. The NY Times "52 Places to go in 2020" was big and reached internationally. Whitefish was on the NY Times radar. Quite a few snow related stories also were generated re: snow pack and Amtrak. Todd Plumber published a story in Conde Naste Traveler so we are getting global reach. 544 million reach with the stories that have come out recently that mention Whitefish.

Lisa reviewed the recent press trips. Visit MT has really been very supportive this year. They come to us because we have the internal support to help them. Free Skier content program had 5 days here. 4 DI's came for the Southern Flair trip, 3 of the women were in the Texas market & and were "never ever" skiers. They shared some great posts during and after their visit. This past weekend we hosted more of the PR Partner Fam Trip. \$8600 will be billed to VisitMT so their support is invaluable.

## Committee Reports

WCVB Finance Committee - FY21 Preliminary Budget

*Committee: Rhonda Fitzgerald, Edna White, Jessie Farnes*

Dylan gave the recommendations from the Finance Committee for FY21:

Public Budget: \$156,000 (represents a 10% increase from the FY20 updated figure.)

Private Budget: Recommending to up the TPA budget for this year FY20 by 5% to \$621K, then the Finance Committee recommend to add 5% to that figure for FY21.

**Erica Terrell motioned to approve Finance Committee recommendation: to increase the FY20 TPA Private budget to \$621K and increase the FY21 TPA Private budget to \$652K and to make the Public budget for FY21 - \$156K. Motion was seconded by Luke Walrath, passed unanimously**

WCVB Marketing Committee - DestiMetrics & Other Opportunities

*Committee: Zak Anderson, Edna White, Nick Polumbus, Rhonda Fitzgerald*

Marketing committee spoke with DestiMetrics to create a comprehensive forward looking reports for lodging. (instead of historical data). We are still in conversations with them and we may need some sponsors for this. How do we incentivize lodging properties to participate? We need 20% of each lodging category to report. Vail, Big Sky, etc. use DestiMetrics.

Restaurants, Lodging, etc. can use the data for rates, staffing, etc. Can look how Whitefish is doing vs. other markets. It's expensive so we would need help paying for it and need a commitment of who would be willing to participate. A lot of sectors could benefit: Lodging, Restaurants, Retail, Transportation, Utilities, etc.

Opportunity Marketing Fund Expenditure Recommendations:

- 1.) Glacier AERO asked the WCVB to donate \$5000 to their fundraising efforts. We would give the caveat that we want our money to support flights on the off season.
- 2.) National Geographic COTC MapGuides: \$2,500 sponsorship
- 3.) Spring Secret Season Media Plan: Additional \$4,000 would come from the increased Opportunity Marketing budget.

**Jessie Farnes made a motion to approve the 3 recommendations from the Marketing committee & to pay for them from Opportunity Marketing Budget; Edna White seconded, passed unanimously.**

WCVB Grant Committee - Recommendation for Grant Awards for Grant Cycle#2 FY20  
*Committee: Zak Anderson, Edna White, Mariah Joos*

Grant Committee recommended that we award \$2000 to the Flathead Valley Ski Education Foundation to create video interviews of old skiers from Whitefish for the Ski Heritage Museum; and \$500 to the Flathead Area Mountain Bikers to assist with a Mountain Biker film festival fundraiser scheduled for May 2020

**Rhonda Fitzgerald motioned, to approve the Grant Committee recommendations, Jessie Farnes seconded, passed unanimously.**

**Staff Reports:**

Marketing & Sales Dan Hansen

Travel Guide Requests: Q2 was down 17% but Q3 is trending up  
Facebook - yearly growth is up 15% and Instagram - is up 35%.  
Facebook; Organic impressions are up considerably, 12%. Notable spikes were photos of WMR from Brian during DI meetup, and drone pics from Dan.

Instagram: top posts were similar to FB top posts. Added over 2K followers to our Instagram account in the past two months. Overall engagement is up from Oct/Nov time period by almost 9% on Instagram.

Groups Committee: completed 2 days of Fall filming before snow fell. Doing a series of co-op ads in Smart Meetings, Small Market Meetings and Meetings Today. \$5,000 was our portion of the co-op ads.

25,000 of 2020 Whitefish Travel Guides have been delivered. If you want a box contact Sarah at: office@explorewitefish.com

Upcoming Videos: Several in the Spring are planned. MOTBD is coming in February.

Whitefish DI meet up took place on Dec. 18, 2019 was very successful, about 20 local/regional DIs attended. They skied and then met for Apre ski at Cafe Kandahar and Bierstube for the Frabert Awards. Worked out well.

Director's Report- Dylan Boyle

- YTD Occupancy up 4.9% and ADR is up 1.5% YTD
- Inbound flights are ahead of last year, outbound flight has caught up with last year.
- Reviewed Marketing Plan Timeline for FY21
- FY19 Year in Review will be mailed to all member along with the new Travel Guide.

- WCVB office is moving upstairs in the same building (where the current Knit n Needle is) probably April or May.

New Business: None

Old Business: None

Board Member Round Table: Board members shared what was new with their businesses.

**Zak Anderson motioned to adjourn at 4:25 pm, seconded by Nick Polumbus, passed unanimously.**

*Next Meeting: March 9, 2020 – at Whitefish City Hall Conference Room*

*Evan Jewell*

*3/9/20*