

Whitefish Convention and Visitors Bureau
Meeting Minutes
Monday March 31, 2014 at 3pm
Rocky Mountain Lodge

Welcome

Erica Coffman, Chair of the WCVB, opened the meeting at 3:05 pm.

Introductions

Board Members: Erica Coffman, Rhonda Fitzgerald, Jake Cook, Nick Polumbus, Barb Brant, Scott Ringer. **Excused Absence:** Luke Walrath, Bruce Haller. **Unexcused:** Zak Anderson

Note: Quorum met with six of nine members present.

Staff & Agencies: Dylan Boyle (WCVB Director), Lisa Hartenstein (WCVB unpaid intern), Jen and John Frandsen (Old Town Creative), Brian Schott via phone (LJ Communications).

Public Attendees: Jason St. Clair, Dawn Jackson, Riley Polumbus.

Public Comment

No public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Nick made a motion to approve the minutes from February 10, 2014. Barb seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Financial Report

Rhonda presented the financial reports and noted that the TPA collections for February were currently lower than February 2012. However, she said that this is due to a few outstanding, not delinquent, payments that will be made soon. In addition, Rhonda noted that we currently have more state public funds that we had initially budgeted for at the beginning of the fiscal year. Lastly, she would like to see a retained earnings report in the future and this request has been added to the financial template given to the WCVB bookkeeper.

Scott suggested that the YTD Profit & Loss report would be more effective for the Board to examine in the future as opposed to the Annual Budget Profit & Loss report.

MOTION: Scott made a motion to approve the financial report. Nick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Director Report

Dylan reported that the Amtrak schedules for both east and westbound trains are changing on April 15. The eastbound train will now be arriving at 4:26 am while the westbound train will now be arriving at 10:26 pm. According to the press release, these changes are due to freight train congestion and infrastructure construction, and the schedules will be reevaluated potentially in the summer. As this is an issue that directly affects tourism in Whitefish, the WCVB Board asked Dylan to draft a letter to Amtrak urging them to work with BNSF. The Board will then review the letter before it is sent out. This letter will also be sent to both Montana Senators, the Department of Commerce, and others.

Dylan also reported that The Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI) is working on a Bird Guide for The Living Wetlands Interpretive Nature Trail and is looking to print 1000 copies with the help of local partners. The

total cost of printing would be \$532.00 and they are requesting any assistance. After looking at the FY14 Budget, the Board did not see any funds that would be allocated at this time. However, Opportunity funds are available for FY15 for such a purpose.

Upcoming Meetings and Deadlines

April 7: WCVB Marketing Plan Presentation at City Council
April 10: Associated Chamber Meeting (Kalispell)
April 11: AERO Board Meeting (Whitefish)
April 13-15: Governors Conference on Tourism and Recreation (Billings)
May 1: FY15 Marketing Plan to Montana Office of Tourism
May 13: Glacier Country Board Meeting (Superior)
June 2-3: Tourism Advisory Council Meeting (Red Lodge)

Upcoming Events

April 5-6: Closing Weekend at Whitefish Mountain Resort
May 9: Crown of the Continent: The Wild Rockies Book Event
May-June: Montana Superhost / Co-hosted Event with Chamber

PR Report

Brian Schott called in via conference call and Lisa Jones was on a planned vacation. Schott discussed recent national press including "Where the Locals Go Montana" by the *National Geographic Travel* group. The intro was by Traveler magazine editor Keith Bellows who stayed in Whitefish last summer as part of a press trip in conjunction with the Montana Office of Tourism. Brian and Lisa worked closely with Donnie Sexton at MTOT on this trip (providing suggestions and hosting) as well as a recent trip by chief photographer Dan Westergren. The new web portal just launched and can be found here along with notable Whitefish content:
<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/local-montana/>.

Schott discussed other new publicity clips including *The New York Times* photo essay and article on the Ski Joring Championships, *Fodors* article on the 10 Best National Parks to visit in the spring that included Glacier. Author Jayme Moye will be visiting Whitefish this spring and was recruited by Lisa. She is an award winning travel writer.

Heather Hansman (who was on the Amtrak press trip in February) has already published 2 pieces online. One for the *National Geographic Adventure* blog on experiencing Glacier National Park in the winter and the other on *Powder Magazine's* web site on what makes ski towns special and her experience at the Whitefish Winter Carnival.

Other upcoming press trips include a Canadian blogger visiting in April, a "Digital influencers" press trip with Glacier Country happening in early June, a September mountain-bike related press trip with an editor from Northwest Travel Magazine, and a possible visit from a writer from Chicago magazine who was recruited for the winter Amtrak trip but could not attend.

This spring Brian and Lisa will be focused on transitioning WhitefishNewsroom.com over to ExploreWhitefish.com as well as continued work on media web site and content. They are also working on the video project with Old Town Creative.

Lisa will be attending the Governor's Conference on Tourism and taking a social media class to leverage exposure – especially in relation to Maggie Voisin and Parkin Costain representing Whitefish in future ski competitions. Maggie is going to the White House to have dinner with the President and other Olympians and

WFS just named her # 1 slopestyle in the world. She is also going to Whistler (Monster is paying her way) to the Worlds to go to a dinner and receive an award.

Marketing Committee

New Business

FY15 Marketing Plan

Dylan and Old Town Creative have been working on the creation of the FY15 Marketing Plan since the last WCVB meeting on February 10. Since that time, the WCVB Marketing Committee has met twice (March 5 and March 20) to discuss the narrative and budget for the new plan. The WCVB Marketing Committee recommended that the FY15 Marketing Plan sent to the Board prior to this meeting be approved.

After discussion by the Board, the following items were asked to be changed:

- 1) The marketing method "Billboards & Out of Home" be changed to "Out of Home" to more accurately reflect the overall nature of this method.
- 2) The total private member funds budget read \$418,009 and the public and private combined budget read \$518,009. These two changes are the result of a calculation error, not other changes to the budget.

MOTION: Nick made the motion to approve the FY15 Marketing Plan with the change to the marketing method language and the recalculation of the total for the private member funds and combined public and private budget. Jake seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The FY15 Marketing Plan will be presented to the Whitefish City Council on April 7th with a request for approval of the plan and budget.

Intern Presentation

Lisa Hartenstein is a college exchange student from Germany that is finishing up her six week unpaid internship with the WCVB on April 1st. Lisa's tasks included a comprehensive content review of www.explorewhitefish.com, creation of a new social media platform for the Whitefish Legacy Partners, and learning the advertising equivalency system used by the WCVB and cataloging the WCVB's earned media. Lisa gave a final presentation of her work to the WCVB Board of Directors and provided an in-depth explanation of her tasks.

WCVB Groups Committee

The WCVB Groups Committee met on February 27th to discuss a strategy for FY15 as well as the allocation of the remaining WCVB Meetings and Conventions funds for FY14. Dawn Jackson, chair of the WCVB Groups Committee, presented the Board with a proposal for the use of the remaining \$9800 left for FY14. In the proposal, Dawn identified funds for spring ski group marketing as well as three publications that the Groups Committee would like to advertise in.

Motion: Rhonda made a motion for the WCVB Board to approve the use of \$2200 for spring ski group marketing and asked the Groups Committee to come back to the WCVB Board with a recommendation for advertising one of the three publication. Jake seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

WCVB Part-Time Staff

The FY15 private budget once again includes funding for an additional part-time employee for the WCVB. After some discussion, the WCVB Board asked Dylan to put together a job description that will be sent to the Board for comment with the goal of posting the job by early to mid-May. The interview committee of Erica, Rhonda, Jake, and Nick will conduct interview in May after the posting with the ultimate goal of the part-time employee starting July 1st.

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Old Business

Promo Video: Dylan reported that we have received permission to use video footage from Whitefish Mountain Resort, Warren Miller, and the Montana Office of Tourism for our winter promotional video. Lisa Jones is now in the process of acquiring these assets.

Bento Workshop: Mike Bento, the tourism branding expert who led the recent branding processes for Montana Office of Tourism and the National Park Service, is potentially coming to Montana in May, and if so, we have the ability to book him for a day of work with us. This would be a half-day session with the WCVB Board, staff, and agencies, and a half-day session open to WCVB members and the public. The cost to the WCVB would be approximately \$2,000.

Motion: Jake made a motion to approve the use of up to \$2500 from the Research budget to pay for this branding workshop with Mike Bento if he is available in May. Scott seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Board Terms:

Erica reiterated from our last meeting that three board terms expire on May 31, 2014: Barb, Luke, and Bruce. The deadline for applications to the City is April 23rd. Barb stated that she will either reapply or encourage another representative from Montana Coffee Traders to do so.

Other

GNP Opportunities/COTC: Rhonda mentioned that the West Glacier VIC will be cooperatively managed by the Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT) and Alberta Tourism, Parks, and Recreation starting in 2015. MTOT has approached the Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council about being involved. As the WCVB is the fiscal agent for the Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council, Rhonda asked that the WCVB Board consider this for the future.

Rhonda moved and Nick seconded a motion to adjourn at 5:30 pm.

The next meeting will be at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, June 9th. Location: Rocky Mountain Lodge.

Signature:



Date:

6/9/14