Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 13, 2023
2:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Location: Whitefish City Hall

Meeting called to order at 2:32pm by Jessie Farnes, Vice-Chair of the WCVB Board of Directors

Introductions:
Board Members in Attendance: Rhonda Fitzgerald, Matt Gebo, Erica Terrell, Edna White, Jessie Farnes, Lauren Oscilowski, Kimberly Wortman

Absent: Mariah Joos, Maggie Schwenker

Quorum met with seven out of nine possible members.

Staff & Agencies: Dan Hansen (Marketing & Sales Manager), Luke Walrath (Business Manager), Lisa Canady (DVA) [by phone], Brian Schott, (PR)

Public Attendees: Emily Struss, Friends of Flathead Avalanche Center

Approval of Minutes
Edna White motioned to approve the Feb 13, 2023 minutes. Motion was seconded by Matt Gebo, passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Special Presentation: Emily Struss from the Friends of the Flathead Avalanche Center presented on their Community Enhancement Grant.

Thanks EW for the community grant support. Recapped FOFAC mission and operations. Explore Whitefish (EW) supported Community Events Supporting Community Safety (Fireside Chat/State of the Snowpack). Explained how the series works and how it helps the community. Recapped past & upcoming series events. Presented season accomplishments and community outreach numbers. 1851 total class participants. 530 local students. Explained how EW has been recognized: web events calendar, email news, social media, annual report, and at events. Coming into the 10th year anniversary.

Agency Reports
Brian Schott gave the PR Report. See PR report slide. WMR 75 years continue to get publicity. Recapped David Goodman press trip from the NY Times and Travel & Leisure. Positive
feedback from David Goodman on Whitefish’s efforts toward its challenges, especially post-COVID. Brian will share photos from the trip with the Board. Participated in the Mountain Towns 2030 Solutions Project with the City working toward carbon neutrality.

Lisa Canady of DVA - Reported on key takeaways slide. Web traffic, paid search, and paid social traffic continues to go up. Seeing stronger CPCs. Book now clicks are down in Feb though still up 8.3% for the winter year over year. Several coops with WMR this year with On the Snow, Outside, On the Snow, and NW Travel, all performed well. Recent efforts translated to high levels of engagement on EW website. Discussion surrounding “book now” clicks vs previous years.

Committee Reports:
WCVB Hiring Committee: Jessie Farnes announced that the Hiring Committee made an offer to Julie Mullins for the Executive Director position, and she accepted. She is scheduled to begin April 3, 2023. Rhonda Fitzgerald recapped Julie’s bio and prior experience. Brian Schott asked about external communications and how to begin notifying members, media, etc. Notify members first, then media. Briant will begin to coordinate with Mariah, Julie, etc.

WCVB Marketing Committee: Lisa Canady with DVA presented the FY23 Spring Media Plan. Partnership with Statehood Media in OR/WA to create content about Spring activities. 4 written features, weekender trip planner pieces. 2 photo galleries. 2 video pieces. Newsletter placement. Will create content in June to promote Spring FY24. Continued social ads, programmatic digital ads, & search. Dan Hansen explained the budget for the plan. Shifted $7,000 from opportunity funds.

Matt Gebo made a motion to approve the FY23 Spring Media Plan as presented. Erica Terrell seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Dan Hansen presented the FY24 Marketing Plan. Explained how the overall marketing plan was rewritten extensively in 2022, based on new State regulations and new EW priorities. Needs to be submitted to the City by March 28. New is the “product development” category, as per the new State allowances. Jessie Farnes requested that final approval be held via email Monday, Mar 20, 2023. Recommended that the plan’s name be changed from “Marketing Plan” to “Strategic Plan.” All were in agreement.


Rhonda Fitzgerald made a motion to approve the Financial Reports as presented, Edna White seconded, no comment or discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Luke Warlath presented the proposed FY24 Private Budget.
Jessie Farnes made a motion to approve the FY24 Private & Public Budgets in their “Flat” projections as presented, Rhonda Fitzgerald seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports:
Marketing & Sales Manager Report
Dan provided the Marketing and Sales Report. Reviewed Board slides. Edna White requested the monthly/quarterly STR report be included in future reports again.

Executive Director’s Report
None

New Business:
Jessie Farnes asked that Julie Mullins get added as an authorized signer to all the First Interstate Bank accounts (Public Checking, Public Savings, Private Checking, Crown of the Continent Checking).

Rhonda Fitzgerald made a motion to add Julie Mullins as an authorized signer on the First Interstate Bank Public Checking, Public Savings, Private Checking, and Crown of the Continent Checking accounts, as well as the Whitefish Credit Union Savings account and remove Erica Terrell Matt Gebo seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Jessie Farnes asked that a First Interstate Bank MasterCard account be created for Julie Mullins.

Rhonda Fitzgerald made a motion to approve a First Interstate Bank MasterCard account to be created for Julie Mullins. Erica Terrell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Dan Hansen updated the Board on the ongoing Google class action lawsuit. Recene Friede is spearheading DMO response. Recommended that EW need not provide discovery information. EW will be submitting a letter to the state stating as such. Letter has been drafted and approved by Mariah Joos.

Old Business:
Jessie Farnes presented the latest draft of the updated organizational bylaws.

Rhonda Fitzgerald made a motion to table the organizational bylaws until the April meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Jessie Farnes presented the latest draft of the updated Community Sustainability Fund agreement.

Erica Terrell made a motion to approve the Community Sustainability Fund Agreement as presented. Lauren Oscilowski seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
Annual Meeting Date. First week of April was recommended. Rhonda Fitzgerald recommended a sit down work session with the City Council. Also recommended a public meeting to present the work that the CVB does to reconnect the public with the mission and operations of the WCVB. Potential dates were discussed. Thursday Apr 6, 2023 or other Wednesdays/Thursdays. Venue with large capacity, with audio/visual capabilities.

Round Table:

Rhonda Fitzgerald talked about researching illegal short term rentals and reporting them to the City. Dan Hansen agreed to take it on.

Matt Gebo motioned to adjourn at 4:47pm, Erica Terrell seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

The next WCVB board meeting will be held on April 13, 2023. Location & Time: Whitefish City Hall, 2:30pm

Signature: [Signature] Date: 4/10/23