Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 10, 2023
2:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Location: Whitefish City Hall

Meeting called to order at 2:34pm by Mariah Joos, Chair of the WCB Board of Directors

Introductions:
Board Members in Attendance: Rhonda Fitzgerald (arrived late), Mariah Joos, Maggie Schwenker, Erica Terrell, Edna White, Jessie Farnes, Lauren Oscilowski, Kimberly Wortman

Absent: Matt Gebo

Quorum met with nine out of ten possible members.

Staff & Agencies:
Staff & Agency Members in Attendance: Julie Mullins (Executive Director), Dan Hansen (Marketing & Sales Manager), Luke Walrath (Business Manager), Mary Angelo (DVA) [by phone], Brian Schott, (PR)

Public Attendees: Daniel Sidder, Housing Whitefish; Doug Reed, Whitefish Lake Restaurant

Approval of Minutes
Erica Terrell motioned to approve the March 13, 2023 minutes via email thread. Motion was seconded by Edna White, passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Special Presentations:
Doug Reed, Whitefish Lake Restaurant:
- Thanked EW for matching Grant just over $1,000. The monies were spent on composting with Dirt Rich.
- WLR has the longest running restaurant relationship with Dirt Rich. Doug gave historical background on Dirt Rich's initial program. Waste went from 2x9-yard garbage containers to just 1 using composting. ROI: Overall last year 8,787 gallons of waste was prevented. Program prevented 28.8 metric tons of greenhouse emissions.
- WLR staff takes pride in being involved in the composting program.
- Edna White asked about the achievability of operations. Doug replied that Dirt Rich's truck allows for easy use with clean bins and compostable bins. Rescheduling or adjusting weekly orders has been easy. WLW has an animal-proof shed to store, which
has helped with animal attraction. WLW kitchen staff has been proactive in creating systems for easy operation. Brian asked if WLGC uses WLW compost. Doug said they don’t.

**Daniel Sidder, Housing Whitefish:**

- **Presentation summarized HW activities and strategies over the past couple years.** EW BOD was given overview of organization and detailed breakdown of how our investment has been used, highlights below:
  - Initial Marketing & PR grant went toward GFCC outreach and marketing.
  - Helped set up the ED office.
  - Website design & hosting.
  - Second grant hired ED and submitted 2 grant applications; 5 grant apps in the pipeline for Spring; 5 grant applications in the pipeline for summer/fall deadlines.
  - Since December ’22, ED has scheduled 94 meetings with community partners, prospective donors, community members, regional & national organizations, 11 local business owners & managers, 10 local & regional developers, 8 city staff, and 5 elected officials.
  - ED summarizes efforts are focused on business development and partnership cultivation.

- **Current projects:** The goal of HW is to fund projects privately
  - Alpenglow Phase II housing units.
  - Monegan Road development - working with the City of WF
  - Looking for opportunities to increase housing density through infill land development (land banking, ADU’s, etc) and advocating for zoning updates to accommodate for increased housing density.
  - Looking for ways to prevent displacement from renters and homeowners (i.e. rental assistance & partnerships to support aging homeowners.
  - HW board met 2 weeks ago - decided to place the “We House Whitefish” campaign on hold.

- **Future proposed use of funds:**
  - ED salary & additional staff, flexible funding for marketing & professional services, and project-specific funding.

- **Next Steps:** Luke Walrath will send additional info slides to Explore Whitefish Board members. Rhonda Fitzgerald asked about the nature of grants - majority of applications are to corporate and private foundations. She mentioned USDA grant programs for projects affecting those with 80%-120% of median HHI. She also asked about how all the housing organizations are working together - recommended an organizational chart and clearer online explanations. Daniel explained that he saw Housing Whitefish as the “tip of the spear” in terms of being the entity carrying out actions. Lauren Oscilowski asked if the various orgs collaborate and meet regularly. Daniel said that there are regular conversations amongst all the different orgs.
Agency Reports

PR Report: Brian Schott presented following, see PR report slide:
- Presented the Meltwater report.
- Nick Polumbus from WMR interviewed on the Storm Skiing podcast. Positioned WMR well as the most affordable modern ski area in the West.
- WMR/POW video continues to get distribution. Good positioning for Winter.
- Nice article in Flathead Beacon re Julie Mullins.
- Travel & Leisure included WF in 9 of the best adventure destinations in the US.

Brian & Rhonda Fitzgerald talked about proposed SB268 and SB528 which deal with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) and short-term rentals (STR). The City of Whitefish will be holding a special meeting on April 10, for public comment and action. Discussion ensued about the ramifications of these bills and potential regulations.

Jessie Farnes made a motion to submit a letter to the Montana Legislature on behalf of Explore Whitefish in opposition to both SB268 & SB528 Maggie Schwenker seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

DVA Report: Mary Angelo presented following, see agency “Key Takeaways” slide:
- Positive numbers YTD:
  - Web traffic up 29% YoY.
  - Book Now clicks were up 10.6% YoY.
  - Target markets of Chicago, LA, Seattle, and Dallas are still strong and Phoenix is organically continuing to build interest.
  - Sojourn produced more that 4 million impressions making it a positive campaign for the Winter.
  - Began Spring campaign with search beginning March 18 and creative runs starting April 18.
  - G2S content shoot begins in June with Statehood Media.
  - Beginning planning on the warm season education campaign as well as larch/fall campaign.

Discussion was held re community outreach about FOTF education and the pillar messages.

Committee Reports:

WCVB Finance Committee: Luke presented the monthly financial report. Luke reviewed the CSF collections. Potential Product Development projects were discussed including bicycle projects.

Jessie Farnes made a motion to approve the Financial Reports as presented, Lauren Oscilowski seconded, no comment or discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Executive Director’s Report

Julie presented the Executive Director’s report. She introduced herself to the Board. Reported on the past 7 days of meetings and discussions. Working to identify key data sources and performance metrics. Will continue to set up F2F meetings with all partners and key members.
Marketing & Sales Manager Report
Dan provided the Marketing and Sales Report. Reviewed Board slides. Highlight included:
- Annual Marketing Plan was passed by City Council
- Attended DMA West Summit which focused educational content on effects of AI on the tourism industry.
- Our Website transitioned over to Spring creative.
- Travel guide distribution orders begin as well as map reprinting.
Upcoming conferences and FAM trips include:
- NW Spotlight, Governor’s Conference, MPI Education Conference.

New Business:

Old Business:
Annual Meeting. Jessie Farnes suggested early Fall for setting up a meeting. Looking to Julie for potential ideas for open-house style events. Action Item: Julie to present initial Annual Meeting Plan to include date and objectives at June BOD Meeting.

Round Table:
Discussion was made about Housing Whitefish commitment. Rhonda recommended that WCVB needs to approve how HW funds are spent. Mariah asked that Julie needs clear direction from the Board on the ongoing relationship with Housing Whitefish. Rhonda asked that funds be earmarked for creating revenue streams and marketing, specifically online information.

Jessie Farnes motioned to adjourn at 4:39pm, Maggie Schwenker seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

The next WCVB board meeting will be held on May 8, 2023. Location & Time: Whitefish City Hall, 2:30pm

Signature: [Signature] Date: 5/8/23