

# Natrona County Travel & Tourism Council

## Visit Casper

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### PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024 CASPER, WYOMING

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Gamble called the public meeting of the Natrona County Travel and Tourism Council to order Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 11:35 a.m. Roll call determined the presence of a quorum.

#### II. ROLL CALL

Present: Cole Montgomery, City of Casper  
Katie Arnold, Town of Edgerton  
Kirk Goodman, Town of Bar Nunn  
Lisa Engebretsen, City of Casper  
Mike Cevasco, Town of Midwest  
Sabrina Kemper, City of Mills  
Tassma Powers, Town of Evansville  
Tiffany Gamble, Natrona County

Excused: Renee Penton-Jones, Natrona County

Also Present: Tyler Daugherty, CEO  
Terri Weinhandl, Operations Manager  
Luke Gilliam, Director of Business Development & Sales  
Amanda Sewell, Destination Experience Coordinator  
Liz Bowers, Analytics & Social Media Coordinator  
Wayne Stewart, Director of Marketing & Communications  
Tammi Chappell, Hampton Inn & Suites  
Gena Jensen, National Historic Trails Foundation  
Tia Troy, Lightning Bug Public Relations  
Pat Sweeney

#### CONSENT AGENDA

III. Mrs. Gamble asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Moved by Ms. Powers, seconded by Mrs. Kemper, carried without dissent to approve the consent agenda. (Exhibit 1)

#### OLD BUSINESS

#### IV. 5150' WINTER FESTIVAL

- The festival kicks off Saturday, January 27, 2024 with Robert Burns Day at Frontier Brewing.

- Snow sculpting competition
  - David Street Station.
  - The snow blocks will be packed on Monday, January 29, 2024.
  - Four teams of four are entered into the event.
  - Competition starts Thursday, February 1, 2024.
- Casper International Film festival
  - 30+ films will be shown at Frontier.
  - Festival will run Thursday, February 1, 2024 through Sunday, February 4, 2024.
- Winterfest Photography Exhibition
  - 123 photo submissions.
  - 100 will be selected and exhibited at the Nicolaysen Art Museum.
  - Judging will take place on Friday, January 26.

V. **CREATIVE COORDINATOR UPDATE**

Sydney (Syd) Wallace started in her creative coordinator position January 3, 2024. She hit the ground running and is already working on in-house design and the brand portfolio.

**NEW BUSINESS**

VI. **CASH BASIS ACCOUNTING**

Information only, no board action is required.

- Visit Casper will be moving to a cash basis accounting system.
  - Roxy from Skogen & Cometto suggested moving to cash basis accounting at the November board meeting.
    - Simpler statements.
    - Easier to read.
    - More simplistic.
  - Can switch over within the current FY.
- Visit Casper currently has a good procedure in place.
  - Continue to track information until the FY24 audit is complete.

VII. **2021 MASTER PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

- In 2021, engaged stakeholders for the Visit Casper road map for the future.
- In June 2023 Visit Casper brought those stakeholders back to the table for a progress report.
  - Progress report is posted to the website.
- Updates from 2021 to 2023 are impressive and include:
  - Destination Marketing Fee implementation with hotels.
  - Destination development grant at the state level with access to \$600,000 every two years.

- Engaged with sustainable strategies which opens Visit Casper up to access of more Federal grants.
- Created the Natrona County Improvement Committee.
- Ford Wyoming Center study with economic impact numbers and the expansion of the locker rooms.
- Created new event – 5150' Winterfest.
- Pivoted from the Business Challenge to the Marketing Co-op.
- Purchase of Visit Casper bus.
- Implementing way-finding signage.
- Created a group with Fly Casper Alliance to work with the Maximum Revenue Guarantee (MRG).
- Trail expansion.
- Two new assets - Wyo Ranch and hotel properties.
- The lodge renovation.

#### **VIII. CENTRAL WY SHOOTING RANGE**

- SF169 – legislators allocated \$10M and a task force to complete the construction of a shooting complex within the state of Wyoming.
- Visit Casper has led a group since August to meet on what a shooting complex in Casper would look like, and to engage stakeholders.
- The task force established March 1, 2024 as the deadline to submit a letter of interest.
- Asking for support from local municipalities, the county, and community stakeholders.
- City of Casper has engaged with the University of Wyoming to conduct an economic impact study on the shooting range and what that could look like for Casper.
- Visit Casper, Advance Casper, the City of Casper, and Natrona County are each contributing \$5,000 to offset the cost of the \$20,000 study.
- One page result sheet will be submitted with the letter of interest.
- Task force committee members are going to the Cameo shooting complex in Colorado for a site visit of that facility to get information on a timeline, the work force, job creation, events they were able to secure, and the impact on the community.

Moved by Ms. Powers, seconded by Ms. Engebretsen, carried without dissent that the NCTTC support the Central Wyoming Shooting Range location in Natrona County.

### **COMMUNICATION REPORTS**

#### **IX. STAFF REPORTS**

See Sales & Marketing Reports below. (Exhibit 2)

**X. LIGHTNING BUG PUBLIC RELATIONS**

- Casper feature articles in AARP magazine, Trip Advisor and Matador Network.
- Working with four journalists for a winter-themed press trip.
- Working on the Salt Lake City market.

**XI. SALES & MARKETING REPORTS**

**Sales - Luke Gilliam**

- Amanda continues to work on state association business with conventions and conferences.
- Attendance at travel and trade shows throughout the year will be scheduled in January.
- Some trade shows will match up with the Wyo Sports Ranch schedule to support their efforts for their November-December 2024 opening.
- NJCAA and IRU
  - Two major events are coming to Casper this spring.
  - Schedules and timelines are going well.
  - Wyoming Office of Tourism reported a \$100M economic impact for our state in terms of business represented from IRU.
- Actively pursuing the RARA event.
- 2024 busy in terms of repeat business as well as new business.
- Look forward to the success of the DMF/5150 development fund or participating hotels.
- Summarized monthly snapshot of January 2024 events. (Exhibit 3)

**Sales – Amanda Sewell**

- Hell's Half Acre update
  - Project to re-open the trailhead which has been closed since 2005.
  - Through Natrona County Outdoor Recreation Collaborative
  - Received the Natrona County Commissioners' approval
  - Sub-committee
  - Currently seeking grants
    - Pledge is at approximately \$200,000
    - Recreation & Visitors Service Program - \$50,000
    - Natrona County Recreation Joint Powers Board - \$50,000
    - Match support through the Natrona County Outdoor Collaborative Grant - \$100,000
  - Improvements and renovations
    - Outhouses below the hill
    - Two auto gate panels
    - Tables and trash cans

- Signs/security signs
- Highway signs
- Updated viewing area
- Renovate gravel and grading
- Partnerships
  - Pathways Innovation Center (PIC)
  - Boys & Girls Club
  - Boy Scouts of America
- Gathering estimates for costs and materials
- Working on timelines

### **Marketing – Wayne Stewart**

- Highlights from marketing report:
  - Herman Global campaign
  - Local resident survey
  - Logan and Morgan Wilson social media posts
    - December
    - LinkedIn – Logan Wilson video
    - Deliverables – 3-year contract.
    - Spring turkey hunt to promote outdoors
- Outside of report
  - Local campaigns
    - Winterfest
    - Restaurant Week

### **CEO Comments**

- Lodging tax doing extremely well
  - FY24 budget will exceed \$2.3M
  - Will require a budget amendment later this year.
  - 90% spend allocates funds to additional projects
- Destination Development Grant projects are going well
- May 19-25 - National Travel & Tourism Week
  - Friday, May 24 - Visit Casper annual hospitality breakfast
- Next 5 months
  - State High School Championships
  - NJCAA Tournament
  - Marketing Co-op
  - Governor's Conference
  - Impact Grants
  - CNFR – 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
  - National Heritage Area discussion and presentation to Natrona County Commissioners

## **XII. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**Kirk Goodman**

- Wyo Ranch General Manager is now on site.
- Rocky Mountain Wrestling asked for a 5-year extension.
- Various shows are coming to FWC. Ticket sales for some shows are doing better than others.
- Plan to expand the cowboy lot for event parking.

**Tassma Powers**

Provided an update of the MRG agreement discussions with Skywest.

**XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Sweeney is now on the Natrona County Fair Board. The Indian Relay Races will again take place in Casper in September.

**XIV. NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 11:30 a.m.

**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**XVI. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Gamble asked for a motion to adjourn.

Moved by Mrs. Kemper, seconded by Mr. Goodman, carried without dissent to adjourn at 12:39 p.m.

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Tiffany Gamble, Chair

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Sabrina Kemper, Secretary