

# Natrona County Travel & Tourism Council

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## Visit Casper

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020 ~ 11:30 PM  
CASPER, WYOMING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Gamble called the public meeting of the Natrona County Travel & Tourism Council to order Tuesday, April 28, 2020, at 11:30 p.m. via conference call/Zoom. Roll call determined the presence of a quorum.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Tiffany Gamble, Natrona County  
Renee Penton-Jones, Natrona County  
Brad Murphy, Town of Bar Nunn  
Steve Freel, City of Casper  
Erik Aune, Town of Mills  
Ken Thoren, Town of Edgerton  
Michael Cevasco, Town of Midwest  
Jim Ruble, Town of Evansville

Absent: Kevin Hawley, City of Casper

Also Present: Brook Kaufman, CEO  
Luke Gilliam, Business Development Manager  
Amanda Scherlin, Marketing Manager  
Katie Moerke, Executive Assistant  
Mikki Milosevic, Destination Service Coordinator  
Wayne Stewart, Content Marketing Coordinator  
Tiffany Funk, Hampton Inn & Suites  
Tiffany Chappell, Hampton Inn & Suites  
Morgan Hughes, Casper Star-Tribune  
Brenden LaChance, Oil City News

**III. Moved by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mrs. Penton-Jones and carried without dissent to approve the consent agenda as presented. (Exhibit 1)**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**IV. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

Ms. Kaufman updated the board on the status of the staff working from home. Guidance from the Governor will help determine when staff returns. Scheduling and cleaning protocols will be determined as we move through May. It is likely we will begin rotating staff in the office by June 1, 2020.

**V. 2019-2020 BUDGET PROJECTIONS**

Ms. Kaufman shared that occupancy rates in April have held around 20%, down from 48% in early March. The data shows a steep decline after March 12, 2020, when events

began to cancel, and buildings/venues closed. Estimated lodging tax revenue through the end of fiscal 2019-2020 is \$140,000 for total tax collections of \$1.7M.

Ms. Penton-Jones asked if the hotels are up to date on their payments. Ms. Kaufman stated we would not know until they are 150 days in arrears.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **VI. 2020-2021 BUDGET FORECAST**

Ms. Kaufman covered three budget scenarios with the board -- worst, moderate and best. Not knowing how the decline of the energy industry and COVID-19 will impact the community and hospitality industry, she asked for guidance from Mrs. Penton-Jones on these scenarios before bringing to the full board. (Exhibit 2)

WORST: Collections estimated at \$762,885.12, down \$1M from fiscal 2019-2020. Occupancy will peak at 48%, ADR at \$83.00.

MODERATE: Collections estimated at \$984,784.32, down \$750k from LY. Occupancy will peak at 58%, ADR at \$83.00

BEST: Collections estimated at \$1.2M, down \$600k from LY. Occupancy will peak at 68%; ADR at \$83.00.

Ms. Kaufman also shared it is likely the final budget presented for approval will include a request for use of retained earnings. Based on board feedback, she will build the budget to fall somewhere between the moderate and best scenarios.

### **VII. GRANT REVIEW**

Ms. Kaufman stated that Mrs. Penton-Jones and Mrs. Gamble met last week to review the following grant requests.

1. East Casper Volleyball Club. (\$1,200 request) Their event was to take place May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, but due to COVID-19 the event has been cancelled.
2. Casper Soccer Club. (\$3,000 request) They had an event scheduled for May 23-25, 2020 but it was cancelled due to COVID-19. They have several events planned for this summer and fall.
3. Central Wyoming Corvettes has an event planned for September, potentially at the Event Center. (\$2,500 request, recommended \$2,500)
4. Wyoming Coaches Association has an event scheduled for July 20-18, 2020. As of right now the event is still a go. (\$5,000 requested; \$1,500 recommended)

Ms. Kaufman noted that grant funds are not released until 60 days post-event.

Moved by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Cevasco and carried without dissent to approve the grant committee's recommendations. Motion carried.

VIII. **MARKETING PLAN**

Ms. Kaufman outlined the current and short-term marketing plan for the organization. Because of recent events, Visit Casper has had to pivot from traditional tourism promotion to emergency community and partner response. Phase two of the recovery plan includes expanding resident advocacy and an increased focus on the “visiting friends and relatives” segment. As appropriate, Visit Casper will move to a drive market then regional approach. The timing will depend on Governor’s orders as well as resident/visitor sentiment.

**COMMUNICATION REPORTS**

IX. **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES**

None.

X. **STAFF REPORTS.**

No questions. (Exhibit 3)

XI. **COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION**

No Comments.

XII. **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Murphy mentioned that there is a lot of caution in the entertainment industry. Tours are being pushed 6-9 months out. The Casper Events Center plans to make more announcements in the coming weeks. He said he is doubtful large events will take place before September/October. He shared there is a domino effect when it comes to athletic events.

Mr. Aune says that things are very limited, and that the Governor’s announcements might be good. Right now, they are at a standstill. He stated how the emotional aspect has been difficult for people who would like to book a trip, as well as those who are panicking and want to rebook or cancel. He says this is has been damaging across the board.

XIII. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

XIV. **EXECUTIVE SESSION – NONE**

XV. **NEXT COUNCIL MEETING:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020. Location: TBD

XVI. **ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Aune and carried without dissent to adjourn the meeting at 12:01 p.m. Motion carried.**

  
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Tiffany Gamble, Chair

  
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Kevin Hawley, Secretary