

Natrona County Travel & Tourism Council

Visit Casper

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021 ~ 11:30 AM
CASPER, WYOMING**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Gamble called the public meeting of the Natrona County Travel & Tourism Council to order Tuesday, February 23, 2021, at 11:32 a.m. via Zoom. Roll call determined the presence of a quorum.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Tiffany Gamble, Natrona County
Jim Ruble, Town of Evansville
Michael Cevasco, Town of Midwest
Brad Murphy, Town of Bar Nunn
Erik Aune, Town of Mills
Kevin Hawley, City of Casper
Renee Penton-Jones, Natrona County*

Excused: Ken Thoren, Town of Edgerton
Steve Freel, City of Casper

Also Present: Brook Kaufman, CEO
Amanda Scherlin, Marketing Manager
Chelsea Combe, Marketing Specialist
Greg Hirst, Oil City News
Tia Troy, Lightning Bug Public Relations
Anna Kinder, Natrona County Health Department
Glenn Januska, Natrona County International Airport*

**Arrived Late*

III. Moved by Mr. Aune, seconded by Mr. Murphy, and carried without dissent to approve the consent agenda as presented. (Exhibit 1)

OLD BUSINESS

IV. PARTNER UPDATES

Ms. Kaufman invited a few partners to present on current events that affect tourism. The first to speak was Anna Kinder, Director of the Casper Natrona County Health Department. Highlights from Mrs. Kinder's presentation include:

- We are about to mark the one-year anniversary of COVID-19. She informed the board that there were 47 cases last week and it has been a long time since numbers have been that low.
- This week the Health Department will be administering its 10,000th dose of the vaccine. Currently they administer 330+ vaccines per day.

- They anticipate opening to group 1C, which is critical infrastructure, (including hospitality workers), in March.
- Ms. Kaufman asked how a person would go about getting the vaccine. Mrs. Kinder shared the public can find a vaccination schedule at CasperVsCovid.com.
- If the county gets more than 1170 vaccines per week, they will move to large scale mass vaccination efforts.
- Mrs. Kinder then informed the board that they will now allow 2500 people in the Ford Wyoming Center for the upcoming high school tournaments.

Ms. Kaufman asked Tia Troy with Lightning Bug Public Relations to speak next and to discuss the current landscape of public relations and to give an update on Visit Casper efforts. Highlights from Ms. Troy's presentation include:

- There has been a major disruption in most media rooms around the country. Many publications have furloughed their workers or closed altogether. Most media outlets that had to furlough are starting to re-hire for those positions or bringing furloughed staff back.
- In the past few months Visit Casper has been looking beyond traditional travel publications for coverage that creates a general feel for Casper as a destination.
- There is a solid decrease in the rates influencers are charging destinations for their partnerships. This is creating more opportunity for smaller destinations to be able to work with higher-level influencers.
- Travelers are looking for longer stays and more meaningful travel, bucket list locations, to explore more of the US where they can be outside and attend outdoor events. Ms. Troy added that road trips will continue to be a big thing all throughout 2021, multi-family travel is seeing a resurgence and visiting friends and family is starting to be extremely popular and she expects that will continue to be an upward trend.

Ms. Kaufman then introduced Glenn Januska, Director of the Casper/Natrona County International Airport. Mr. Januska shared information on the study that was recently done by the state on the impacts of air travel in Wyoming. Highlights included:

- Airports employed 21,974 people in the state in 2020 compared to 12,263 in 2013.
- The economic impact of airports across the State was \$2 Billion in 2020 up from \$1.4 Billion in 2013. That translated to \$87.7 Million in state and local tax revenue in 2020, up from \$55 Million in 2013.
- Total expenditures for those traveling by air were approximately \$710 per visitor.

NEW BUSINESS

V. **NONE**

COMMUNICATION REPORTS

VI. **STAFF REPORTS:** No questions. (Exhibit 2)

VII. **COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION:** No questions.

VIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mrs. Penton-Jones updated the board on the Wyoming Lodging and Restaurant Association. She noted that at the last Executive Committee meeting they discussed the future of the WLRA. There is some discussion about merging with the Wyoming Travel Industry Coalition, but nothing is set in stone.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None. (Exhibit 2)

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

XI. NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: Tuesday, March 23, 2021. Location: Visit Casper Office.

XII. ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Mrs. Penton-Jones, seconded by Mr. Hawley and carried without dissent to adjourn the meeting at 12:36 p.m. Motion carried.



Tiffany Gamble, Chair



Kevin Hawley, Secretary