

# Natrona County Travel & Tourism Council

## Visit Casper

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### PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022 CASPER, WYOMING

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Gamble called the public meeting of the Natrona County Travel and Tourism Council to order Wednesday, February 23, 2022, at 11:33 a.m. Roll call determined the presence of a quorum.

#### II. ROLL CALL

Present: Michael Cevasco, Town of Midwest\*  
Sabrina Kemper, City of Mills  
Tiffany Gamble, Natrona County  
Steve Freel, City of Casper (Zoom)  
Brad Murphy, Town of Bar Nunn  
Kevin Hawley, City of Casper  
Renee Penton-Jones, Natrona County

Absent: Ken Thoren, Town of Edgerton

Excused: Jim Ruble, Town of Evansville

Also Present: Brook Kaufman, CEO  
Chelsea Combe, Marketing Specialist  
Amanda Scherlin, Marketing Manager  
Luke Gilliam, Business Development Manager  
Amanda Sewell, Destinations Experience Coordinator  
Angie Volzke, Creative Coordinator  
Terri Weinhandl, Executive Assistant  
Tia Troy, Lightning Bug Public Relations  
Gena Jensen, National Historic Trails Interpretive Center  
Brendan LaChance, Oil City News (Zoom)  
Travis Mitchell, Wyoming News Now

\*Arrived late to the meeting.

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

#### OLD BUSINESS

#### IV. BUS MOU WITH THE CITY OF CASPER

Ms. Kaufman updated the board on the MOU and relationship with the City of Casper on the purchase of a 24-seat bus. The committee is working on the MOU which should be received next week and will go before the City Council March 8, 2022. Visit Casper will purchase the 24-seat bus and gift it to the City, who will lease it back to Visit Casper. The City of Casper will provide storage and minor maintenance of the bus.

**V. GRANT PROGRAM ALIGNMENT**

Ms. Kaufman explained to the board that Visit Casper has been working with the City of Casper over the last year to align their respective grant programs. Both the City and Visit Casper have the same mission with the funds to drive overnight stays. The alignment will provide a once-a-year grant cycle with the City of Casper providing in-kind services and facilities, and Visit Casper providing monies. The grant programs will be combined in 2022 with the first grant application deadline of May 15, 2022. The grant review committee will meet in June to review.

**VI. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Ms. Kaufman gave a legislative update:

- The tourism improvement districts bill did not make it through introduction.
- The Wyoming film production incentives program bill died in the house.
- The lodging tax sales exemption did not get introduced.

Ms. Kaufman also reminded the board of the weekly calls with Representative Harshman and to contact Visit Casper staff for information.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**VII. SALES UPDATE**

Mr. Gilliam presented the council with a sales update on 2022 YTD. Meetings are being planned and scheduled from three months to three years in advance. Sports conversations are picking up. In the last two months he has been working on the Digital Edge Campaign and the Youth Sports and Amateur Sports campaigns. Casper is centrally located for Wyoming, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho and Colorado. Organizers for volleyball, baseball and 5K and 10K races are searching for the ideal location to hold their events.

**VIII. NHTIC MOU**

The current memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was signed in 2017. NHTIC Director Dennis Kuhnel, is pleased with the working relationship with the Visitor Center at the NHTIC. Changes to the MOU will need to run through the BLM ladder with the hopes of the new MOU in place in September. (Exhibit 2)

**IX. BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

Ms. Kaufman pointed out that there are three board members whose terms will expire at the end of June, 2022.

- Renee Penton-Jones
- Kevin Hawley
- Mike Cevasco

Mrs. Penton-Jones has agreed to another three-year term. Ms. Kaufman asked the remaining board members to let her know their intentions.

**X. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY**

Ms. Kaufman shared the results of the Employee Engagement Survey, expressing that she is pleased with the results of a 4.7 out of a possible 5. Those categories scoring less than a 5 indicate that there are opportunities to improve. (Exhibit 3).

**COMMUNICATION REPORTS**

**XI. STAFF REPORTS**

No comments. (Exhibit 4)

**XII. COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION**

No comments.

**XIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mrs. Gamble shared that the TA Truck Service Center has opened next to the Hat Six Travel Plaza. Bringing the service center to Casper has been in the works for the last three years and is a good addition to the travel plaza.

Mr. Hawley said there is a lot going on in downtown Casper and he is excited for summer. It will be a great summer for concerts and summer shows.

Mr. Murphy reminded the board that state wrestling will be Friday and Saturday, and that are expecting record numbers for the Casper Showdown on Sunday. The Ford Wyoming Center will make a big announcement Monday, February 28. Spectra has been approved to manage the Ford Wyoming Center for another 10 years.

Mr. Cevalasco shared information on projects for Midwest:

- The planning commission is working on a rest stop across from the junction.
- Offering fishing in the cooling pond.

Mrs. Kemper shared that Mills is working on three major projects:

- A 3-mile bike trail that will connect the current east and west bikes trails.
- The Robertson Hills Park in the fall of 2022.
- A riverfront project. They are working with FEMA on building approval.

Mrs. Penton-Jones shared that the Wyoming Travel Industry Coalition and the Wyoming Lodging & Restaurant Association are merging in April. The new collaboration will be very effective. Mrs. Jones will be the chair of the new organization for the first year.

**XIV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mrs. Jensen Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) is planning a conference at the end of August or the first part of September with 200-400 people in attendance. They are working on the agenda and the logistics for the conference.

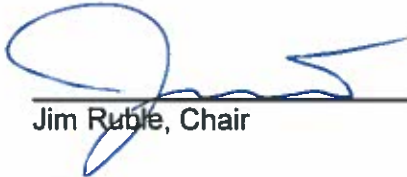
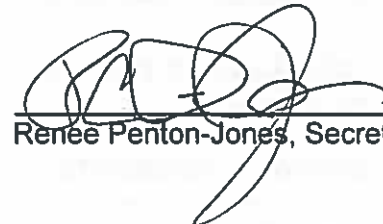
The National Historic Trails Interpretive Center (NHTIC) is working on spring programs and an educational calendar. The NHTIC is finalizing plans for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. They are seeing new attention and interest in the center.

**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**  
None.

**XVI. NEXT COUNCIL MEETING:** Tuesday, March 23, 2022, Visit Casper Office.

**XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Mrs. Kemper, seconded by Mrs. Penton-Jones and carried without dissent to adjourn the board meeting at 12:16 p.m.

  
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Jim Ruble, Chair  
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Renee Penton-Jones, Secretary