

Natrona County Travel & Tourism Council

Visit Casper

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022 CASPER, WYOMING

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Ruble called the public meeting of the Natrona County Travel and Tourism Council to order Tuesday, March 22, 2022, at 11:32 a.m. Roll call determined the presence of a quorum.

II. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Jim Ruble, Town of Evansville
Sabrina Kemper, City of Mills
Tiffany Gamble, Natrona County
Steve Freel, City of Casper *
Brad Murphy, Town of Bar Nunn
Renee Penton-Jones, Natrona County

Absent: Michael Cevasco, Town of Midwest
Kevin Hawley, City of Casper

Excused: Ken Thoren, Town of Edgerton

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 (Zoom)
Gena Jensen, National Historic Trails Interpretive Center
Greg Hirst, Oil City News
Tammy Chappell, Hampton Inn & Suites
Catherine Sarrett, Strategic Venue Studies (Zoom)

*Arrived late to the meeting.

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

OLD BUSINESS

IV. **NHTIC MOU**

Ms. Kaufman stated that the Bureau of Land Management is taking the proposed MOU through their process and it should be in place by September 2022. The proposed term of the new MOU for the Visit Casper Welcome Center to be inside the NHTIC is five years.

V. **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

Ms. Kaufman shared that Ms. Penton-Jones will be reappointed to the board for another three-year term ending June 2025. Mr. Hawley has decided to step down. Mr. Cevasco's appointment is up June 30, 2022. Visit Casper will advertise the open seats and accept applications through May 20, 2022.

NEW BUSINESS

VI. **EXECUTIVE SEARCH**

Mrs. Penton-Jones shared that the Board has contracted with Winner Partners for the search of a new CEO. Winner Partners will be in Casper March 28 and 29 to meet with the Board and Visit Casper staff, as well as community members, elected officials, partners and leaders, etc. who have been invited to engage in the process.

VII. **BUDGET – 2022/2023 PRELIMINARY**

Ms. Kaufman shared a preliminary budget with the Board for structure and general discussion. Ms. Kaufman will continue to update the budget as needed prior to her departure. The final budget will be approved at the July 2022 board meeting.

VIII. **LODGING TAX RENEWAL**

Ms. Kaufman explained local lodging tax boards across the state are now guaranteed 2% by the legislature as part of the statewide lodging tax that was passed in 2020. The additional 2% will be on the ballot in November. The 2% is not a new or additional tax, it will keep the local option lodging tax at 4%. (Exhibit 2)

IX. **SURVEYS – PARTNER, ELECTED, BOARD**

Ms. Kaufman shared that the results of the Visit Casper partner, elected and board satisfaction survey were favorable. The scores are very strong and the organization is in a good position. (Exhibit 3)

X. **FILM CASPER – NEXT STEPS**

Visit Casper will continue to be the resource office for Film Casper. Kelly Eastes is the primary liaison for Film Casper and has signed an additional 12-month contract that will run through June 2023. We continue to see solid interest from producers.

XI. **FORD WYOMING CENTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE**

Catherine Sarrett with Strategic Venue Studies gave an initial findings presentation via Zoom on the Ford Wyoming Center (FWC) from her January 2022 site visit.

Key points included:

- Shared local market key findings
- Competition key findings
- Comparable theaters
- Historical demand of the FWC
- Initial improvement or addition recommendations
 - Kitchen, dining and meeting areas
 - Arena entrance
 - Lobby
 - Concourse

- Restrooms
- Seating
- Club seats
- VIP lounge
- Balcony party suites

The next phase is client review and analysis.

COMMUNICATION REPORTS

XII. STAFF REPORTS

No comments. (Exhibit 4)

XIII. COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION

No comments.

XIV. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Murphy shared that the Ford Wyoming Center is busy with the state pool tournament this week with 1,000+ players expected to compete; Blippi, Professional Bull Riders, Cory Asbury and Santana will follow through April 6.

Mr. Freel asked about the replacement cost of the street banners for College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR) as a result of the updated logo. Ms. Kaufman stated that \$3,600-\$4,000 is in the Visit Casper budget. Ms. Scherlin will share the new CNFR logo with the Board.

Mrs. Penton-Jones stated the Wyoming Lodging and Restaurant Association and Wyoming Travel Industry Coalition will merge April 1, 2022. The organization's new name will be released at a later date.

XV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Troy from Lightning Bug Public Relations will provide media training for the Board and staff prior to the Outdoor Writers of America Association conference in May.

Ms. Jensen stated that a new exhibit is set to open at the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center and the new website is scheduled to launch on April 1, 2022.

Ms. Chappell stated that the remodeling project at the Hampton Inn & Suites is progressing. She also shared that the state wrestling and basketball tournaments went very well. Mr. Murphy said he received very positive comments about the Proud to Host the Best hospitality at the state tournaments.

XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

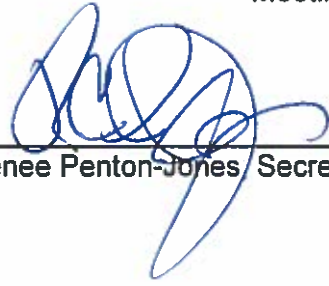
XVII. **NEXT COUNCIL MEETING:** Tuesday, April 26, 2022, Visit Casper Office.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mrs. Penton-Jones, seconded by Mrs. Kemper and carried without dissent to adjourn the board meeting at 12:30 p.m.



Jim Ruble, Chair



Renee Penton-Jones, Secretary