

Natrona County Travel & Tourism Council

Visit Casper

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 26, 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, May 26, 2020, at 11:30 p.m. at the Visit Casper office and conference call/Zoom. Roll call determined the presence of a quorum.

II. ROLL CALL

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

**Entered the meeting late*

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
Tim Monroe, Cowboy State Daily

III. Moved by Mr. Hawley, 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 schedule. Currently, there are three people in the office daily on rotation. The combination of in-office and work from home will continue through at least mid-June.

V. 2019-2020 BUDGET PROJECTIONS

Revenue year-to-date is \$1,665,445.42. Expenses are \$1,426,836.07. Ms. Kaufman anticipates the June lodging tax check (reflective of April occupancy) will be around \$40,000. The remaining funds in net income will be allocated to marketing and sales expense through the end of this fiscal.

VI. **2020-2021 BUDGET FORECAST**

Ms. Kaufman informed the Board that next year's budget is in the \$1.2M range, a 30%+ decrease from this year's collections. Mrs. Gamble asked Mrs. Penton-Jones how she feels about these projections. Mrs. Penton-Jones said she feels good about it. (Exhibit 2)

Mr. Thoren asked about fixed costs and where the differences were from this year's budget to next. Ms. Kaufman stated that there would be no money for research and that the marketing and sales spend will be reduced. The grant committee will also meet to discuss a slate for next year – final recommendations will be brought to the board for approval at the July meeting.

Mr. Cevasco asked why the digital/social marketing was projected to be higher than last year. Mrs. Scherlin explained that the digital/social media costs include display digital marketing and that our allocation next year is more than what was budgeted this year but is less than what we actually spent with the unanticipated increase in lodging tax collections.

NEW BUSINESS

VII. **TOURISM OUTLOOK – DOMESTIC AND LOCAL**

Since the cancellation of state 3A/4A basketball, occupancy dipped to 19.3% and is back up to 31%. Nationally, over 51% of people who work in the travel industry are unemployed. Ms. Kaufman is estimating that average occupancy for 2020 will be between 40-45%.

Ms. Kaufman asked Mrs. Scherlin to share the statistics from Uber Media. Mrs. Scherlin explained how Visit Casper uses the data to monitor movement of people based on cell phone data. She also showed the trend where there was a falloff in Mid-March, similar to the day Casper had a snow day in February. (It dipped again over Easter.) The data shows that people are on the move again and that there is a slight increase in volume in our area.

Mrs. Gamble inquired about the next phase of messaging. Mrs. Scherlin shared will be promoting outdoor recreation, driving lift in the visiting friends and family segment and providing COVID-19 travel updates. The Road to Yellowstone campaign will launch July 1st.

VIII. **OUTSTANDING GRANT REQUEST**

A motion was made by Mr. Hawley to approve a \$3,000 grant for the Special Olympics of Wyoming Fall Festival. It was seconded by Ken Thoren and passed unanimously.

IX. **GRANT REVIEW AND PLAN 2020-2021**

Mrs. Penton-Jones, Mrs. Gamble and Ms. Kaufman will meet to discuss a potential slate of grants for next fiscal year. Ms. Kaufman said she will have an update for the board at the next meeting.

X. CTA™ 2020

Ms. Kaufman presented the idea of awarding scholarships to all individuals who want to become a CTA in 2020. Mr. Thoren asked the about exposure, liability, and Visit Casper's costs. Ms. Kaufman asked the board if they thought it would devalue the program if there were no fees associated. Mr. Hawley discussed renewal and the potential lack of value long-term. Ms. Kaufman believes there is opportunity to drive engagement with post-certification activities. Mr. Ruble stated he sees value in the certification. Overall, the Board approved covering tuition for the rest of 2020.

COMMUNICATION REPORTS

XI. STAFF REPORTS.

No questions. (Exhibit 3)

XII. COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION

No questions.

XIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mrs. Gamble asked each of the Board members to give updates from their industry.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION – NONE

XVI. NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: Tuesday, June 23, 2020. Location: Visit Casper Office or Zoom

XVII. ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Ms. Gamble, seconded by Mr. Ruble and carried without dissent to adjourn the meeting at 12:44 p.m. Motion carried.



Tiffany Gamble, Chair

Kevin Hawley, Secretary