



Visit Estes Park
The Destination
Marketing Organization
VisitEstesPark.com

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 3, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
Conference Room, 1230 Big Thompson Ave

Board Members Attending: Sean Jurgens, Deborah Gibson, Pat Murphy, Tonya Humiston, Marie Cenac and Todd Jirsa

Board Members Absent: Camden Birkeland

Also Attending:

Eric Lund, President & CEO, Visit Estes Park
Kevin Benes, Chief Financial Officer, Visit Estes Park
Wendi Bryson, Office Manager, Visit Estes Park

The meeting was called to order by Chair Sean Jurgens at approximately 6:10 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

None

REPORTS.

Patterson gave a brief overview of RMNP's visitation for July and some preliminary figures from Labor Day, new signs at specific trailheads to notify visitors that a pass is required, how traffic volume was affecting the pavement preservation project along with some schedule changes, and the Park's effort to educate others on fire danger.

Cenac gave a brief update on the Town Board's discussion on e-bikes, the discussion regarding commercial land use in residential areas, and the marijuana petition submitted to the Town.

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE.

Jurgens went over the items on the agenda briefly. Cenac moved to approve the agenda, Humiston seconded. With no further comment, the motion passed unanimously.

PRESIDENT & CEO.

Lund went over some highlights of his written report and gave some additional details on conferences he had attended. He gave an overview of what CVENT is and how he planned for VEP to use it to attract groups to Estes Park. He talked about how the RFP process would work, and some of the options it provides for the person submitting the request. Jurgens asked if where the figure at the bottom of the slide had come from, and Lund explained that was the estimated revenue that would have been generated. Gibson shared that she had looked up some of the groups listed to see who they were since the figures were so large, since she thought at first that the chart included in the packet was an example of what the request received looked like. She found that five or six had already committed to other locations, and asked what exactly the chart was showing the board if the requests listed had already committed to other locations. Lund explained that the chart was exactly what was received from CVENT for the RFPs specifying Estes Park directly as a location for the event. He went on to explain that it had already resulted in the large medical group event in two years, and that they had already booked large room blocks at the Ridgeline and the Stanley. Jurgens asked if there was some sort of group informational flyer Lund was passing out at these events that they could take a look at, and Lund agreed that he was working on one. He gave a brief overview of what information was currently included on the flyer, and Jurgens asked if he could see it after the meeting. Lund gave an update on some changes to the last-minute availability page, and that it should hopefully be live by the following month. He moved on to state that the digital annual report had been sent out. Gibson and Jurgens had not received the report, and they had

searched for it. Lund will investigate why they had not received it. Gibson asked if it should have gone out to all stakeholders, and Benes agreed that it should have. He gave an update on the Community Advisory Board and asked for recommendations on anyone else the board felt he should approach. Jurgens asked what areas still needed representation. Lund explained that they still needed some active community members, a couple from retail businesses, at least one more from dining. Gibson asked if he had approached anyone that said they would be interested in participating when Sandy Hall was interviewing them. Lund said he would approach some of them. He thought that he should hear about the grant sometime in October, but likely not before the board meeting. He would send out an email once he heard back. Murphy asked what the typical deciding factors for groups to choose Estes Park were. Lund explained that meeting space, room availability and dining opportunities. Murphy wanted to know if there was anything that Estes Park didn't currently have that was impacting the ability to attract the larger groups. Lund explained that conference space that can accommodate breakout sessions or large expos was a big one. Benes added that transportation was also a big factor for events, specifically the limited public transportation and ride share presence.

PROGRAM REVIEW.

Lund gave an overview of the marketing statistics for the website, visitation at the Visitor Center, and current PR efforts including changes to the formula to track the ROI. Gibson asked about the highway traffic data, Lund shared that the traffic was flat on US34 and down on 36. Gibson wondered why 36 was down so much. Lund thought it might have to do with the construction on 34, but Gibson stated it opened in May. She went on to explain that she would have expected to see a corresponding increase in traffic on 34 if it was affected by construction. With visitation up, the dip didn't make sense. Bryson added that 34 did have flaggers in several places that pushed a large portion of the traffic over to 36, but agreed that it still did not make sense. Gibson wondered if CDOT had changed how they were tracking the data or if the Town did anything to track the traffic flow into town. Cenac explained the Town did not track the traffic, but CDOT did. Benes added the visitors weren't likely to be coming through Grand Lake. Lund thought they could be coming through Hwy 7, but most disagreed due to the lengthy extensive construction project. Cenac mentioned that TripAdvisor stated that there was no public transportation in Estes Park, and wanted to know how that could be updated. Lund explained that it just needed to be submitted to them. Lund moved on to updates on the stakeholder services and gave some brief highlights of the report, an update on sales efforts, and the plan to revamp the lottery process. Benes went gave an overview of the June lodging tax collected, explained notable items on the balance sheet, the real-world effect of bringing all the sales in house to cash flow, talked through the Town's sales tax report, shared highlights from the final audit report.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT.

Lund started the presentation of the 2020 Operating Plan with the organizational chart. Humiston asked why Bryson was shown as reporting to Benes on the annual report, but to Lund in the Operating Plan. Lund explained that Bryson would be reporting to him directly next year. He then started to go through highlights from the plan. Jurgens asked why the goals weren't in order. Lund explained that for things like the marketing program more than one goal applies so that is why they appear out of order. He then went through key variances in income and expenses in the proposed budget for 2020. Jurgens expressed concern over the formatting of the Plan in the packet, and Lund agreed it would be cleaned up. Gibson added that quantifying our results had been a big deal, and she wanted to know how that would be possible with the new Group Sales Program to establish growth. Lund explained that the data was already being gathered using past RFPs and finding out if they booked and where they stayed. Gibson wanted to know how he was getting that information. Lund explained that we already had the RFPs, and Gibson asked if that provided the rest of the information. Lund shared that they had to call them back and ask. Gibson asked for clarification on how the RFPs were generated. Were they specific to Estes Park? Lund shared that they were specifically submitted to Estes Park, but since VEP does not control the booking we have to contact them after the fact to find out if they booked here and where they stayed. He expected to have all the data collected by the end of the year. Jurgens expressed concern regarding budgeting so much for the group sales program without the data in place to back it up. Gibson went on to say that in the original project proposal there was one group sales person, but in the operating plan there was one person plus a potential additional shared staffer. She wanted to if that was factored into the personnel budget increase. Lund explained that his expectation was it would be a collaborative effort with the events center staff. Gibson wanted to know if Rob at the Events Center was supporting the shared staff person. Lund shared he had a meeting with him the next day, but it would not change the budget. Cenac added that it was not likely that the Town would be ok with adding anything to their

budget for that, and Jurgens added he didn't think Rob would be open to an increase to their budget either. Lund explained it would not increase their budget, as it would be offset by a better distribution of labor costs. Jurgens clarified that the plan was to hire a person that would be shared between both entities, and Lund agreed that was one possibility. Humiston wanted clarification on the part in the operating plan where it talked about being our own media house. Lund explained that it was about staff creating more content and materials ourselves rather than using outside partners. Benes went on to explain that the initiative to bring more media creation in house actually started in 2019 in conjunction with bringing all the sales in house. Humiston then asked how influencers were chosen for some of the different target markets like family or couples. Lund explained there were several that were being looked into to find the best fit. Benes added that Davis' Athlete in Residence has been so well received in the influencer community that he had already gotten a family that had two young kids that stayed here a week in April. He offered to send a link to the board members after the meeting. He explained that we were not just hosting influencers that do impossible things, but that several were your average person doing attainable things that just happened to have giant followings on social media. Lund added that the Tommy video was also being submitted to Brand USA to see if they will add it to their new streamed TV channel. Lund asked if there was anything else the board would like him to adjust on the operating plan in addition to cleaning up the formatting. Gibson shared that she had found a typo when she was going through it, and she would send him where it was after the meeting. Benes asked if the Town had voted on cost of living increased for the next year yet, Cenac said no they had not. Benes explained that the figure in the proposed budget was based on what the Town Board decided for this year that VEP matched. Lund added that after the operating plan would come the marketing plan. Humiston asked about the note regarding the potential that the organization would need to move offices again. Lund shared that since the building was for sale there was a possibility that we would need to move if the property is sold, but that would happen at the end of the year if at all. In addition, he was looking into other options just in case. Gibson wanted to know why there was such a large increase in the conference and education line of the budget. Lund explained that he thought that was due to a planned increase in development training for all staff separately and collectively. Gibson clarified that it was not an increase in conference attendance. There was an increase for Destinations International conferences and ESTO to allow more staff or board members to attend. Gibson explained that was a hot spot in the past, with a large contingent of people thinking it was a waste of funds. Jurgens asked if the board members were comfortable with submitting the operating plan to the Town and County. Jurgens then moved to approve the Visit Estes Park Operating Plan, Humiston seconded. With no further comment, the motion passed unanimously. Jurgens asked if the Town would be able to vote on the Operating Plan at their next meeting. Cenac explained they'd already gotten their packets, but it might be possible to get it added to the next study session. She offered to talk to Jackie. Jurgens thought the County just approved last year's operating plan on their consent agenda, Benes agreed.

CONSENT AGENDA.

Murphy moved to approve the minutes from the August 6, 2019 meeting, Gibson seconded. With no further comment, the motion passed unanimously.

BOARD COMMENTS.

None

ADJOURN.

Jurgens adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:20 pm.


Wendi Bryson, Recording Secretary


Sean Jurgens, Chair

DATE: 10/1/19

DATE: 10/1/19