



Visit Estes Park
The Destination
Marketing Organization
VisitEstesPark.com

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 1, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
Conference Room, 1230 Big Thompson Ave

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

Board Members Absent: Camden Birkeland and Marie Cenac

Also Attending: Zach Clemens and Kyle Patterson

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 6:00 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

None

REPORTS.

Patterson gave an update on the park numbers over the weekend and who determines the fee free days, 2 weeks for September numbers, update on the Colorado Tourism Conference where she participated in a panel with other National Parks and some of the information shared. Gibson shared that she had heard about a parking app being utilized by another park that allowed them to better notify guests regarding areas that were full, and if RMNP had considered do something similar to help distribute the increased traffic they are having. Patterson shared that it was something that was being considered, but connectivity was a major challenge to adopting an app. Benes asked to verify that Old Fall River Road was going to be closed on Monday to all traffic for a week, Patterson agreed.

Jirsa shared that he had spoken to almost all the Town Board members and did not foresee any issues getting the 2020 VEP Operating Plan approved. Jurgens asked if Jirsa thought there would be any difficulty getting the County Commissioners approval, and Jirsa explained that he did not believe so.

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE.

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

PRESIDENT & CEO.

Lund went over highlights of his report starting with the submission of the 2020 Operating Plan to the Town Board and County Commissioners and that Josh Harms had been appointed the Interim Marketing Manager after the resignation of Shannon Davis through the end of the year. Gibson expressed concern over the resignation of Davis and that she felt it was a huge loss for the organization. Lund shared that Harms had covered the Marketing Manager position previously and he was one of the longest standing employees of the organization. Gibson asked when the major planning meetings for the marketing efforts for next year would occur. Benes explained that the major planning meetings would happen after the Operating Plan was approved, and the Marketing Plan should be complete before the end of the year. He went on to explain that there were quarterly meetings held with all the partner organizations and one would occur next week as well. Lund went on with his report by giving an update on the results from the IMEX conference he attended. Jurgens asked how many of the 508 leads were specific to Estes Park. Lund shared that the leads were not for

any location in Colorado specifically, but that Estes Park was part of the presentation they received. He went on to give an update on his meetings in September and initial responses to follow up efforts being made on RFPs to find out if the groups had stayed in Estes Park and how many room nights were generated. He briefly went over the expectations for the Smart Meeting show happening in November, new comp sets being worked on in conjunction with RRC Associates, data included in the National Tourism Outlook Report, the VEP upcoming Tourism Summit, expectations for the first Group Sales Committee meeting and a proposal for staff development training from Employers Council. Gibson asked for clarification on the scope of work in the training proposal in respect to the challenges specified. She explained that a year ago when Sandy Hall was doing interviews for her report that one of the main things she had identified was the cohesiveness of the staff as the number one asset, and she was wondering what changed. Lund explained that it was not stating that communication was an issue, but that it was an area that would be worked on. He believed that the language used was in an effort to match the other proposal. Gibson stated that it made it sound like there was a level of disfunction in the team that hadn't been there before. She asked if that was something that had been reported to them. Lund said no and that he thought it was included as a general area that could always be improved on. He went on to explain that the proposal did not include any board or executive development. He then gave an update on the Community Advisory Board Meeting, who was invited and who was participating. He went on to talk about the possibility of moving the VEP offices to the Visitor Center, and some of the considerations that would go into that. He went on to give an overview of other meetings with local organizations.

PROGRAM REVIEW.

Lund went through some of the data for September's marketing data. Jurgens wanted to know why the session duration on the website had dropped so significantly. Lund was not sure, but would look into it. He continued by going over the PR performance data briefly and statistics specific to the Tommy Caldwell video. He gave information on the efforts of the Stakeholder Services team and RFPs data. Benes gave updates on the lodging tax income in July and why it was likely so different from the projection made the previous year. Gibson wanted to clarify that we hadn't directed all of our marketing to the off season, but had directed a higher percentage of the overall marketing budget to the off season. Benes agreed that the summer marketing was not reduced, but the overall marketing budget was increased with the added room in the budget attributed to the off and shoulder seasons. He went through some expenses he wanted the board to be aware of and the balance sheet before moving on to results of an updated futures study.

Jurgens explained that he wanted to make sure that the board was aware of how long the terms were and when their terms were ending. Since it is getting towards the end of the year, he wanted to give everyone the chance to consider if they would like to reapply for another term, or if the board needs to start recruiting applicants. Murphy and Jirsa's terms were set to end this year. Jurgens was not sure if we had received a copy of the IGA for this year. Bryson explained that we never received a countersigned copy of the current IGA, even though she had asked for it. Jirsa offered to check into that. Jurgens was concerned what would happen with Jirsa's seat on the board with the election happening next year.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT.

Lund went over the purpose of the Community Advisory Board and who had agreed to be members, and then asked for two board members to be assigned for the quarterly meetings. Jurgens wondered if it might be better to have two rotating board members for each quarter. The other board members were all in agreement that having two rotating board members attending the meetings was a great idea. Jurgens and Humiston agreed to attend the first meeting on the 16th.

Lund explained that after recalculating the group marketing budget that an additional \$9,000 was needed to finish out the last three shows scheduled for year. Gibson and Jurgens wanted to know what the three shows were and how much was budgeted to each. Lund listed the shows, number of days, and amount already spent on each. Jurgens was concerned that the email responses Lund included in the packet were not what he expected. Lund explained that it can typically take two to three years to get a group marketing program going and realize the benefit. Jurgens shared that he thought that the selection process for what shows to attend should have been more selective, but since a commitment for the remaining shows were already made that it was in our best interest to not back out. Lund explained that we needed to decide if we are going to have a group marketing program or not. Gibson disagreed and stated that it was really a question of if we are going to have a group marketing program within budget. She went on to explain that her reservation is with the lack of

data to prove the return on what has already been spent versus the return. Jirsa shared that he didn't see an issue with the increase in relation to the total budget. Gibson disagreed, but agreed that since the commitments were made that the expectation would be that it would not happen again next year and consistent data would be provided. Jirsa moved to approve an increase to the group marketing budget by \$9,000 to \$88,000 total for the 2019 year for the funds to be shifted from the advertising budget to the group marketing budget, Humiston seconded. With no further comment, the motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA.

Jirsa moved to approve the minutes from the September 3, 2019 Regular Meeting, Humiston seconded. With no further comment, the motion passed unanimously.

BOARD COMMENTS.

Murphy shared that during a trip to Branson MO he had learned that they are now busier during the holiday season than during the summer. He was wondering if there was anything that could be done to further help promote the holiday season in Estes as well. Gibson shared that something similar came up during the first marketing committee meeting in June and how to make the holidays the focus. She was not sure where that had gone. Lund explained that Harms was working on that, and that he also knew the town was looking into some sort of light show. Jirsa did not think that was going anywhere. Murphy shared that it just seemed like there was a lot more that could be done. Benes shared that Visit Estes Park can absolutely help sponsor businesses that want to work together to put on holiday themed events like a light show or something along those lines, but VEP cannot run them ourselves.

ADJOURN.

Jurgens adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:00 pm.



Wendi Bryson, Recording Secretary



Sean Jurgens, Chair

DATE: 11/5/19

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