



**Humboldt County Visitors Bureau  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MINUTES**

**Thursday, October 6th, 2022**

*Present:* Libby Maynard, Jeff Durham, Ara Pachmayer, Justin Legge, Chris Ambrosini, Lowell Daniels, Jenny Early, Ken Hamik, Shannon Hughes, Sam Wedll, Julie Benbow, *ED:* Jason Baxter, *Marketing Consultant,* Dianna Rios, *County Liaison*  
*Absent:* Paul Beatie, Aaron Ostrom, Supervisor Michelle Bushnell,

- I. Libby called the meeting to order at 11:35 am.  
Julie introduced guest, Carlton Nielsen, publisher of *101 Things To Do* franchise.
  - o Directors checked in.
  
- II. Public Comment  
There were no public comments.
  
- III. Approval of Minutes of September 1<sup>st</sup> meeting
  - o Action Item  
Ken made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted.  
Justin seconded the motion.  
One correction: Top Page 7, Correct to: Letter dated December 6<sup>th</sup> 2019, from the Garberville Chamber read to the BOS at their meeting. (Jenny)
    - o The motion to approve the minutes as corrected was passed unanimously.

IV. Board Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Combined Executive & Marketing Committee: discussed items on this agenda.

Finance

Julie September financials not sent to the Board (due to meeting date). Will be sent after the meeting. Financials adjusted to reflect newly adopted 22/23 budget.

Blue Lake Rancheria Feasibility Study is almost completed, will receive fee for that project, around \$8K.

Approached by Leslie Castellano, ink People ED, to consider having the Brenda Tuxford Gallery in part of the 422 space. Get some rental income but important to be in partnership with the arts.

Both Libby and can Ken support this idea which will be pursued. Maybe have something in 422 for the holidays.

The financials will be approved at next meeting.

## Advocacy / Funding

A Bureau funding request was approved by the Fortuna Lodging Alliance for \$30K for two projects: develop a display at 422 featuring Fortuna, and create video marketing. Waiting for check.

- HCVB has not as yet chosen a HCVB Advocate.
- Will be working with Chuck at HLA on developing text regarding Collaborative relationship for the BOS report.

Julie: Need to rally as much support as possible for the presentation to the BOS on October 25th. Need people to speak in support of the Bureau and its work. Important that have a strong representation to support Bureau. Board will receive a copy of the annual report and some bullet talking points.

## Marketing

Julie reported on the Visit California Rural Counties committee meeting. Did presentation on behalf of North Coast Tourism Council. Many rural counties are experiencing similar challenges to Humboldt, with economic challenges (inflation) and price of gas, the dependence on drive tourism may see a decline. Now is the time to increase marketing to keep Humboldt front of mind as a destination of choice.

Jason: Digital Analytics. September 1<sup>st</sup> thru 30<sup>th</sup>, Facebook 49,000+ page reach. Instagram reach was up 83%, over 21K eyes. Most popular posts were Tavern 1888 and the Skywalk – so still marketing Eureka. Lots of shares. Different posts on Facebook and Instagram, catering to different markets. (full Report at the end of the minutes)

In response to Chris' comments regarding the Bureau's social marketing of Ferndale, Libby reminded the Board that the 3-month contract between the Bureau and Ferndale Chamber trial run, looking at ways to help the various communities improve marketing themselves. Reporting on it specifically to track how it has benefited them. Showing a service that we can offer to other communities, for a fee, to support them. Marketing the whole county is very important, the redwoods are the biggest draw.

Julie: October newsletter went to 32K subscribers. 35.8% open rate – which is amazing. Five articles. Clarke Museum Halloween event, Mattole Campground, Hikes with BFF (furry friend), Blue Ox Millworks, and The Bite was Tavern 1888.

Ken reported that there will be a marketing committee meeting to identify and discuss county stakeholders for Map & Guide input, and to develop a strategic approach. He invited Carlton to share his opinion and expertise about marketing Humboldt challenges and opportunities. Carlton told the Board that one future challenge to rural drive destinations will be adapting to the legislation regarding electric vehicles, need infrastructure (charging stations) to support these vehicles. Tremendous opportunities in cannabis tourism, Mendocino is already really marketing itself as a destination.

## County Report

Dianna updated the Board on the planned presentation to the BOS on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>. County staff are available to answer any questions and provide support. CEDS community meetings have taken place in Garberville, Eureka, Trinidad, McKinleyville. There will be a meeting for industry leaders on October 27<sup>th</sup>. In Arcata.

## Other Business

With Jeff Durham's resignation, the Board needs to elect a new Vice President. Julie invited members to self-nominate. Goal is to have it resolved for the November meeting. Jenny proposed Ken Hamik.

In answer to Lowell's inquiry as to the reasons for Jeff's resignation, Julie responded that his business ventures in Napa were very time consuming and he felt he could not be effective with his attention elsewhere.

Libby responded to Dianna's question as to term lengths: the new vice president will serve for one year, completing Jeff's two-year term.

## Nominations to the Board.

Julie proposed that the Board consider adding two new members to bring their number to thirteen directors. Need to have an Ad Hoc Nominating Committee to review nominations, interview them and invite them to attend the November Board meeting if they are interested. – Committee should be two board members and Libby as president.

- Ken nominated Lisa Sundberg, native Yurok and member of the Trinidad Rancheria. Internationally known in tribal affairs and local businesses.
  - Julie: Visit California just announced a new initiative called Visit Native California to promote tribal culture and history and help develop indigenous tourism. Yurok now operate the Stone Lagoon visitor center and recently purchased the Bigfoot golf course and restaurant complex in Willow Creek. And the Wiyot recently opened a welcome center on Second Street in old town near 422. Great opportunity for the Bureau to work with and support and tribal endeavors.
  - Sam commented that there is a growing market for travelers who desire more education/culture-based activities. Blue Lake Rancheria just starting discussions to see what they can do in relations to the programs they already have. Great to collaborate with other area tribes to see what can be developed. Known Lisa for many years, great nomination.
  - Sam and Ken agreed to serve on the nominating committee with Libby.
- Julie nominated Nick Bown-Crawford, the Executive Director of Humboldt Made. Wealth of professional experience in the hospitality industry and tourism. Be a good addition to the Board.
- Libby invited board members to nominate others.

Staff Updates:

Kyle has graduated Cal Poly. The Bureau is not in a financial position to offer him a full-time position, but he will be working a few hours each week as Kristin will be out for a few weeks after surgery.

With Leslie Castellano, Cassandra Hesseltine and Sheriff Honsal, Julie will be attending the second meeting to discuss with the county the disbursement of the Measure J funds. Proposing that Arts & Culture, the Bureau and the Film Commission split the first monies (estimated \$400k in 2023) as it will have the most positive impact for these organizations. Not sure who will make the final decision.

Sabbatical Semester: Ara is proposing forming a professional industry advisory council for our (Cal Poly) major Recreation Administration Outdoor recreation, Tourism and other recreation areas of study made up of local and statewide industry leaders.

Shannon reported that Willow Creek Chamber is putting on some exciting community events. There will be a Bigfoot Daze fundraiser on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the Golf Course. Looking for auction prizes. Bigfoot merchandize now for sale on the website.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.