



Humboldt County Visitors Bureau

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

January 22, 2020 • 12:00 to 2:00 pm

Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center, Eureka

MINUTES

Present: Chris Ambrosini, Barbara Groom, Laura Lasseter, Meredith Maier, Libby Maynard, Pete Oringer, Aaron Ostrom, John Porter, Marc Rowley (Chair).

Staff: Jules Benbow, Genie Brady, April Hagans.

Absent: Paul Beatie, Lowell Daniels, Cathy Kunkler, Justin Legge. Scott Adair (Director, County EconDev). Supervisor Rex Bohn.

The meeting was called to order by Marc Rowley at 12:02 pm.

The Minutes of the November 22, 2019 meeting were reviewed.

Laura made a motion to amend the *Other Business* to include the following statements, "Laura questioned the Interim Executive Director on how to respond to partners on how the Bureau is supporting Southern Humboldt. Jules responded to look at the Wall Street Journal & New York Times. Meredith interjected that the Bureau should be sharing credit where appropriate." Meredith seconded the motion. (The motion was approved, Marc voted no).

Pete motioned to approve the minutes with amendments. Meredith seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Upcoming Board Meeting Schedule:

It was agreed that the meetings should take place county-wide on the fourth Wednesday bi-monthly. The next meetings will be March 25th in Willow Creek, May 27th, Southern Humboldt – Benbow Inn, & July 22nd, TBD.

Financial Report:

Pete stated that the Bureau had about \$397k, plus \$116k in the reserves, & that the burn rate is about \$25-30k a month. Jules questioned this and will get a specific amount.

- Laura requested that the *County Funding Revenue* be relabeled "unincorporated".
- Noting the annual amount spent on website management, Chris stated that he thought the Bureau was looking for another website. Jules answered that the Bureau has two RPS in hand and another coming.
- The Arcata Lodging Alliance unfulfilled agreement to pay the Bureau \$75k was discussed. Jules will meet with Shailesh Patel & the new member from Hotel Arcata, Sherrie.

Regarding overall budget, Pete reported that while the digital (Google Ad words) marketing budget had been cut impacting website traffic, there are funds to take the Bureau through fiscal year-end, June 30th. Marc agreed that the Bureau's marketing endeavors have been impacted because of present circumstances, but that it needs to market now more than ever. Laura asked if the Board would get to meet Jason Baxter, the Marketing consultant. Jules suggested that he was paid on an hourly basis it would be more fiscally responsible to have the Marketing Committee meet and report back to the Board.

Executive Director Report: Jules reviewed her meeting with Scott Adair & discussed the intention of meeting with all Gateway Funding recipients to assess their marketing needs. She & Marc would be attending Sacramento Senator McGuire's Rural Tourism Economic Impact meeting in Sacramento, followed by the North Coast Tourism Council (NCTC) quarterly Directors meeting. John inquired as to the sources of NCTC's funding, Jules responded that each of the four counties gave \$11,000 annually, matched by Visit California. Meredith mentioned that she had looked back at past minutes & didn't recall seeing any mention of NCTC in her 5 years of Board service. John stated that Benbow Inn is an Executive Member of the NCTC & didn't know what the money went to.

- Laura commented on the first section of the ED Report regarding the report made to the County Board of Supervisors in December and her concerns. The last line, "... *however during the public comment period, Bureau Board Member Laura Lassetter, representing some SoHum business/community members made disparaging comments about the Bureau.*" Laura commented that the afore-mentioned community members voiced valid concerns in a professional manner by stating facts regarding the Bureau's under-representation of Southern Humboldt in the Map & Guide & was curious why that was referenced to as "disparaging"? Jules replied that she, "*had thought long & hard about how to phrase that portion & that none of the commentary was positive or in support of the Bureau*". John voiced regarding the lack of marketing support the Bureau gives Southern Humboldt. Marc, stating that the meeting was getting off topic, proposed scheduling a special meeting with this as an agenda item, noting that if this discussion needed to stop or he would adjourn the meeting. The Special Board Meeting was scheduled for February 5th at 10am at Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center to discuss So Hum's grievances, along with any additional topics of concern, to be emailed to Genie before the meeting.

Marketing Committee Report:

Aaron stated that Jules & Jason have been reading past Marketing Committee Minutes, Board of Supervisor Report Materials, & marketing studies of demographics by experience, as well as local event trends. He noted that the Bureau has partnered with the Executive Directors of Mendocino (Travis Scott) & Redding/Shasta County (Laurie Baker). Subaru, Kleen Kanteen, & REI were contacted to explore possible sponsorship opportunity with the Bureau. Aaron reviewed the multiple upcoming meetings that would be taking place with Scott, Lucas Thorton, HSU, Blue Lake Rancheria, & an upcoming local road show that is in the works. He ended his report by commenting that there was still lots of research to do.

Other Business: Jules brought Bigfoot notes for the Board as a holiday gift.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:07pm.

Prepared by Genie Brady.