



**Humboldt County Visitors Bureau  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, February 3, 2022 • 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Via Zoom

Present: Libby Maynard, *President*; Jeff Durham, *Vice President*; Ara Pachmayer, *Secretary*; Treasurer; Paul Beatie, Lowell Daniels, Jenny Early, Ken Hamik, Shannon Hughes, Justin Legge, Julie Benbow, *Staff*: Supervisor Michelle Bushnell,  
Absent: Aaron Ostrom, Pete Oringer, Chris Ambrosini, Marc Rowley, *Ex officio*, Scott Adair, *County*

I: Libby called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.  
Board members checked in

II. Approval of Minutes of January 13 meeting:  
Jeff made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted.  
Ken seconded.  
There were no additions, corrections, or comments.  
The motion to approve the minutes as submitted was passed unanimously.

III. Board Committee Reports

- Executive Committee:

Libby reported that the committee met on January 18<sup>th</sup> and discussed general Bureau business and items covered on this agenda. Committee discussed the letter to be sent to the BOS in support of the cannabis farmers request for suspension of taxes. The letter was approved by the Committee then sent to each Board member to vote Yay or Nay to submit to the BOS. All Directors voted and the motion to send the letter was approved 10 votes to 2. The letter was sent on January 31.

- Financial Report:

Julie: January Financial statement not received however current cash situation as follows: \$200K + in bank accounts and \$116K in reserves. Received an outstanding invoice of \$2K for attendance at a 2019 travel tradeshow (April attended). All other payables regular operations.

- Advocacy / Funding

Jeff: Working on how to move forward. Discussions on determining an equation as a base for funding expectations from each municipality, and exploring public and private funding sources.

Julie: Putting together a soft estimated budget for building out 422 which will give us a goal to raise money. Meeting with Jason to develop key points for presentations to HLA, muni's etc. Short presentations will be specific to each area, value of the Bureau, area visitor assets, data

about revenue tourism impact data and projections, and ROI. Researching the number of hotel rooms in areas to establish the funding equation. Securing funding is the priority as we will be paying rent starting mid-April (\$4K month).

- Marketing:

Ken: Had a spontaneous meeting of people representing various aspects of the cannabis industry at 422, including Nigel from California Adventure District and 12 others. Had really good and meaningful discussions about sustainable cannabis tourism, and education. Some very thoughtful work being done. Humboldt unique as an outdoor growing culture which means farmers pay special attention to soil, water, impact on the land etc. All this is now called regenerative agriculture and CalPoly Humboldt will be an important partner. On call Jeff and Ara, and Genesea from the Arcata Chamber, who has a degree in sustainable tourism. Also Matt Kurth (Cannabis Tours), Kerry Hurley who is producing an Emerald Triangle map, and Realina who specializes in sustainable cannabis packaging and marketing. Good thoughtful conversations and exchange of ideas.

Julie: Cannabis tourism is still in its nascent stage, however it is one of the assets Humboldt can offer visitors. Will have conversations with Visit California and other counties at the upcoming conference about who already has established cannabis marketing to visitors.

Jeff: Gave insights into what work we will be doing at the March retreat – establishing our (the Bureau's) focus, what we are doing and how it will be accomplished. The retreat will be very valuable.

IV: County Update

Julie: As Scott unable to attend, met with him and discussed the following:

1: He proposed that the Board starts engaging with individual BOS for ARPA funding, which they have designated three areas of focus, housing, childcare and broadband. However, tourism is the only industry that brings a significant of money into the county and into the general fund. Other county DMO's in California have already received significant amounts of ARPA funding to ensure tourism is supported post-pandemic. If invest in tourism now, more visitors will come resulting in more revenue. That can be invested in community projects supporting a healthy county. Have one-on-one meetings with Supervisors with specific talking points.

2: He proposed we schedule a meeting with Elishia Hayes (Scott's boss). County staff write reports and make recommendations to the BOS.

3: Measure S discussed at BOS meeting regarding request to suspend taxes was tabled. Michelle said special meeting will be held to finalize decisions.

4: Will be redoing the agreement between the Gateways and the Bureau.

V: Other Business

All

- Board Retreat: As some Board members cannot make February dates, it will be moved to March 22. Hope all can attend as this is an important time for Bureau. Move forward with a strong intent and direction.
- Short ED report:

## Meetings:

- Betsy Totten – Public Affairs Officer for Six Rivers National Forest – very enthusiastic about 422. Wants to collaborate on informational displays – also give presentations – including wildfires.
- Marnon of Redwood State parks re: new interactive app.
- Met with Shannon and Linsey Jones to discuss Willow Creek Chamber and Cannabis.
- Kerry Hurley to discuss Emerald Triangle Map.
- Nigel Skeet to discuss California Adventure District and 422.
- Conversation with Mark Thurmond, lives in Kneeland and community got together as Canadian purchased property with the goal of developing a large commercial grow. Residents concerned so are putting together a Cannabis Reform Initiative for ballot in November – mainly concerned about compliance and sustainability.

Working with AARP for Wish of a Lifetime recipient Glenda – in a wheelchair, end of March / April. Justin will be her guide for two days. Bureau will be doing some marketing around this as we have not done anything focusing on experiences for differently abled visitors. Also pitched an article to AARP for their magazine, “Everybody’s Redwoods” about access to forest experiences for people with disabilities. Will have photographer to do shots and video. Justin: Great opportunity as many with mobility issues don’t even consider coming to the redwoods. Are wheelchair accessible trail and can have a really great experience. Has done guided tours with visitors with ALS, love being able to work with them and help them have a wonderful time.

Attended a very informative branding webinar. Will share the link closer to the retreat.

Number of visitors to website continue to be strong, Facebook and Instagram continue to grow followers.

- Community Updates:

Paul: Update on the “Live From the Old Steeple” series of 12 concerts taped with KEET TV. Report that been picked up by other PBS stations and has been airing across the nation. Visit Ferndale has a 30-second spot, as has Visit Redwoods as sponsors/underwriters, embedded in the program so seem twice during each airing. 3,000 airings, top markets are Long Island, NY, Los Angeles (2 PBS affiliates), Philadelphia, San Francisco, Tampa, Minneapolis, Denver, then multiple smaller markets. Really hopeful for a second season, bigger names.

Julie: Best return on marketing dollars, great that Bureau supported music and promotes culture in the county.

Shannon: Julie connected with writer from Thrillist, doing a feature about Bigfoot and Willow Creek and really promoted WC as a great vacation destination.

Julie: Bureau does a lot of connecting writers and travel trade professionals with connectivity out of the county Bureau really good at. Also marketing through North Coast Tourism Council website (northofordinaryca.com) brings in a lot of leads to Humboldt.

Ken: With new CalPoly Humboldt expecting to have 12,000 students in future, will bring in new people to the community, also their families. Be thinking about these new demographics and how to market to them.

Jeff: Email thread with Gregg Foster and ACV – think there are some who, due to past history, are not as supportive of HCVB. Need to have consistent positive messaging to entities in the County. HLA \$550,00 marketing plan. Misfit agency doing the marketing, ACV submitted proposal to HLA for 3-year marketing plan. Hopeful that things are moving forward for county. Will share Misfit's presentation.

Julie: In response to Ken noting that Gregg is happy to share the air data, J commented that data does not include demographic info or give meaningful insight into visitor intent. Interesting to have annual data to see if numbers are seasonal, trends etc. Geo tracking can give this info. Pre-pandemic, Ara was working with students to do visitors surveys at ACV.

Rural Outdoor Investment Act, \$50M annual budget going through Senate.

[www.bennet.senate.gov > public > cacheRural Outdoor Investment Act \(ROI\)](http://www.bennet.senate.gov/public/cacheRural%20Outdoor%20Investment%20Act%20(ROI))

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm

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