



**Humboldt County Visitors Bureau
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Present: Ken Hamik, Ara Pachmayer; Molly Blakemore, Lowell Daniels, Jenny Early, Shannon Hughes, Justin Legge, Carlton Nielsen, Lisa Sundberg, Sam Wedll, Julie Benbow, *ED*, Dianna Rios, *County Liaison*
Absent: Justin Legge, Jason Baxter, *Marketing Consultant*, Supervisor Michelle Bushnell

Note: A full, unedited recording of all Board Meetings available on request.

- I. The meeting was called to order at 11:41 am.
Role call was taken. Directors checked in.
Guest: Yvonne Henricks, ED of the SoHum Chamber & Visitor Center
- II. Public Comment: There were no public comments.
- III. Approval of Minutes of January 18 meeting:
Carlton made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted.
Ara seconded the motion.
The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.

IV. Board Committee Reports

- Executive Committee

The Exec Comm did not meet in February.

- Financial Report

In Justin's absence, Julie reported making some media investments which are projected to have a significant ROI. Ink People are paying \$800 monthly rent for the Brenda Tuxford Gallery space at 422. By the end of fiscal year 23/24, June 30th, funds will be low. As yet, future County funding is uncertain.

- Advocacy & Funding

Ken: Having discussions with Carlton to strategize the next steps for meeting with the Supervisors to review annual report. Great report, good numbers and performance, and great ROI for the investment. Want Directors to meet individually with Supervisors

Carlton: Need to follow up with them to confirm they have read the report, answer any questions, see what they would like to see in our MOU. This will give us a clear understanding of their expectations of the Bureau. Staff will reach out to Directors to see who has a good rapport with a supervisor and would be willing to meet with them.

Dianna offered to answer any questions. She clarified that the Bureau and County do not have an MOU, it is a Contract and expectations are listed therein.

Julie apologized for the mis-spelling of Carlton's surname in the Annual Report. When and other comments or corrections are completed, they will be printed and delivered to the Supervisors.

- Marketing

In Jason's absence, Julie gave the 28-day data analytics report.

Social Media: In this period, had over 128,000 opens, average daily reach for Facebook and Instagram was 10K. Traditionally, our numbers of followers have not increased during the winter months, however numbers have been increasing month over month since September. Facebook followers to 60K for and Instagram 18K.

- Facebook – Redding, Los Angeles, Portland, San Francisco, Citrus Heights, Long Beach & Stockton.
- Instagram – Los Angeles, Sacramento & San Jose. Good locations as all are either drive or fly distances from Humboldt.
- Website: www.visitredwoods.com: 130K unique visitors in last month: Top five pages – Redwood National, Avenue of the Giants, Events, lodging and Fern Canyon.
- Currently working on editing page content and images.

Bay Area Travel & Adventure Show: Humboldt partnered with North Coast Tourism Council for a prime space at the convention center. Area included Del Norte, Mendocino, Lake Counties, The Cannabis Trail and the Skunk Train, each with their own areas. Very successful and worthwhile – collected over 1,000 new email addresses. SHBVB had a separate display in another area.

Map & Guide. Ad sales are underway, copy & images being edited and finalized.

Cannabis Trail: Campaign media blitz planned for May. Brochures are being printed and will be distributed by Certified.

Media Hosting April/May: Two couples – national magazine publisher/journalist from Germany, and Influencers (WeRunTheAtlas - 7M views on YouTube, 700K+ followers).

Dean Runyan will be posting their California Travel Impact annual report in the near future. Will share the Humboldt numbers with the Board and stakeholders.

eNewsletter:

- *February: Spring Transformations* - (29,669 subscribers): Open rate – 40.2%, 15,550: Top Locations by Opens: USA, Sweden, Canada, UK, UKRAINE!
- *March: March-ing into Spring* (29,639 recipients): Open rate – 34.9%, 16,2,682; 351 click throughs. Top Locations by Opens: USA, Sweden, Canada, UK, Germany

V. County Update

- Dianna noted that the Board and County had requested to review the Cannabis Trail contract, and the Map & Guide prior to printing the County will review and return the draft M&G according to HCVB timeline. County has a list of over 6K county businesses etc. Happy to share information for the M&G ad sales.
- All action items discussed at meetings need to be recorded in the minutes.
- Tasks as HCVB liaison: Scheduling Gateway meetings for the Ad Hoc Tourism Committee. Dianna is compiling a list of questions and assured the Board that, in

response to Julie's request to receive the questions for review prior to meetings, the questions would be sent, to ensure full transparency.

- New Contract: If the Supervisors decide to renew the HCVB contract, what would a new contract contain. Same or different? Any specific requests should be communicated to Dianna.
- Dianna proposed that a Board Member attend the regular meetings with Dianna and HCVB Executive Director.
- In response to Julie's request for data regarding the airport passenger traffic by flight/destination, Dianna can share gross data but destination numbers not available. Previously, RRDEC contracted and paid for regular detailed data reports, but when SOAR took over, they chose to discontinue the service. There will be a cost (\$2K+) to get a report of destination traffic, which HCVB considers important data to manage ROI. Ken commented that the more data available, the better to analyze marketing reach. Destination data is crucial for comparison to HCVB social media, website, and newsletter reach etc.
- Julie noted that the more visitor data available that can be shared with county stakeholders and partners, the better focused marketing efforts can be.

VI: Other Business

Ken announced that, in partnership with OSU, the Indigenous Habitat Institute was awarded a \$10M grant to continue developing hempcrete as a eco-friendly building material. Soon will build first ADU in Eureka and Humboldt can be a leader in this endeavor.

Lisa reported that she has been elected to serve on the US Hemp Building Board of Directors. She noted a lack of coordination within the county between stakeholder, marketing organizations and tribes, when could all be working together to promote the Humboldt brand.

Shannon announced that Bigfoot Daze will be back on July 13th bigger and better with the return of the logging competition, a car show, live music, opportunities for kids and much more.

Ken reported that our colleague, Nigel Skeet, recently established the Shasta County Chamber of Commerce in Redding and wants to develop agricultural tourism (Insterstate 5). He asked if Humboldt County has an ordinance or permitting process for licensing farms for visitors – similar to the cannabis farms (a permit for ADA, etc.). Dianna thought that there are permits available, however is unsure which department handles them. Will research and get back with information. Ken also mentioned being approached by a group of artists to develop a variety Humboldt Road Show of local talent to promote the creativity of Humboldt.

Next Meeting: May 16, 2024

The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.