

Albany County Tourism Board
210 E. Custer Street, Laramie WY 82070
Monday, November 16th, 2020
4:00 - 6:00 PM

Present: Scott Larson, Kaley Holyfield, Brad Jackson, Kathleen Bertoncelj, Rebecca Walsh, Sara Haugen, Pat Gabriel, Page Malmstrom, Lyndee Johnston

Absent: Terri Jones, Tessa Cedillo, David Wright

Guests: Laura Tangeman - Cowboy Turf Wars

1. 4:00 Call Regular Meeting of the Albany County Tourism Board to order by Page Malmstrom
 - a. Confirmation of Quorum
 - b. Introduction of Guests
2. Additions and/or Corrections to Agenda
 - a. None
3. Consent Agenda
 - a. October Minutes
 - b. Profits and Loss Budget vs. Actual - Scott Larson explained that we are in the midst of a bookkeeping transition, so we don't have these documents to look at today. ACTB is transitioning to Capitol Clarity, a local accounting firm. While we don't have these documents today, we should have these before the end of the week and Larson can answer any questions.
 - c. Advertising and Grants Agenda

Motion by Brad Jackson, seconded by Kathleen Bertoncelj that the Consent Agenda be approved and that each specific action on the Consent Agenda be approved as indicated.

4. Old Business
 - a. None
5. Grant and Sponsorship Requests
 - a. Cowboy Turf Wars
 - b. The event is still slated to happen this year, but UW has set many restrictions in place. The team registration is down about 50%. They are currently expecting 100 teams to attend, when usually they have 195 teams in attendance. UW will only allow 8 spectators per team. The limit is 250 people total in the building. The event will run Jan 1 - 3, 2021.
 - c. The group usually asks for \$4,500, but they are requesting \$2,500 this year. This funding helps cover operating costs (ie. field rentals, full time employees, health insurance for the employee, etc.). The group has not had to put much money into marketing and promotion in the past as they historically fill the tournament

completely through word of mouth promotion. ACTB will still get the highest level of sponsorship (i.e. banners, logos on web, etc.). Tangeman stated that they are expecting half occupancy compared to normal years. Pat Gabriel asked about the deadline for registration (usually Nov. 15th). Tangeman explained that they extended the registration deadline until after Thanksgiving and that they may pick up a few more teams in the next few weeks. Page Malmstrom suggested encouraging hoteliers to be flexible on their cancellation policies. Tangeman stepped out of the meeting and the board continued their conversation. Brad Jackson stated that all that the board has done is “pad their savings account” and that we are down 50% and it is not appropriate to fund the Turf Wars grant this year. Jackson further stated that if money is not being used for marketing, then it is not worth investing in. Page Malmstrom asked if the Turf Wars group would consider relocating to another city if the grant is not approved and Jackson answered no.

Brad Jackson motioned to decline the request for the Turf Wars grant this year, Kathleen Bertonecel second the motion. The motion passed unanimously to not fund the Turf Wars grant this year.

6. Financial Reports

- a. Lodging Tax Collections FY 2020-2021. October 2020 came in at \$90,000, compared to last year at \$130,000. ACTB is down 30% YOY for October. However, the numbers came in ahead of what was budgeted because the budget was cut in the spring so drastically. October’s numbers don’t shape the picture for the year as ACTB is still running 6-7% ahead of the budget. Scott Larson stated that all things considered, he feels good about our position when we compare the actuals against the budget.
- b. CARES Act Funds Update - Scott Larson and his team are wrapping up the CARES Act details right now. All of the funds will be allocated or spent by mid to late December. Larson is working on a report for the State Tourism Office. Larson will look at the internal budget after the accounting transition is completed. ACTB has not had to use the internal budget besides for paying salaries, utilities, etc. Therefore, ACTB will have some flexibility for the second half of the year. Scott Larson predicted that they will use a 4-6 week marketing schedule this winter. Rebecca Walsh predicted that this winter will be booming with Colorado ski restrictions being so strict compared to Snowy Range restrictions.

7. New Business

- a. Marketing Report - There is a spike in the data that was caused by a National Park Trips Media email with a fall focus. Another email will be coming out in December to encourage visitors to plan for winter. Social Media numbers are not accurate due to the noise and chatter related to the election season.

8. Review of Staff Activities

- a. October Office Stats

- b. All Staff
 - i. New Website - The entire team is working hard on this project. Phase 2 starts tomorrow with data migration and content migration. The rebrand is aligned with the rest of the community.
 - ii. Work from Home Update - The team is beginning the 4th week of working from home. Scott Larson decided to encourage his team to work from home due to the COVID numbers in the area and the individual situations of his team. Larson stated that he is hoping the mandate and absence of students will lessen the risk of COVID transmission for his team.
- c. Haugen
 - i. Main Street Collaborations - Haugen is helping MainStreet with the Shop Local push and coordinating marketing emails and social campaigns.
 - ii. Shop Local Campaign - See above.
 - iii. Marketing Campaigns - Haugen is doing the behind the scenes work on marketing campaigns.
- d. Johnston
 - i. Brand Style Guide - This guide will be rolled out with the re-brand. ACTB has never had this tool before. Larson stated that it is important as a group launches a brand so the group can guide people on how to use the logo, fonts, etc.
 - ii. Annual Report - ACTB has never prepared a document like this before. The final report will demonstrate the value of ACTB to the community.
 - iii. Visitor Research Survey Postcards - See example in board packet.
 - iv. Design Help - Johnston continues to assist with design projects.
- e. Larson
 - i. Community Partner Calls - These calls are still happening regularly.
 - ii. Laramie Regional Airport Redesign - Larson is still working with the airport team on this project.
 - iii. Destination Next Strategic Plan Survey Completed - Waiting on more responses.
 - iv. Laramie Tourism Coalition (Haub School, City, ACTB).
 - v. Fall Tourism Summit - This is a rather small conference that was supposed to be hosted in Sheridan but was hosted virtually this year. The summit had great sessions and presented good information, according to Larson. One particular session was on the future of DMOs. The trend is to shift from a heads-in-beds strategy to a community development strategy.
 - vi. Community Connections on the Radio - Larson is featured on Hits 106 on the last Wednesday of each month to discuss what tourism looks like in the area, what projects are in the works, etc.
 - vii. Visitor Research Survey - Lyndee Johnston is designing the postcard and creating a 5 min survey. The goal is to distribute the cards to hotel desks, hotel rooms, museums, etc. to get a better sense of the visitor experience. Visitors will be surveyed based on 3 different seasons - summer, fall, winter. Visitors will be offered an opportunity to win a \$50

visa gift card for completing the survey. Larson sent out a backwards facing survey last week to fall and winter visitors.

- viii. New UW Connections/Bridges - Larson is working with Alex Keen and UW institutional marketing to work together on the re-brand.
 - ix. Haub School Spring Projects Mentor - ACTB is serving as a mentor for 3-5 students in the spring semester that are working on creating an ambassador program to help train Albany County front line employees.
 - x. Visit Laramie Foundation Project - The original plan was to offer space on the website for chamber members. Larson learned that ACTB can monetize this space instead and put this money into 501-C3. The funding can be used for community development projects. The funds are not governed the same as lodging taxes. This project will require a 3-5 person committee.
9. Berkely Young from Young Strategies and Destination Next and Amy Larsen from WOT joined the call at 5 pm - Berkeley Young specializes in research and strategy planning for DMOs. Destination Next is designed to help lodging tax boards develop strategy plans for the future. This 3-5 year strategy plan is intended to guide the board's policy and focus moving forward. Destination development is a part of economic development.
10. Public Comments - None.
11. Motion by Brad Jackson, seconded by Page Malmstrom to adjourn the meeting
12. The next ACTB Board Meeting will be at the ACTB Office at 4:00 PM on Monday, December 21, 2020.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kaley Holyfield, Secretary.