

Albany County Tourism Board

210 E. Custer Street, Laramie WY 82070 (Meeting held over Zoom).

Monday, October 19, 2020 - 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Present: Kaley Holyfield, Scott Larson, Page Malmstrom, Kathleen Bertoneclj, Pat Gabriel, Brad Jackson, Lyndee Johnson, Rebecca Walsh, Sara Haugen, Tessa Cedillo, David Wright (joined in after the meeting was called to order)

Absent: Terri Jones

Guests: None

- 1) 4:02 Call Regular Meeting of the Albany County Tourism Board to order by Page Malmstrom
 - a) Confirmation of Quorum - Yes.
 - b) Introduction of Guests, If Any - None
- 2) 2. Additions and/or Corrections to agenda
 - a) None
- 3) Consent Agenda
 - a) September Minutes
 - b) Profits and Loss Budget vs. Actual
 - c) Advertising and Grants

Motion by Brad Jackson, seconded by Kathleen Bertoneclj, that the Consent Agenda be approved and that each specific action on the Consent Agenda be approved as indicated. The motion passed unanimously.

- 4) Old Business
 - a) None
- 5) Grant and Sponsorship Requests
 - a) None
- 6) Financial Reports
 - a) a. Lodging Tax Collections FY 2020 – 2021
 - i) Lodging Tax Collections FY 2020-2021: Larson reported that September was a great month all things considered with collections coming in just shy of \$125,000. Larson explained that there was a strong leisure travel push and businesses benefited from the phased student move in. Additionally, there was business from firefighters and other businesses that are related to wildfire support. Larson asked the group what the business mix looked like in September. Malmstrom answered that there

was a lot of leisure with the core business being firefighters. Larson explained that these results are only a 12% drop year over year, even with the first September we have not had UW Football. Larson explained we are pacing ahead of other lodging tax boards, with Natrona and Laramie county reporting to be down 25% and Sheridan reporting to be down 30%. Only Fremont County is outpacing Albany County. We are now pacing ahead of the budget by 6-7%. David Wright joined the meeting at this point.

- b) b. CARES Act Funds Update, Round 3
 - i) \$230,000 was distributed on August 1st, however not all money that was offered was claimed. Another round of disbursements was distributed around September (about \$57,000.) Once again, the full amount of money was not claimed. Now a third round of \$47,000 is being awarded, totalling \$332,000 that Albany County has access to. This funding has been helpful for Albany County as it was used to bolster summer marketing and amplify and boost fall marketing. Larson explained that now we are planning out how to use this funding for winter. This money has to be fully spent by the end of December.
- 7) New Business
- a) Marketing Report - While discussing web stats, Larson explained that marketing emails were sent on Sept. 3 and Sept. 10. There was no spike because the team raised adword spending and Google campaigns. However, there was a spike on September 8th and 9th during the winter snowstorm. This spike was mostly webcam traffic. There was another massive spike on Sept. 19th. This was the date that the National Park Trips eblast was sent. This eblast delivered over 6,000 unique visitors to ACTB website. The eblast focused on Laramie, fall activities, sightseeing, and road trips. There was a lift towards the end of the month when a fall content piece with Madden (9 socially distant fall activities in Laramie) was published. ACTB used CARES Act to pay for this piece and it was pushed out through different mediums. The bounce rate is in the green, which means that we are getting high quality traffic, not just high quantity traffic. In July, we saw a 50% increase in new users to the website. In Aug., we saw a 100% increase in new users. In Sept., we saw a 220% increase in new visitors. The Denver Getaway Fall Roadtrip piece was published to the blog; this piece was a co-op project with Larson's counterpart in Steamboat. The piece outlined a trip from Denver to Laramie, Laramie to Steamboat, and Steamboat back to Denver. The goal was to expand regional partnerships and reach. Unfortunately, this piece was launched the week the fire started. However, this piece will still be used to boost SEO and long term search traffic.
 - b) Update on Fall, Winter Campaigns and Strategy - Most fall campaigns are wrapping up this week and next. During the first few weeks of Nov., we will go into full winter mode using the normal marketing tools. There will be additional winter marketing funded by the CARES Act. We are expanding into digital radio, bounceback programs, and connected TV (these use device IDs and credit card data). We are continuing to use traditional print marketing. Sara is working on digital billboards in the Denver area. Additionally, we are setting up contracts to showcase that we are spending the money within the guidelines of when the money must be spent. Page asked if we are targeting any specific states that we have not marketed to in the past. Larson answered no, but we are doing a bigger push to Front Range and working on an increased presence in midwest

snowmobiling publications. Larson noted that he has some states in mind that we will increase our marketing efforts to next summer.

- 8) Review of Board/Staff Activities
 - a) September Office Stats - Attached to packet. No notes.
 - b) All Staff
 - i) New Website - They are getting design elements approved and preparing for content migration and data entry.
 - c) Haugen
 - i) Main Street Collaborations - Sara is helping with the Shop Local push in November. Sara worked with Laramie Main Street to create a logo and a hashtag.
 - ii) Shop Local Campaigns - See above.
 - iii) Fall Video Shoots - The team decided not to do summer shoot and to focus on a fall shoot instead. They were able to use CARES Act funding to create video and photo content that can be leveraged in the future.
 - d) Johnston
 - i) Design Help - No notes.
 - ii) Front Desk - No notes.
 - e) Larson
 - i) Community Partners Calls - Larson continues to attend weekly community partner calls with community leaders. Most of the topics are related to COVID and the latest response to COVID.
 - ii) Laramie Regional Airport Redesign - Larson explained that originally he was attending these meetings to provide input and sourcing images, but recently he has been able to chime in more and steer the team in the direction of the 4 pillars that will be part of the rebrand.
 - iii) Poke Pride Flags - Larson worked with UW and the City of Laramie to get the flags up. They were put up later this year but just in time for the kickoff this weekend.
 - iv) Haub School + City + ACTB - Larson is working with these organizations on the Thrive plan. Larson explained that they are working on how to have sustainable growth in regards to outdoor recreation and are focusing on topics such as trail management and LNT ethics.
 - v) Destination Next Strategic Plan Prep Work - Larson invited board members to attend this session on November 19th if they can and explained that community leaders are encouraged to give input/feedback to help guide the session.
 - vi) Visitor Research Study - The goal of this is to capture data from different seasons, interest groups, and types of travelers. Larson explained that as tax revenue increases, we should be simultaneously improving the visitor experience.
- 9) New Website Update and Presentation of Comp Layouts - Larson shared his screen and presented 4-5 pages of the website. Scott presented the home page, explained the color scheme, use of widgets, use of fonts, use of icons. David noted that it is a great design, looks user friendly, and suggested changing the images on the home page with the seasons. Brad asked if we should change the background based on the season we are in or the season we are promoting. Scott responded that the images will be changed based on the season we are promoting. Larson moved on to present the "Places to Stay" page, the listings page, and the "Things to Do" page.

10) Public Comments - None.

Motion by David, seconded by Kathleen to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned 5:16.

11) The next ACTB Board meeting will be at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, November 16, 2020.
Location TBD.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kaley Holyfield, Secretary.