

Albany County Tourism Board

800 S 3rd Street

Laramie WY 82070

Monday, March 18th, 2024

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Present: Scott Larson, Sara Haugen, Lyndee Gurnham, Kera Malmborg, Emma Dixon, Matt Blakeman, David Wright (virtual), Becky Maddox, Sara Ghezzi, Derek Jones, Sarah Brown Mathews, David Lewis, Pat Gabriel

Absent: Kaley Holyfield, Terri Jones

Guest: Laura Tangeman (Cowboy Turf Wars), Kelly Neville (Taste of Laradise)

1. 4:00 Call Regular Meeting of the Albany County Tourism Board to order
 - a. Confirmation of Quorum – Yes.
 - b. Introduction of Guests – Laura Tangeman with Cowboy Turf Wars, Kelly Neville with Taste of Laradise
2. Additions and/or Corrections to agenda
 - a. None.
3. Consent Agenda
 - a. February Minutes
 - b. Financial Reports – linked in board packet

Motion by Sarah Brown Mathews, seconded by Becky Maddox that the Consent Agenda be approved and that each specific action on the Consent Agenda be approved as indicated. Motion passes.

4. Old Business
 - a. Cowboy Turf Wars – Mrs. Tangeman reported that this year's event was another successful one with 184 teams from across the region. All teams stayed in Laramie except for about 30, which totaled about 2000 room nights. The Laramie Chamber Business Alliance estimated the economic impact from this year's event at 1.2 or 1.3 million dollars. Sarah Brown Mathews and David Wright both commended Mrs. Tangeman on tracking hotel rooms at team check in and encouraged them to continue this in the future.
5. Grant and Sponsorship Requests
 - a. Taste of Laradise – Documents linked in board packet. Mrs. Neville presented some backstory of the event to the board and their vision for the future growth of the event. Mrs. Neville explained the way the event has worked in the past and the way that it will work this year. The event anticipates a turnout this year that is mostly local and some who will drive to the event but their vision is large as they hope to make it a signature summer event in the future. The grant funding requested was largely one time expenses with some of the remaining amounts for marketing including radio, social media, and other marketing activities.

Motion by Derek Jones, seconded by Sara Ghezzi, that the Taste of Laradise grant request be approved for \$2500 to cover the marketing expenses listed in the budget worksheet and the one time expense of logo design.

6. Financial Updates
 - a. Lodging Tax Collections FY '24 – Mr. Larson reported that February lodging tax was down but occupancy and ADR were both up. Mr. Larson reported that there may still be some delays in reporting as January saw an increase in lodging tax but a decrease in occupancy and ADR. Mr. Larson also reported that we are wrapping up a winter season this month that has not been the

strongest and this has been reflected in visitation, occupancy rates, and engagement with marketing campaigns. Mr. Larson reported that ACTB will likely finish the fiscal year in the green and will have a better sense of visitor spending for 2023 when the state releases the Dean Runyan economic impact report in the spring.

- b. Public Officer Training – Mr. Larson asked the board to complete this before June 30th and shared updated options available for in-person courses in Laramie and Cheyenne in addition to the online ones.

7. New Business

a. Destination Development Projects

- i. Centennial Visitor Center – Mr. Larson shared that the Visitor Center continues to be a success for all parties involved and that it will continue to operate this summer. Mr. Larson shared 3 major updates regarding the Visitor Center. Mr. Larson informed the board that there will be vault toilet murals installed this spring related to Cowboy Character, similar to the ones installed at Pole Mountain. Mr. Larson shared that ACTB will be operating a gift shop at the Centennial Visitor Center this summer and will be meeting this week to discuss plans in greater detail. Mr. Larson also shared that he continues to work on hiring summer staff and hiring an UW ORTM intern for the summer season.
- ii. Wayfinding Match Program – Mr. Larson shared that he spoke to the City of Laramie this week to get an update on this project. The City has prioritized the Interstate 80 interchanges for the first set of signs, applied for the necessary WYDOT permits for the work to be done, and at this time the plan is to install those 6 signs or roughly 2 per interchange.
- iii. Laramie Jubilee Days – Mr. Larson shared that he has met with Shawn Faxon, the Vice Chair, to continue to pursue expanded seating capacity for the event this summer. Mr. Larson and Mr. Faxon met with WYDOT to discuss traffic control plans for increased capacity. Mr. Larson shared that Mr. Faxon had obtained a quote for traffic control for approximately \$4000 and quotes for temporary bleachers for approximately \$6300 per 300 person stand. Mr. Larson expressed optimism that the Jubilee Days Board would meet this week and be supportive of moving forward with the additions for this year's event and should know more before the next ACTB board meeting.

8. Review of Staff Activities

- a. Director's Report – The new format for the Director's report is linked in the board packet including staff updates, office stats, and gift shop stats.
 - i. Data Reports – March insights linked in board packet

9. Public Comments – None.

10. Motion...to adjourn the meeting

Motion by Derek Jones, seconded by Becky Maddox, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carries.

11. *The next ACTB Board meeting will be at 4:00 p.m. on **Monday, April 15th, 2024.***