

Albany County Tourism Board
800 S 3rd Street, Laramie, WY 82070
Monday March 21st, 2022
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Present: Scott Larson, Sarah Haugen, Kevin Welch, Lyndee Gurnham, Sarah Reese, Kaley Holyfield, Spencer Swift, Becky Maddox, Sarah Brown Mathews, Emma Dixon, Derek Jones, Pat Gabriel

Absent: Heber Richardson, David Wright, Willow Hinkley

Guests: Laura Tangeman, Teal Cufaud, Eric Miller

1. 4:01 Call regular meeting of the Albany County Tourism Board to order
 - a. Confirmation of quorum.
 - b. Introduction of guests - Laura Tangeman (Laramie Soccer Club), Teal Cufaud (Wyoming Game Wardens Association), Eric Miller (Wend)
2. Additions and/or corrections to agenda
 - a. None.
3. Consent agenda
 - a. February minutes - Sarah Brown Mathews asked that we correct the spelling "Mathews."

Motion by Derek Jones, seconded by Sarah Brown Mathews, to approve the February minutes. Motion passes.

- b. Profits and Loss Budget vs. Actual

Motion by Kevin Welch, seconded by Sarah Brown Mathews to approve the Profits and Loss Budget. Motion passes.

- c. Advertising and grants
4. Old business
 - a. Turf Wars - Laura Tangeman (Laramie Soccer Club) explained that they just wrapped up their 13th year of Cowboy Turf Wars. She will no longer be directing this event after this year, but plans to be involved still. She explained that this year was a challenging year after COVID and they only had 160 teams attend, compared to 195 teams in their best attendance year. She had estimated 2,000 room nights on their original application, but she believes that they actually produced around 1,640 room nights. She explained that hotels were still full between their teams and a high school had a swim meet in town that weekend. She explained that she got feedback about the rates being too high from their visitors. She also noted that Gillette now hosts a similar event the weekend after theirs and that their room rates are more competitive (around \$100/night). She explained that they ran promotional ads targeted to teams in Colorado and received calls from teams they have never worked with before as well as provided promotional items for players and coaches to help remind them to come back next year.
5. Grant and sponsorship requests

- a. Wyoming Game Wardens Association - Teal Cufaud requested \$1,500 for the annual Wyoming Game Wardens Association annual banquet and membership meeting. This event is open to active and retired game wardens and they are expecting 100+ attendees from April 8 - 10. The event is a training and networking opportunity and they will also set aside time to encourage their attendees to explore the local community (planetarium, museums, etc.). They are staying at the Hilton Garden Inn. She noted that this conference will likely attract the most membership.

Motion by Sarah Brown Mathews, seconded by Sarah Reese, to approve the grant request for \$1,500 for the Wyoming Game Wardens Association Annual Meeting and Banquet. Motion passes.

6. Financial reports

- a. Lodging tax collections FY'22. Larson noted that February was stronger than anticipated, especially given the lack of snow. He explained that President's weekend and basketball games helped boost traffic. He explained that we are not seeing as many visitors but we are seeing longer stays (based on cell phone data). We continue to pace well ahead of budget and our tax collections are above the statewide average.

7. New Business

- a. Remodel update - The remodel continues to move forward. The flooring, paint, and light fixtures are all selected and the floor plan has been submitted to the City of Laramie. Larson and his team are currently working on exterior signage. They aim for this to be completed by June 1.
- b. Marketing report - National Park Trips e-blast.
- c. Wend - demo. Postpone - Technical difficulties.
- d. Vice-Chair appointment.

Motion by Sarah Brown Mathews, seconded by Sarah Reese that Kevin Welch serve as the vice-chair. Motion passes.

- e. Summit Visitor Center - This visitor center used to be staffed by state from May 15 to October 15. The center would see about 100,000 people come through, with about 25% being truck drivers. Recently, the responsibility has been placed on ACTB to staff the center, which costs about \$25,000-\$30,000. The center was not open in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID safety concerns. The board brainstormed solutions for staffing/opening this visitors center and will continue to work on this.

8. Review of staff activities

- a. All staff
 - i. 2022 Governor's Tourism Conference
 - ii. 2022 Annual Team Retreat: March 24 - 25. This retreat will be off site at the Albany Lodge.

- b. Executive Update
 - i. ACTB audit - finished!
 - ii. UW Haub School - Larson continues to serve as a capstone project mentor and is working with a group of 3 students on an ambassador training program.
 - iii. Marketing Chart through FY23, new markets: ACTB will focus on growing the Dallas-Fort Worth area market. Based on the data, this is a top 5 market for Albany County. Larson explained that it may be difficult to get through to this market, but the data supports going in this direction. This will be a multi-year effort before we expect to see the return. ACTB will also focus on growing the new markets from last year including Kansas City, Lincoln/Omaha, Minneapolis, and Chicago. Larson explained they have been able to extend a lot of the stays of visitors from these markets. In 2021, ACTB did not run marketing in Colorado and plans to focus on sustainable growth for this market. This market grows on average 7% a year.
 - iv. Budget for FY23
 - v. Governor's Tourism Conference Panel
 - vi. Simpleview Summit presentation
 - c. Marketing
 - i. Wrapping up winter campaigns
 - ii. Spring and summer campaigns
 - iii. Transition to summer content
 - iv. Cowboy Character Challenge
 - v. Mural tour updates
 - vi. Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives
 - d. Design
 - i. Gift shop
 - e. Events
 - i. Events calendar
 - f. Operations
 - i. February office stats - Foot traffic is about the same as last year, but visitors guide requests from the website are up.
 - ii. Exterior mural
9. Public comments
10. Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Becky Maddox, seconded by Kevin Welch to adjourn the meeting at 5:17 PM. Motion passes.

The next ACTB Board meeting will be at 4:00 PM on Monday, April 18th, 2022.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kaley Holyfield, Secretary.