

eXplore Lawrence
DRAFT - Board Minutes
December 15, 2021
3:30 p.m.
Carnegie Building

Members Present: Mike Logan, Ivan Simac, Danny Caine, Peter Bobkowski, Porter Arneill*

Members absent: Fally Afani, Heidi Champagne, Sally Zogry*, Jamie Hays Szelc, Hugh Carter*, City Commission member TBD*

*ex-officio members

Staff: Kim Anspach, Executive Director

Guests: City Commissioner Amber Sellers came at 3:50 p.m.

Meeting Materials provided by email: December 2021 Board Packet

Meeting began at 3:31 p.m. at the Carnegie

1. Approval of Minutes – November board meeting

Action: Ivan moved; Danny seconded. Approved.

2. Finance Report

- Kim reported that the year is winding down,
- Nothing unusual. After paying bills a couple of budget items will go over but will work with the accountant to make adjustments.
- Kim will send the balance sheet.
- Kim submitted the funding letter for quarterly request for full \$387K which includes some restorative funding. That check was received and deposited on December 7.
- Also requesting that the City reimburse funds for 2021 to make EL whole for the year. With increase in TGT funds, the City believes it can fulfill this request.

3. Staff Reports

- Kim – Staff is working on end of year efforts

Visitors Center

- Visitor Center had 646 visitors
- New products are selling well
- Visitor guides are delivered to container/storage
- Distributing guides
- Caleb is working on documenting a list of murals in Lawrence
- Plumbing leak during the Christmas Parade so no bathroom. Working with Action Plumbing to fix.

Sales

- Been a challenging year and staff has done a good job under the circumstances
- No presentation this month. Working on getting feedback from partners to develop presentation with Kendra for future board meeting. Will give a good perspective of where things stand as we move forward in 2022.
- Did get MOKAN Hardwood Classic
- Working with Sports Pavilion Lawrence to coordinate schedules for 2022 and 2023
- Site visit at JayHawk club went well

Marketing

- New visitors guide is delivered. Get a portion of sales back, 80%, \$23,084
- 17 new advertisers
- Launched the new vibe videos Picked up by Fox in KC and KU Athletics
- Web site is under last year's traffic - Had some large digital campaigns in 202 with CARES funding
- People are spending more time on the site though, more engaged

4. Executive Director Report

- Kim – Strategic Plan
- Met with Jonathan Morris for the 2022 retreat and Strategic Plan review and update
- Staff refers to the plan regularly
- Met with Jason Booker, Deputy Athletics Director at KU – looking in to how to conduct more community engagement. Asked if EL can help make Homecoming more of a community event. Asked about facility use as a starting point. Good meeting.
- Met with Bridgette Jobe at Tourism Director for the State. Want to raise Lawrence as a destination site in the state.
- 10 EDA grants with 50/50 match. \$50 to \$250K. Will be released in January.
- Met with Anthea Scouffas, community engagement coordinator at the Lied Center. Glad to have a representative and she is also connected with Indigenous groups in Lawrence. Also connected her with Freedom's Frontier.
- Also met with Jancita Warrington who used to run the Haskell Cultural Center.
- DMI meeting. Nothing significant to report. Continue operations as in past including shared service fees.
- Mike and Kim will meet with new commissioners.
- Kim spoke about the renewal with C-VENT meeting planner service network. At \$15,175, it is a large budget commitment which requires board approval but also very helpful for Lawrence to be part of the platform to monitor events. Very helpful tool for Kendra to track hotel planning efforts in Lawrence. Also helps support hotel sales teams. Want to add a \$5,000 ad-on for a retargeting ad for focus marketing on planners in the area and planners

looking for options specific to what Lawrence has to offer. This would come out of meetings marketing budget line.

- Discussion about C-Vent. Ivan spoke about how they use it as a franchise hotel. Popular with hotels and helpful as a service. Also can help keep hotel sales in Lawrence. This is for meeting planners reaching out to hotels. There was some issue in how leads are perceived as data for eXplore Lawrence but leads are generated by planners. Best to maximize for large events with KU facilities and other partners to help generate hotel sales that benefit everyone.
- Kim – We have separate service and sales goals. Diamond listing provides for more sales opportunities. Saw an increase with Diamond Listing

Peter moved to authorize Kim to sign a contract with C-Vent for Diamond Listing and advertising; Ivan seconded. Unanimous

5. Budget Update

- Much better this month than last month. Will access remaining \$217,000.
- Budget is flat for 2022, \$996,000.
- Want to talk about additional funds and how that money will be spent.
- Reduce rent \$12,000 per year. TGT Star Report comes out Friday. Ending the year strong.
- Mike pointed out that we need to discuss how we want to work with the added funds in 2021 during board retreat. Kim mentioned the need to raise the marketing budget to help re-focus attention on Lawrence. Also need to add staff support.
- Work study has only generated two applications.
- Happy to end the year 'whole.'

6. Board Continuity

- Going to have two unanticipated seats.
- Danny is resigning for a move.
- Since Fally has joined the Chamber as an employee, it is prudent for her to serve as the ex-officio member for the Chamber which opens an arts and culture seat.
- Have been talking about past president position and recent board turnover. Important to have board continuity. Is it possible to extend Mike's term for a year. Porter explained that the City Commission would need to approve extending Mike's term.
- Leaves Danny (Tourism Business) and Fally's (Arts and Culture) seats to be filled.

7. Board Retreat

- Spoke with Jonathan Morris about board and staff retreat
- Looking for available times/days ideally in the last two weeks of January. Tentatively held Wednesday January 19, 10 to 4 p.m.?
 - Topics
 - Job descriptions

8. 2022 Meeting Schedule

- Best to discuss at retreat.

Motion to Adjourn

Peter moved to adjourn; Mike seconded. Unanimous
Meeting adjourned at 4:44

Next meeting January 19, 2022 - 3:30 p.m.