



## Explore Lawrence

Board of Directors Meeting

May 30, 2025

Present: Drew Gaschler (chair), Kim Anspach, Executive Director, Heather Shull, Tina Tourtillott, Kirk Goodman, Andrew Holt, Luis Ruiz, Emily Peterson, Margann Bennett

Present online: Anthea Scouffas, Heidi Champagne, Commissioner Amber Sellers

Absent: Andrew Holt, Emily Peterson, Margann Bennett, Anthea Scouffas, Heidi Champagne, Amber Sellers

Staff: Sara Harley, Office and Sales Coordinator (notetaker)

Drew called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM

### MINUTES/FINANCIALS:

April minutes were approved with an edit to the TGT Conversation section to clarify that both Kim and Luis will be leading the initiative.

Financials were presented to the group, including the first quarterly disbursement of funds from the city. The funds were split into appropriate buckets and moved into the money market account. We expect to have \$200,000 in the bid fund by EOY and are researching higher interest accounts to place funds in.

Miscoded expenses have been corrected. We expect marketing and digital spending to increase during Spring/Summer, along with spending in the mobile van budget lines.

The budget for the Lawrence Tourism Summit is set and will come from a \$5,000 budget line which also supports quarterly DOS meetings. Freedom's Frontier NHA has moved out of the office after paying \$7,500 of their expected \$15,000 in annual shared services costs. Space will be cleared out.

We are on track with our current budget and there are no changes to expected spending.

### STAFF REPORTS:

#### Marketing:

Kim presented a proposal prepared by Allison, proposing to move next year's Visitor's Guide from a printed to a digital model. The current Visitor's Guide costs approximately \$100,000 per year in printing and distribution; a digital-only inspiration guide with a flipbook format and printed rack cards with QR codes would significantly reduce cost and storage space. The digital guide is expected to include inspirational content, articles, and recommendations from local influencers. We do not plan to sell ads for the digital guide. There was a question about the guide being translatable like the

website, which we will look into. The board is in favor of the proposal and feels that it aligns with the direction of the overall industry.

In other marketing news, we experienced a dip in year-over-year page views during the past month (13% decline) which we attribute to high interest news stories happening around this time last year, which inflated page view numbers.

### **Sales:**

Kim provided an explanation of our definitions of Leads and Assists and explained their equal importance in achieving our sales goals.

TGT income was down a little in April but remains up overall YTD. We are seeing a slight decline in room demand overall but the lodging report is otherwise consistent. We expect to see short term rentals spike over football weekends.

The monthly report was delivered in its new format, with feedback from the Board. There is interest in continuing to see a monthly list of leads/events for the coming month, possibly linked externally. Our goals are aligned with encouraging a quality over quantity mentality, going after high value leads rather than chasing raw numbers.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

### **2026 Budget Request:**

Kim presented a draft memo to the city with proposed allocations and an increase of \$247,870 over last year's operating budget and a \$25,000 reduction of EL's request for bid funds. We plan to redirect money to support marketing and sales efforts, especially for World Cup in the coming year.

The increase also supports increases to staffing and payroll, and health insurance cost increases. We propose a ~\$27,000 increase to these costs and the creation of a \$70,000 dedicated World Cup budget line with an additional \$10,000 for promotional items.

The Board is comfortable with this request and encourages us to submit it with an emphasis on World Cup and TGT increases.

Drew called a vote, in favor of editing the memo to add World Cup and TGT increase language, with a final copy sent to the board before sending. All in favor.

### **2025 Budget Reallocation:**

Any reallocation over \$7,500 must be approved. We propose to reallocate \$30,000 from payroll to the marketing and design budget line to shift money into contract services with our designer. Drew called a vote, no questions. All in favor.

### **TGT Increases:**

We have an email drafted to explore the possibility of increases to the TGT rate. We will be convening a working group to look into rate options and provide recommendations to the city manager's office.

### **Preview of the Mobile Experience Van:**

Kim presented a visual preview and mockup of the current plan for the Mobile Experience Van, complete with personality board and color palette within brand guidelines. We are working to add a Meetings experience to support Sales use of the van. The plan is for the design to be self-contained and to function without wi-fi but we would like to include a hotspot in the van.

The Board is excited about the design and encourages us to question the designers on continuous tech support and maintenance.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Drew requested a motion to adjourn (Heather, Kirk). The meeting adjourned at 2:12 pm.

Next meeting is June 27 at 1:00 pm in the Carnegie Building.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sara Harley