



**Board of Director's Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 16, 2024**  
**Laramie, WY**

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Tourism Board Members Present:** Tony O'Brien (Chairman), Quintin Blair (Vice Chairman), Ken Barkey, John Johnson, Mark Tesoro, Budd Betts, Taylor Phillips (Shawn Parker, virtual; Charisse Haws, not present).

**Staff Members Present:** In person – Dionne Roccaforte, Becky Oswald, Piper Singer-Cunningham, Lexi Mitchell, Jim Wollenburg, Amy Larsen, Becky Ward, Jeanett Wolff, Stephen Haukaas, James Scoon, Sarah Reed, Glenn Gardner, Michell Howard, Keith Turbitt, Hailey Mach, Angelina Cisneros, Kari Eakins, Diane Shober.

**Guests Present:** In person – Chloe Arbuckle, Verb; Ciera Morrison, Verb; Berkley Young, Young Strategies; Madelyn Matlock, Young Strategies; Helen Dodridge, New Thought Digital; Daniel Sappenfield, New Thought Digital; Jesse Ryan, New Thought Digital, Maura Curtis, BVK; Darci Bandi, BVK, Annmarie Mercieri Colonna, Percepture; Lauren Clark, Percepture; Julia Grignon, Miles Partnership; Debbie Johnson, Cindy Loose, Megan McCombs, Carbon County; Darren Rudloff, Rudloff Solutions; Mathias Jung, RMI; Mitch Knothe, Miles Partnership; Alyssa Winter, RMI; Dan McCoy, University of Wyoming

- I. Chairman, Tony O'Brien, called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.
- II. **Consent Agenda** – Chairman Tony O'Brien presented the consent agenda. Ken Barkey moved to approve the consent agenda as presented; John Johnson seconded; motion passed unanimously.
  - A. BFY26 Supplemental Budget Request – \$489,667
  - B. Contracts
    - i. **Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources – America's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence – Grant Agreement** – The purpose is to grant \$2,000,000 in legislative appropriated funds for initiatives recognizing the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Will not exceed \$2,000,000. This is a budgeted item in Business Operations.
    - ii. **Real America Marketing Company dba rocky Mountain International (RMI) – Amendment One** – The purpose of this amendment is to modify the previously approved contract amount of \$400,000 up to \$415,000 to include domestic international familiarization tour expenses and shipping. Will not exceed \$415,000. This is a budgeted item in Global Partnerships. The contract was approved by the board on April 22, 2024.
    - iii. **Wyoming Department of Transportation – Interagency Agreement** – The purpose is to ratify the interagency agreement with the Wyoming Department of Transportation to support renovations, enhancements/interpretive improvements at the Northeast and Southeast Wyoming Welcome Centers. Reconfigure the video editing office located in the Southeast Welcome center basement and provide additional support for enhancements that are under current planning, development and consideration. Will not exceed \$190,000. This is a budgeted item in Business Operations, Welcome Centers. The Interagency Agreement was approved by the board via email on June 11, 2024.
    - iv. **Young Strategies, Inc – Amendment One** – The purpose of this amendment is to modify the previously approved contract amount of \$53,000 to \$78,000 to include the Wyoming BEST program. Will not exceed \$78,000. This is a budgeted item in Global Partnerships. The contract was approved by the board on April 22, 2024.
  - C. FY24 Annual Report
  - D. Minutes from WOT Board Meeting, April 22, 2024



**Board of Director's Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 16, 2024**  
**Laramie, WY**

**ATTACHMENT A**

**III. Financials** – Senior Accounting Manager, Dionne Roccaforte, presented the financials. Quintin Blair moved to approve the financials as presented; John Johnson seconded; motion passed unanimously.

- A. 2023 – 2024 Biennium Summary
- B. Year-to-Date Financials as of September 30, 2024
- C. Statewide Lodging Tax Collections Report as of September 30, 2024

**IV. Contracts**

**A. Information Only**

- i. **McCrimmon Productions – Amendment One** – The purpose of this amendment is to modify the previously approved contract amount of \$15,000 to \$25,000 to include additional video content for the 2024 Wyoming rodeo season. Will not exceed \$25,000. This is a budgeted item in Business Operations, Cowboy Marketing. This contract was approved on April 22, 2024.
- ii. **Miles Partnership LLLP** – The purpose of this contract is to establish the terms and contributions of which the contractor shall develop and maintain the Wyoming Office of Tourism Destination Optimization Program, Phase III. This program is an initiative aimed at improving the quality of tourism content within major travel discovery planning platforms, including Google and TripAdvisor, by providing “how to” and best practices education to the industry and hands-on assistance for individual businesses and destination marketing organizations. Will not exceed \$21,000. This is a budgeted item in Brand Studio, Public Relations.

**V. Director's Reports**

- A. **Business Operations** – Director, Strategy and Business Operations, Kari Eakins, provided highlights from the Business Operations department from the past year including a finalized full financial audit, implementation of an employee safety and health program, the launch of a monthly internal newsletter, work with the State Human Resources division to do a pay grade crosswalk, a reduction of the MOU with the Wyoming Business Council to move senior level HR duties in house, hosting the highest attended Salute to Team Wyoming breakfast in Las Vegas, NV, and the Northeast Wyoming Welcome Center experiencing the highest traffic ever with 1,415 visitors in August 2024. Kari announced Daiven Francis, as the new Data Analyst who will start at WOT on November 4. In addition, the Global Partnerships team is actively recruiting for the Partner Activation Manager position and aim to have that filled by the beginning of December. Kari also updated the board that Kaser Designs began work on the renovations at the Wyoming welcome centers this summer. Kaser will work with our digital vendor, True Omni, to begin work in March with a completion goal of April 2024.
- B. **Global Partnerships** – Global Partnerships Director, James Scoon, shared that inflation is slightly affecting spending in the international markets, however, visitors are still traveling to the West and those numbers remain steady. Travel statistics from the Great American West (GAW) program show 512 international tour operators are selling Wyoming, overall bookings for the GAW region (North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Idaho) are up 14% year over year, room bookings remain about the same from last year and the estimated spend in Wyoming is up 12% from last year. It is estimated that travel to the GAW region will get back to the strong numbers seen in 2019 and 2020 in the year 2027-2029. Germany, Italy, and the UK remain the top three GAW markets for Wyoming for product offerings, bookings, and spend. James also confirmed that 9 of 15 GAW program partners are Wyoming Destination Marketing Organizations. The 2025 Rocky Mountain International Roundup will take place in Rapid City, SD May 6-9. WOT plans to host a post-conference familiarization tour including the areas of Devils Tower, Gillette, Sheridan, Big Horns and Cody. James also provided an overview of partner coop programs being offered through Brand USA, Expedia, the USA Discovery Training Program, and working with a large UK tour operator to promote travel to



**Board of Director's Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 16, 2024**  
**Laramie, WY**

**ATTACHMENT A**

Wyoming. Brand USA Sales Missions are also ongoing. Jim Wollenburg conducted a sales mission in Japan/South Korea in June and upcoming missions will be in London and Canada.

Global Partnerships Senior Manager, Jim Wollenburg, updated the board that the Destination Development program is in its second round. The program will grant \$5M, within the biennium, to Wyoming Lodging Tax Boards (LTB) to assist in their marketing efforts. The funds are distributed on a three-tiered system based on each community's lodging tax collections. Out of the 27 Wyoming LTBs, 23 are eligible for this program and 15 have applied. WOT is actively talking with all LTBs and providing guidance on individual plans for either spending their allotted funds, how to become eligible, or how to apply for the program.

**C. Brand Studio** – Senior Director of Brand Strategy, Michell Howard, provided an overview of the paid media summary including performance stats, budget breakout, a timeline of the campaign and the consumer journey. She also spoke about cross-channel partnerships and coop opportunities used to elevate Wyoming and its partners. A couple highlights were on the Sticker program, which had a 12% increase in participation reflecting an all-time high and the Trip Planning tool that launched in May 2023 with over 38k users.

Darci Bandi, BVK presented the Winter 2024/25 campaign starting with the objectives of awareness, driving interactions and stimulating engagement. She pointed out that the media plan will be focused on digital channels to accommodate flexibility and visitor demand, and the timeline will be December through February versus November through March as with last year. Darci introduced the newest Modern Explorer, Aaron Mulkey, who was also the winner of the Wildy Wyoming series season 1. As for content, she announced the creation of 6 new videos, display ads, and the continuation of the WY Responsibly campaign and Travel Guide which are all utilized to boost the campaign.

Senior Manager of Brand Integration, Becky Oswald, spoke about a new vendor, Simpleview, one of two vendors awarded contracts from the Digital Platform Request for Proposal. Simpleview has been contracted to rebuild WOT's Partner Portal and consumer website. Plans for the website redesign include a simplified look and focusing on the user experience with personalized content and improved trip planning tools. Enhancements to the Partner Portal will enable Wyoming partners to apply for Destination Development funds, and access to all coop opportunities. The new digital platform is scheduled to be launched in March 2025.

Communications Senior Manager, Piper Cunningham, spoke about the second RFP contract-awarded vendor, Verb, who will lead visual content including creative content for the website, SEO, email, social strategy and community management. Piper presented a Content Planning Map which will influence strategy on all these mediums.

**VI. Executive Director's Report** – Executive Director Diane Shoher recognized the WOT team, vendors and board for their work, leadership and contributions to the Tourism industry and market. She then provided an update on the Supplemental Budget process and next steps.

**VII. Board Development** – Chairman Tony O'Brien notified the board that Ken Barkey and Mark Tesoro's first terms will expire February 28, 2024, and they are both eligible for reappointment. Charisse Haws is serving the unexpired District 6 term, which will also expire February 28, 2024, and she is eligible for appointment for 2 consecutive 3-year terms. Any WOT Board member seeking reappointment should apply through the boards and commissions page on Governor Gordon's website by December 31, 2024.

**VIII. Old Business** – No old business

**IX. New Business** – No new business

**X. Public Comments** – No public comments



Office of Tourism

**Board of Director's Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 16, 2024**  
**Laramie, WY**

**ATTACHMENT A**

- XI. Executive Session** – At 3:06 p.m. Chairman O'Brien moved to enter executive session to discuss Executive Director's annual performance review; Ken Barkey seconded; the motion passed unanimously.  
Present during the executive session: In-person: Chairman Tony O'Brien, Vice Chairman Quintin Blair, Budd Betts, John Johnson, Mark Tesoro, Ken Barkey, Taylor Phillips, Diane Shober. Virtual – Shawn Parker.
- XII. Adjourn** – Upon conclusion of the executive session, the board reconvened in open session at 4:11 p.m.; John Johnson moved to adjourn; Taylor Phillips seconded; motion passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:12 p.m.