**Mat-Su CVB**

**Board Meeting MINUTES**

**August 12, 2021**

**Zoom Meeting**

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| **Board Members Present**Mark Fleenor (Z)Travis Taylor (Z)Cole Chambers (Z)Cheryl Metiva (Z)Heather Dudick (Z)Rick Peterson (Z)Fernando Salvador (Z) | **Board Members Absent**Roberta WarnerIsrael MahayDan Wilcock | **Staff Present**Bonnie Quill (Z)Neil Campbell (Z)Casey Ressler (Z)Justin Saunders (Z) |

Mark called the meeting to order at 7:37 am. The roll was called.

**AGENDA**

Rick moved to approve the agenda. Cole seconded the motion. The motion carried without opposition.

**MINUTES**

Rick moved to approve the June 17, 2021 board meeting minutes. Heather seconded the motion, which passed without opposition.

**STANDING REPORTS**

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

Mark stated he had nothing to report. He commended the staff for their hard work.

**ATIA REPORT**

Bonnie reported that the ATIA marketing committee met last on June 8th and 9th. She noted that the legislature passed their FY2022 budget, which included $10 million for tourism marketing. The Governor then vetoed the total $10 million. It is hoped that the August 16th special session will allocate American Recovery Plan funds for tourism marketing. Bonnie stated that the marketing committee will meet next on August 26th in Anchorage. She concluded by mentioning that the legislature announced a structure for allocating $90 million in ARP funds intended for tourism and business relief, the known details for which are available online.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Travis stated that there was not much changed from earlier reports. He noted that the audit was underway and that the change in banking institutions would occur soon.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Bonnie noted that she emailed a detailed report on Monday. She chose to briefly mention that current Mat-Su CVB marketing campaigns were significantly driving web traffic up, that the first monthly DCCED COVID-Safe grant reimbursement had been received, 2022 visitor guide ad sales and membership renewals were underway and doing well, the recently completed photo shoot had good weather and yielded great results, Casey was extensively quoted in a CNN article on Alaska tourism, she had testified on August 3rd before the Assembly regarding the anticipated ARP funds, and that had a productive one-hour meeting with the Borough manager.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ADVOCACY COMMITTEE**

Bonnie reported that Cheryl and Mark are both on the committee. She stated that the upcoming borough election in November is, perhaps, one of the most important in some time, with three Assembly seats open, as well as the election of a new mayor. These open seats constitute half of the Assembly body. Vern Halter, the current mayor, is terming out. The advocacy committee has met four times since it was appointed at the June board meeting, discussing and communicating with potential and declared candidates. Bonnie noted that two candidates have declared for mayor, both of whom are familiar mayors in the borough—Bert Cottle and Edna DeVries.

Bonnie stated that the deadline for filing is August 27th. She added that all declared candidates will be surveyed by the Mat-Su CVB and hosted at a candidate forum in October. Bonnie informed the board that the committee will meet again tomorrow, meeting as it does every week, commending the committee members for their participation in this important issue.

Cheryl added that the committee is a really solid group, working hard to identify candidates that are strong on tourism. She expressed one of the concerns of the committee is that whoever is elected mayor must have a broad, borough-wide outlook on the issues facing the borough and the tourism industry. She stated that it has been a very interesting and rewarding process. She named committee members Craig Saunders, Mark Austin, Cindy Bettine, herself, and Bonnie.

**NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Mark stated the need to appoint a nominations committee to address the upcoming board election. The terms of Mark himself, Cheryl, Dan, and Heather are up, and a slate of candidates need to be developed to fill their seats. Cheryl is terming out and cannot run. She, Cole, and Fernando volunteered to serve on the committee. Bonnie stated that she would recruit two members to serve as well.

**EDA GATEWAY GRANT UPDATE**

Bonnie gave a brief update on the EDA grant process, beginning by noting that the Notice of Funding Opportunity was announced by the EDA on July 22nd. The Mat-Su CVB Gateway grant was originally submitted under the CARES grant but was held over for American Rescue Plan funding. New information relating to the ARP requirements was requested four days after the NFO announcement and the information was delivered on schedule. The grant proposal now goes to the investment review committee for an extensive evaluation of the project. Bonnie reported that she participated in two EDA ARP funding webinars this past week outlining the grant program and eligibility of projects. The Gateway visitor center is a perfect fit for this funding that is dedicated to travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation that leads to long-term increases in tourism activity. Bonnie stated that she is encouraged by the quick timeframe that the EDA has imposed on application deadlines and awarding. Due to the Gateway grant being held over for the ARP funds, the proposal is in front of the applications just getting started. Bonnie hoped that the current review will be quick as the proposal has already undergone much review for the previous funding opportunity.

**REMAINING MEETING DATES**

Bonnie reported that the annual meeting and awards luncheon has been scheduled for Friday, November 12th at the Palmer Depot. She added that she is working on a theme and topic inspired by a session she attended at the Destinations International in July. Richard Peterson, the Executive Director of the US Cultural & Heritage Marketing Council, talked about a collaborative community approach to destination marketing. Bonnie stated that she is working with him to deliver a presentation and conduct a workshop that she feels will lead to more inclusiveness and unity in the community, especially moving forward building a new Gateway Visitor Center. Two Zoom meetings with Richard have led to a proposal that includes two virtual discovery meetings with stakeholders, a survey to be sent out in October before the annual meeting, the results of which would be presented during the educational program, scheduled from 9-10:30 am, to be followed by the annual meeting, the seating of the new board members, and followed by the awards luncheon. A two-hour community workshop to identify initiatives that are inclusive of all Mat-Su communities will follow the luncheon. Bonnie noted that she has added a provision allowing holding the program as a virtual event should the COVID situation warrant it.

The board decided to meet next via Zoom on Friday, October 1 at 9:00 am.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 am.

Respectfully submitted, Attest,

Neil Campbell, Recording Secretary Israel Mahay, Secretary

Date Date