****

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

August 15, 2024

Prepared by: Michelle Senderhauf

**Attendance:**

Don Ensign (); Scott Tuft (x); Richard Riley (x); Barb Lusco (x); Dave Bolla (); Cathy Brown (); Matthew Soliday (x); Andy Vasquez (x); Karen Webster (x); Patrick Lyp (x); Christine Livingston (x); Dustin Ritchea (x); Michelle Senderhauf (x); and Jenny Matthys(x).

**Members of the public in attendance**: None.

**Members of the media in attendance**: None.

**Opening of meeting:**

VIce President Scott Tuft called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of minutes:**

* Barb Lusco made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Andy Vasquez seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Board Chair’s report:**

* Board Chair Ensign was not in attendance.

**President/CEO and staff reports:**

Christine:

* President/CEO Livingston asked Andy Vasquez to assist in giving an update on the Salt Creek regional meeting that took place at the Visitor Center. At the meeting, an initial plan was made to investigate using the portion of the river from Imagination Glen to Haven Hollow and/or Chustak launch as a test site. Property owner information will also be gathered.
* Interviews have taken place for the new IDT Volunteer and Office Coordinator. Background checks and reference calls are underway.
* Research was conducted on a new van. A new van has been identified. The old van and company car will be traded in.
* All three Duneland communities have agreed to have Maura Mundell represent them on the Tourism Board. Bill Welter is interested in the other open board position.
* IDT has been working on a new beverage with Journeyman, similar to the one Field Museum created with them.
* Schmidt’s architect team visited the Visitor Center to look at the space for the redesign. Schmidt is also going to look into NIPSCO’s plan for eco-friendly light replacements. The gift shop’s engineering is being prioritized..
* The County Council approved replenishing the unemployment line item.
* Livingston updated the board on the negotiations with the National Park.
	+ The new NPS Superintendent has drawn a line in the sand saying that either Eastern National returns with a gift shop in the Visitor Center or the National Park leaves the Visitor Center.
	+ Attorney Patrick Lyp summarized the original lease agreement terms.
	+ The NPS Superintendent has been presenting to several local groups and has been publicly talking about how he thinks IDT has failed to create a positive visitor experience. Livingston shared the reviews that the Visitor Center has received celebrating the staff, rangers, building, and the visitor experience in general.
	+ It was suggested that a timeline of the negotiations and attempts to work with the NPS Superintendent be documented.
	+ A Term Sheet was created with agreed upon terms for the ongoing NPS negotiations to be shared with the County Council and Commissioners. It contains the following:
		- The goal is a multi-year lease with a ten year term.
		- The rent would be $9,700 per month with a 3% yearly escalator.
		- A map has been created with a proposed division of spaces and which partner is responsible for the upkeep. Highlights include Eastern National in their previous space, the Beaches & Beyond gift shop in the activity room, the majority of the foyer will be filled with exhibits by NPS, and the theater stage would be turned into storage for IDT. See attached map.
		- Negotiating that Eastern National (EN) may return to the previous location and storage area. EN to pay NPS or IDT directly. If they pay IDT directly, this could reduce the NPS rent.
		- IDT will continue to do upgrades, improvements, and landscaping in the interior and exterior areas as well as the building and maintenance schedule.
		- IDT will provide NPS with construction-ready designs for the welcome shelter, programming and guided tour documents, and trail concepts for NPS 15-acres, so NPS can finalize plans and complete phase 2 of the Indigenous Cultural Trail.
		- Concerning NPS’ spaces, Attorney Lyp said that typically in a lease agreement like this, the building owner would have the right to review the plans of the tenant.
		- IDT would continue to maintain IDT owned land and facilities on that land.
* Livingston shared two sign examples created by MixDesign that will interpret the Potawatomi and Miami calendars.
* Livingston showed the drawings of the new welcome sign. Groundbreaking will be soon.
* Livingston shared that Donnelley gave IDT $20,000 and Cleveland Cliffs gave $25,000 for the ICT turtle sculptures. She also gave Porter County Community Foundation a tour of the trail since they are helping with the processing of donations.

Dustin:

* Production Director Ritchea shared that all eleven community videos are done. A meeting with the state will take place this month to form the plan to promote the community project. Ritchea shared two of the videos—a “sizzler” ad that covers the communities as a whole and the longer Duneland community video.
* Ritchea shared that one of the nice things about the video project is that IDT has met with the communities and they are excited about the videos.
* Ritchea shared that he and Senderhauf have been working on six new web pages promoting the communities.
	+ Photos, videos, business listings, information, blogs, and links to the community’s own websites are on each page.
	+ The South County video was shown. As a representative of South County, Andy Vasquez said that its video is “well done.”

Michelle:

* Communications Director Senderhauf shared many of the projects IDT is working on with Simpleview. The company has been providing IDT with database services for around twenty years. Simpleview has been providing several new services over the past couple of years.
	+ Website
	+ SEO
	+ YouTube, The Brain Scoop, recently filmed in Miller Woods and West Beach.

Jenny:

* Senior Operations Director Matthys reported:
	+ 3 roof leaks were repaired.
	+ July visitation increased by 4,927 people to a total of 51,879 from last July.
	+ We carry 6 local artisan vendors in the gift shop.
	+ Upcoming contract for painting trim work for $1,722.50.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

* Richard Riley read the July 2024 Treasurer’s report.
* Barb Lusco made a motion to approve the July Tax and Non-Tax vouchers in the amount of $364,393.56.
* Total expenditures year-to-date = 45.65% of the total operating budget.
	+ Karen Webster seconded the motion.
	+ Scott Tuft asked for details on a specific line item. There was no further discussion. Motion carried.
* The July 2024 Innkeeper’s Tax collection revenue collected was $114,448.96, which is a year-to-date decreaseof 9.3% on a cash basis from 2023.

**Attorney’s report:**

* Attorney Lyp updated the board on the Innkeepers Tax process.

**Old business:** None

**New business:** President Livingston suggests that Advisa schedule 2 days for strategic planning in January.

**Public comments:** None.

**Adjournment:**

With no other new business, Andy Vasquez motioned to close the meeting. Karen Webster seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

**Next meeting:**

The next meeting will be Thursday, September 19, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.