



Visit Bend Board of Directors Meeting Minutes February 16, 2016

Location: Bend Visitor Center

Present: Doug La Placa, Valerie Warren, Kevney Dugan, Nate Wyeth, Tawna Fenske, Scott Greenstone, Stephanie McNeal for Ben Perle, Matt Williams, Alan Dietrich, Dave Nissen, Michelle Mercer, Jodie Barram, Erick Trachsel, Hank Therien, Lisa Sidor.

Guests: Stephen Hamway, Wendy Kelley, Kristen Coon, Nate Safty, Wendy Puller, Rod Porsche, Ben Hemson, Rosa McCulley.

Call to Order

Doug La Placa called the meeting to order at 8:02am. Introduction of guests followed.

Financial Report

Scott Greenstone stated that 7 months into the current fiscal year, revenue is over budget by approximately 20%. Expenses are in line with budget or deliberately over budget due to additional spending on marketing, using the surplus revenue.

Overhead expenses are close to budget.

As the year progresses, the net income will move closer to the break-even point.

Scott noted that the City of Bend has changed the way they are administering payments to Visit Bend. The contact between the City and Visit Bend stipulates that funds that exceed the approved budget plus 10% need to be requested by Visit Bend. The City has decided to hold these funds back monthly instead of waiting until the end of the fiscal year.

The funds are still required to be spent on tourism, but are not required to be released to Visit Bend. BEDAB will be making a recommendation to City Council to open these funds up to RFPs from other groups after the end of the fiscal year.

Jodie Barram asked if tourism dropped below budget, would the City use these funds to make up the difference between the shortfall and the budget. Scott stated that we don't know. Jodie stated that the Visit Bend Board needs to closely track the City's plan for the additional funds.

Doug said that Price Fronk & Co. is 2/3 of the way through the financial review and Wes Price will be reporting at the next Board Meeting.

Tourism Industry Briefing

Doug referred to the updated TRT report included in the Board Packet. The most recent month available, December, showed an adjusted increase of 6%, which is the lowest of the past few years and may indicate a leveling off. Sometimes there are delayed room tax collections for the month of December. ADR for December was also relatively flat.

The updated visitor volume report created by RRC Associates shows that the annual visitor days has climbed to over 3 million.

Nate Wyeth stated that we are 3 months into the 4 ½ month winter marketing campaign. The print campaign was strong this year, with nationwide ads in *Sunset* - with a mini-guide insert in Northern California - as well as ads in *Mountain*, *Northwest Travel & Life*, and *OnTrak* magazines.

Visit Bend also completed a large buy with *The San Francisco Chronicle* including print advertorials in the Sunday Travel section and a digital campaign.

There will be a dedicated Oregon and Washington spring campaign.

Website traffic is up about 30% year-over-year. Blog traffic is up over 154% year-over-year. Traffic to the Winter Fun and Mt. Bachelor pages are up, as well as traffic from Northern California. Traffic from Seattle also continues to grow.

There have been over 20,000 Bend Ale Trail completions to date. Bend Ale Trail month was a success. During the month, traffic to the Bend Ale Trail page was up 165%.

Facebook is now up to 166,000 followers. The Instagram following is over 20,000 and continues to grow.

Public Relations and Social Media Update

Tawna Fenske reported on a piece done for *The Washington Post* on beer. There was also good coverage in *Chevy New Roads* magazine, *The Red Bulletin*, and *Men's Health*. There were some pieces done in smaller, niche magazines on shoulder season travel.

Tawna showed some highlights from recent Facebook posts.

Group Sales Updates

Kevney Dugan noted key updates from the Group Sales report included in the Board Packet.

The recent USATF Cross Country Nationals were a success.

The USA Triathlon and Duathlon should bring participants from all over the country.

Shoulder season groups are increasing.

The Bend Marathon will be held in late April and registrations are greatly outpacing last year with runners representing many states.

Triple Crown will again be held on Memorial Day weekend.

Bend will again host the Snowshoe Nationals in 2017.

Kevney also pointed out that there are several groups Visit Bend continues to actively pursue.

Registration numbers and interest in the 2016 Oregon Senior Games is strong.

Discussions on the creation of a regional sports complex continue.

Board Roundtable

Dave Nissen said that the major holidays were very successful for Wanderlust Tours and the crowds have been very positive.

Matt Williams stated that the Pine Ridge Inn has been busy.

Michelle Mercer said that they are getting ready for the 38th season at Sun Country Tours.

Alan Dietrich said he is impressed by how well the Bend brand plays nationally. The traffic to the tasting room tracks cyclically with the tourist traffic overall.

Erick Trachsel said the Riverhouse has finalized their executive team and that renovations are continuing. Currently, the new restaurant, will be launching sometime in April. The room renovations are almost complete. The new website will go live on March 1st.

Stephanie McNeal, who is representing Ben Perle, said the Jazz at the Oxford show are going well. They have a new sales team and a new general manager, who moved to Bend from their Portland property.

season. This weekend is the Bend A Cappella Festival. Several shows and events have been added to the regular season.

Public Comment

Wendy Kelley of the Wall Street Suites asked if the Cycle-Cross Nationals would be hosted in Bend anytime soon. Doug stated that Bend did not win the bid to host the event in the near future, and that the venue around Deschutes Brewery has changed.

Ben Hemson of the City of Bend will be reaching out to the tourism industry for feedback.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

Notes by: Valerie Warren
February 16, 2016