



VISIT BEND

Visit Bend Board of Directors Meeting Minutes September 18, 2018

Location: Bend Visitor Center

Present: Kevney Dugan, Kelli Carrow, Hank Therian, Scott Greenstone, Nate Wyeth, Tawna Fenske, Noelle Fredland, Dave Nissen, Paige Robinson, Michelle Mercer, Matt Williams, Alan Dietrich, Jason Lusk, Lisa Sidor

Absent: Brent McLean, John McLeod, Erick Traschel, Cayla Gleason

Guests: Ashley Mitchell, Tyson, Jasmine, Stephanie McNeil, Carolyn Eagan, Michelle Caramagno, Eric Rock, Olivia Evers, Derrick Swanson, Shelly Mirabile, Julia Theisen

Call to Order

Chair Dave Nissen called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Introduction followed.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Paige Robinson moved to approve the minutes from the most recent board meeting. Alan Dietrich seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Marketing Plan Approval

Matt Williams moved to approve the FY19 marketing plan. Noelle seconded. The marketing plan was unanimously approved.

Reserve Fund / Cash Reserve Policy Approval

Dave Nissen moved to approve the new reserve fund and cash reserve policy. Matt Williams seconded it. The policy was unanimously approved.

Financial Report

Scott Greenstone stated this was the first financial presentation of FY19. Added content to the presentation was not printed but available to those who wanted it. In the Visit Bend Budget P&L Analysis, there are two months behind us which the P&L showcases (1/6th of the way through FY19). City funding is a little light in relation to what we forecasted. July was almost exactly on budget. August fell off a little. We were below budget in advertising, but that is due to timing and we will make that up. Personal expenses are close to budget, with a lag due to timing. Overhead expenses are close to budget, as well as dues and subscriptions. Nothing notable to report, other than August having a slight shortfall. We're carrying a 3% surplus YTD, which is close to budget, but the way the year moves we build up a surplus in parts of the year and other parts it gets burned off. Every year before FY19 the financial policy at Visit Bend has been aimed at breaking even. This is the first year we have a reserve fund established to be able to use those additional funds when needed. We are aiming to put 5% surplus on total revenue. There has been a change in the financial policy to increase the size of another cash reserve fund to use in the event that Visit Bend needs to ramp up some efforts due to new opportunities. Kevney Dugan stated that those new accounts are money market accounts and as

they grow, we will revisit how to manage them. Scott Greenstone stated that Visit Bends YTD are tracking to the budget. The BCTF is a part of Visit Bend that undertakes the job of using funding to enhance the arts in the community. The financial activities of the BCTF are managed and reported by Visit Bend and Greenstone Financial, which are included in the reporting. Their budget is 7.5% of the budget of Visit Bend. On the expense side, the BCTF has underspent by 52%, but it will get made up as the year goes by. Guest Carolyn Meegan asked if this is the largest fund in the state and if it is a year-round initiative, which they are, and are important things to note about this fund.

New COVA President/CEO

Julia Theisen introduced herself as the new Present/CEO of Visit Central Oregon (a new name to roll out for COVA). She has been in the position since August 6th and she's excited to learn more about product knowledge. She does not know Oregon very well but is excited to work with Visit Bend and learn more about the region. She worked in the DMO world in Aspen, is familiar with the ski town feel and a member-based organization.

Tourism Industry Briefing

Kevney Dugan mentioned we are a little light on TRT for July, down 3.3%. We did end last fiscal year strong however, being up 2.6% in May and 1.4% in June. Being down in July is not a trend, but something we're keeping an eye on. Looking back on the last couple of years, there were some major events that increased TRT, and we do have some work to do to reach our goal of +2% by the end of the year. Vacation Rentals were up 3.6% in occupancy in July, but the average daily rate was down some. We sold close to 3,000 more room nights than last year. August was at 71.3% in occupancy. The ADR in August was \$271, which made a REVPAR of \$162. On the Smith Travel Research side, we were down 5.4% in occupancy, up slightly in ADR, and REVPAR was slightly down. The market is trying to sort out the new hotel room supply, which has an affect on these numbers. The entire curve is reflecting a dip in the shoulder months, which is ultimately why we're trying to put more dollars into promoting those months. Dave Nissen asked if the fire season affected the first two weeks vs last two weeks of July. Matt Williams asked for August numbers, and Kevney will share as soon as he gets them. Noelle Fredlund mentioned she does not have all of her numbers, but the Old Mill District and LSA's August is showing stronger than last year. Alan Dietrich asked if there are underreported properties, and Kevney mentioned he has had conversations with the City and they are looking at this seriously. Paige Robinson said she noticed people are renting out 'rooms' and parts of their properties, which are not reported. Kevney Dugan included that the ORLA law suit is still in progress and going through the appeals process. We are still waiting to hear, and there is no new info to report. Noelle Fredland asked about how many more hotels are coming down the pipeline. Kevney does not have solid completion dates to know what FY they will affect.

BCTF

Noelle Fredlund mentioned they will have a public meeting on October 17th and will be releasing a location shortly. Michelle Mercer mentioned that the funds that are allocated to these grants are coming in consistently, but said they are discussing whether or not they will give away all the funds to grants or reserve some for potential opportunities. Dave Nissen asked if there has been a proposal that was more than they were able to give. Noelle Fredland said they have not had a project that was worthy of providing more money than expected. She said some of the strongest grants are returning grants, and since they've seen the growth they will continue to allow repeat grant proposals. Michelle Mercer mentioned the quality of the grants are getting better every year, but some are having trouble writing their ideas to follow grant criteria. Noelle Fredland will be resigning from the BCTF chair at the next board meeting.

Marketing Update

Nate Wyeth said the summer media buy ended on September 16th, and was the smallest summer media buy we've ever had. Visit Bend is focusing their marketing efforts on the shoulder season. They are still waiting on some invoices but have received over 2.5 million impressions throughout the course of the summer campaign. We jumpstarted our winter campaign the weekend of September 8th with a promotion in Eugene in partnership with Mt Bachelor. Nate will present the full winter marketing plan in the November Board Meeting. Visit Bend will focus their marketing efforts in Portland, Seattle and San Francisco. TripAdvisor has been a successful DMO partnership for Visit Bend, with over 780k pageviews in the last three months. The influencer marketing program is continuing, and recently

utilized the most recent influencer visits to help promote the Visit Bend trip planning tool on visitbend.com. This has been a successful campaign with helpful insight from those users. Visit Bend is in the process of rolling out new radio and TV scripts starting this fall and winter. On the website front, it was Visit Bend's goal to make SKIFTs list of top DMO websites, and although they changed their article focus to the top DMO websites with personalization, Visit Bend did make that list. Kevney Dugan mentioned Visit Bend has been paying attention to their keyword rankings and hasn't seen any dip in with the new website transition. Nate Wyeth added that they have been focusing on SEO reporting to ensure Visit Bend maintains their status. Another goal of the Visit Bend website was an increase in repeat visitors, and since the launch they have received a 6.4% increase. Two new breweries have been added to the new BAT Atlas, bringing it to a total of 18, and they have launched a new designated driver program. The purpose of the DD program is to help encourage people to be responsible while enjoying the trail. Paige Robinson requested some messaging be included along with the BAT to respect neighborhoods and the rentals they are staying in. Kevney responded saying they are working to balance promotions to a certain target while including messaging to care about the community, and although we want to put that message out there with responsible tourism, it is difficult to get that message to everyone. Nate mentioned the BAT campaign will officially starts on Oct 22, 2018. Visit Bend will not be doing any traditional TV advertising for the first time ever for the BAT, and instead focus on Hulu, Spotify, as well as radio and digital advertising. In the past 6 months, Facebook is seeing less and less reach due to algorithms, but are still seeing over 6m impressions, with 23K clicks to our website from our posts and ads. Visit Bend continues to outpace statewide and regional DMOs.

Public Relations and Social Media Update

Tawna Fenske said Visit Bend is continuing to see coverage from the winter/spring FAM visits they partnered with COVA and Mt Bachelor on. This is the first year Visit Bend has hosted FAM journalists in the summer in the last 3 years, including the arts and culture industry and hosting Outside Magazine, making sure to keep the articles targeted with a little control over messaging on fall and winter. Visit Bend recently hosted an arts and culture freelance journalists who had a great visit promoting the arts and culture scene in Bend. Top social posts include dog posts, engaging posts with a poll of 'choose your favorite' messaging, weekly Instagram roundups, floating the Deschutes River blog, live video, video in general, and in the moment posts regarding weather (which generate a lot of interest).

Group Sales Updates

Hank said there are exciting things happening and to reach out with any questions (cut short due to time).

VB Board Leadership

Dave Nissen mentioned there is a new Visit Bend Board Chair nominee, Noelle Fredland, and requested a motion to approve her as the new chair. Alan Dietrich approved Noelle as the new chair. Matt Williams seconded. The new chair was approved unanimously. In addition, the executive team will continue to be Alan Dietrich and Matt Williams. This is officially Dave Nissen's last board meeting. As a thank you to Dave for all his years as part of the Visit Bend Board of Directors, Kevney Dugan said Visit Bend made a donation in his name to two of his favorite organizations, the Deschutes Land Trust and Deschutes Historical Society.

Board Roundtable

Alan Dietrich said Bendistillery had a robust summer and it is turning into a strong fall. The tasting room is picking up, with a different type of marketing than they've done in the past. Michelle Mercer said Sun Country Tours are wrapping up their 40th year of rafting with the best season since 2011. Both Mt. Bachelor and Sun Country Tours are rolling out new websites. Paige Robinson said Bluebird Day Vacation Rentals' trends are in alignment with Visit Bend's. The second half of July quieted down, but they are in line with a really strong September. October is coming online now. Their marketing focus has been on a vibrant community, and they now have a treasure map with discounts and promotions at local businesses, which is going well. Marketing the community is strengthening the clientele. Matt Williams said the Pine Ridge Inn had a great July and August, September has been strong, and November a little light right now. All July went well compared to their competitors. The booking window is getting shorter. Noelle Fredland said the last concert is tomorrow night at the Les Schwab Amphitheatre, which is the last of the largest concert season the venue has ever had. The Old Mill District is already planning for the holidays. The People's Tree is coming to Bend, and Oregon has been

selected to provide the tree. It is also the 175th anniversary of the Oregon Trail and the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The tree will be in Bend on November 12th, the day before Veterans Day, along with other events. Oregon provides more Christmas Trees in the nation. The driver will be from Central Oregon Truck.

Public Comment

Fairfield Inn and Suites has almost wrapped up their remodel and are planning a big tour once that is complete. The Doubletree will start their remodel after the Fairfield Inn is complete (around November). The lobbies, bathrooms, and Crest NW area will be updated. The new Residence Inn is projected to open November 7th.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Notes by: Kelli Carrow
September 18, 2018