



VISIT BEND

Visit Bend Board of Directors Meeting Minutes May 21, 2019

Location: Bend Visitor Center

Present: Kevney Dugan, Valerie Warren, Nate Wyeth, Tawna Fenske, Kelli Carrow, Noelle Fredland, Michelle Mercer, Matt Williams, Alan Dietrich, John McLeod, Erick Trachsel, Brent McLean, Jason Lusk, Lisa Sidor, Scott Greenstone

Guests: Troy Kerr, Will Gryna, Dave Nissen, McKenzie Ballard, Katie Johnson, Joey Hamilton, Raul Ainardi, Carolyn Eagan, Eric Rock, Olivia Evers, Hank Therien, Kelly Newcombe, Suzanne Roig

Call to Order

Chair Noelle Fredland called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Introductions followed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Because there was not a quorum present during the March meeting, the meeting minutes from January were not approved at that time. Alan Dietrich moved that these minutes be approved. Michelle Mercer seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Alan Dietrich then moved that the March meeting minutes be approved. Erick Trachsel seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Financial Report

Scott Greenstone said that at a high level everything is tracking close to budget. Transient Room Tax revenue is higher than budget by approximately 4%. Year-over-year, revenue is up 6%. Personnel expenses are under budget. Sales and Marketing expenses are close to budget. Some of the surplus in this area has been spent.

The cash position in the cash reserve “Rainy Day” account is approximately \$139,000. Approximately \$101,000 is a cash reserve “Wind Down” fund.

The Bend Cultural Tourism Fund is on track to grant \$200,000 this year. Expenses are currently under budget.

Tourism Industry Briefing

Kevney Dugan presented recent room tax collection information. Both Bend and Deschutes County are showing high year-over-year growth for the past few months. AirDNA reporting has moved to a combined report rather than data just for Airbnb. STR reports show flat numbers.

More information is available in the Board Packet.

Kevney also noted that Paige Robinson has resigned from the Visit Bend Board of Directors as she is pursuing other career opportunities. The Board currently has an adequate number of Directors, but Kevney stated that it would be a good idea to seek an additional Board Member in the fall.

2020 Business Plan

Following the BEDAB approval and recommendation to City Council to approve the Business Plan, Kevney stated that the Bend City Council officially approved the Fiscal Year 2020 Business Plan on May 15th. Kevney went through the same presentation he gave to City Council.

The John McLeod moved for the Visit Bend Board of Directors to approve the Business Plan. Matt Williams seconded. The Business Plan was unanimously approved.

The Business Plan will be available on the Visit Bend website.

BCTF Recommendations

Noelle Fredland and Kevney reported that there was a meeting between the Visit Bend Board of Directors and representatives from the BCTF Executive Committee on May 10th. The Board has been presented with the grant recommendations for the upcoming year.

Michelle Mercer moved to approve the grant recommendations of the BCTF Commission. Brent McLean seconded. All voted in favor except for John McLeod, who abstained from voting.

Marketing Update

Nate Wyeth introduced Troy Kerr and Will Gryna from DVA who presented results from the winter media campaigns.

The budget was divided between digital, radio/streaming services, and TV/online TV streaming. A minor amount was spent on print.

The main goal was to increase transient room tax collections during the winter months. The monthly average increase was 10%.

Audience location showed the main audiences were Portland, Bend, Seattle-Tacoma, and San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose.

Sojern tracks marketing efforts back to hotel searches. Sojern showed that the ROI was \$20.32 return for each \$1 spend.

Sojern also showed that 40% of bookings take place within three weeks prior to actually visiting the area. The most common length of stay during the winter is 1-3 days.

Facebook delivered over 11 million impressions. Google Display delivered over 23 million impressions.

Nate stated that more money was shifted into digital this year. TV spots are also shifting toward streaming services such as Hulu. All of the goals for the winter campaign were exceeded. \$335,000 in additional TRT revenue was brought in during the winter months.

Nate said that the summer media buy will be around \$52,000 in the Portland area. Kelli Carrow highlighted some components of the campaign. OPB, *Outside* Online, and Oregon Live will be included in the campaign. The Bend Pledge will be a main part of the messaging. There will be a small social campaign as well.

The value of TripAdvisor is decreasing due to their redesign. Kelli reported that the destination page is more difficult to find. Pageviews and engagement are increasing as summer approaches.

The Google DMO program continues to be very successful. Bend has seen over 1.75 million views since October 2018. Referral traffic is also increasing. Nate stated that this program also increases Visit Bend's search strength.

Facebook and Instagram are performing well, with high quality photos continuing to perform the best. The weekly Instagram roundup is very popular. The Instagram influencer program increases reach. Facebook impressions over the past few months have decreased slightly. The Instagram following is growing.

A re-skin of the Visit Bend website is planned for launch in early August.

Total website visits are up by approximately 20,000. As we move toward summer, camping and hiking pages show higher traffic. The email newsletter is also performing well.

More information is available in the Board Packet.

Kevney presented the initial concept for the Pledge for the Wild website in partnership with Steamboat Springs, Bozeman, and South Lake Tahoe.

Public Relations Update

Tawna Fenske said that FAM trips continue to produce great media coverage. Journalists who are coming in now should be producing content for the fall.

More information is available in the Board Packet.

Group Sales Updates

Beverly Lucas is looking to partner with Mt. Bachelor on a large outdoor expo. This agenda item was cut short due to time constraints. Information is available in the Board Packet.

Board Roundtable

Kevney introduced Kelli Neumann, who is starting as Visit Bend's Visitor Center Manager today.

Public Comment

Carolyn Eagan of the City of Bend announced that the traffic report is available online.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

Notes by: Valerie Warren
May 21, 2019