



Visit Bend Board of Directors Meeting Minutes March 16, 2021

Location: Zoom

Present Via Zoom: Kevney Dugan, Nate Wyeth, Valerie Warren, Kelli Carrow, Laurel Hunter, Serena Gordon, Noelle Fredland, Michelle Mercer, Erick Trachsel, Diana Spring, Matt Williams, Todd Montgomery, Scott Greenstone

Via Zoom Guests:

Carla Moore, Raul Ainardi, Dave Nissen, Barbara Simms, Courtney Braun, Stephanie McNeil, Eric Rock, JoAnna Eisler, Meredith Mackey

Call to Order

Chair Noelle Fredland called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Financial Report

Scott Greenstone presented the most recent financial report through February 2021, eight months in to the fiscal year. Transient Room Tax collections continue to outpace the budget. Expenses are under budget.

Kevney Dugan stated that Visit Bend will cease receiving funding in upcoming months due to the 10% cap over the approved budget. The funds will be held by the City of Bend and will be released to Visit Bend during the next fiscal year, which starts on July 1.

Scott also reviewed the cash position and cash reserves. As marketing and grant activities have been on hold, the current cash position is high. The Bend Cultural Tourism Fund continues to be funded at 7.5% of city revenue.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Todd Montgomery moved to approve the January 2021 Board Meeting Minutes; Matt Williams seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Tourism Industry Briefing

Kevney discussed recent tourism industry data. TRT reports reflect that Deschutes County continues to be up year-over-year, likely reflecting the popularity of vacation rentals. For January, the city of Bend is close to returning to historical year-over-year collections. STR and AirDNA reports show that vacation rentals are also performing well in Bend. ADR is still low in comparison to past years.

Updates + Timelines

Kevney stated that the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund (BCTF) will be resuming activity. The application will go live on April 1. A timeline is available in the meeting packet.

A conversation has started with tourism industry stakeholders and the City of Bend regarding the City adopting the ability for tourism funds to be used for tourism-related facilities as well as tourism promotion, as defined in Oregon state law. A timeline is available in the meeting packet.

The Visit Bend staff has started the process of working on the annual Business Plan. A timeline is available in the meeting packet.

The Visitor Center is reopening on Friday, March 19. The staff is also going through training on the new Wilderness Permit system.

Marketing Update & Strategy

Nate Wyeth said that the marketing team has been working on updates to the Bend Ale Trail as well as website improvements to the event calendar and listings. A new feature will suggest activities based on the season and weather.

The team continues to work on planning for the future.

The new Bend Ale Trail will focus on seven territories. “Perfect Pairings” will suggest activities and adventures in each area. Seven artists were commissioned to create artwork for the territories. The paper passport will be available for a fee and a new app will be launched. The prizes will be four-ounce taster glasses – unique for each territory as well as for Drinkable Diversions. The Designated Driver program will also continue. The new Bend Ale Trail will go live in early summer.

Board Questions + Comments

Matt Williams stated that January and February were strong. The booking window is short and most of the travelers are leisure, not business, travelers.

Todd Montgomery said that he has already had several companies coming to him looking for summer labor.

Noelle Fredland wondered if lack of housing would be an issue for the labor pool.

Diana Spring said that their booking window is shortening, but they still have several houses that are renting monthly. Homeowners are also coming to stay in their own homes.

Community Questions + Comments

Dave Nissen of Wanderlust Tours said that they are seeing business pick up. They have had a lot of interest in guide positions. They do not have any corporate groups; their bookings are all leisure travelers.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Notes by: Valerie Warren, March 16, 2021