**Visit Southeast Montana**

**Board of Directors**

**Meeting Minutes, February 7, 2017**

**Conference Call (due to inclement weather)**

Board Members in Attendance:

Jeff Ewelt, Nicole Borner, Dennis Kopitzke, Mona Madler, Dale Galland, Chip Watts, Lyn Ohl, Peggy Iba, Dan Johnson, Glenda Uleland, John Laney, Jeff Walters, Doug Habermann

Staff Present:

John Brewer, Megan Stevenson, Brenda Maas, Aly Murnion

Guests:

Sandy Watts, Butch Bratsky, Laurie Tschetter, Jaclyn Moos, Connie Hilger, Suzy Havener

**Welcome, Introductions and Public Comments**

Meeting called to order at 2:05 p.m. Brenda Maas completes roll call. Chip Watts (Chair) asks for public comment not on the agenda. There are none.

**Minutes for December meeting**

Dale Galland moves to approve; Jeff Ewelt seconds. No discussion. Motion passed.

**Financial Overview**

Megan Stevenson gives financial overview. Glenda Uleland moves to accept; Peggy Iba seconds. No discussion. Motion to approve financial overview.

Megan gives update on external audit. Board members were contacted to answer questions about audit and fraud questionnaire. Expect to finalize external audit at next meeting.

**Strategic discussion**

Brenda and Jaclyn Moos (Mercury) present the final FY17 warm season campaign. Brenda thanks board for feedback. Jaclyn adds that timing is starting a little later than planned, due to budget adjustment, but will start March 1. It includes (1) ad to promote non-stop American Airlines flight from Dallas/Fort Worth to Billings to service the region. Additionally, Jaclyn explains how animation of online ads work and that ads will be served to targeted markets based on online behavior and demographics. Chip expands that these ads are meant to cover entire region of Southeast Montana. John Brewer thanks the board for input, noting they helped make the campaign better.

**American Airlines Update**

John explains the importance of Billings airport to the region and that region now has a direct flight from Billings to Dallas/Fort Worth, the 4th busiest airport in terms of passenger numbers and expands to 44 other airports. The bid was funded through grants and other private business support and $250k will be spent to market the Dallas/Fort Worth area, including Visit Billings funds. Service starts June 3. Chip mentions that Exec Committee feels that it is worth it to invest in this because of the traffic it can bring to the region.

**Strategic Planning for FY18**

John calls for discussion. Explains that we aren’t looking for action items but to provide feedback to help marketing staff with planning. John starts with Southeast Montana research and opens conversation to the board, which spends a fair amount of time discussing and concluded with:

Re-order the Identity in this order: Outdoor Recreation; Western Authenticity; Historic Significance; Accessibility and Facilities; Dinosaur Adventure and Native American Culture.

Strategic Goals for FY18: Grow In-region Partnerships; Develop Marketing Partnerships; Support Tourism Product Development; and Produce Quality Marketing Initiatives.

Highlights of conversation include ideas on thematic tear-off style and/or “download-able” maps; training session for low-cost marketing tools; and potential app of region and/or itineraries.

**Committee and Board Reports**

Visit SEMT Board has received application from Christine Whitlatch (Glendive Chamber of Commerce/Dawson Co.). Peggy Iba motions to accept; Dale Galland seconds. No Discussion. Motion approved.

**Cooperative Marketing Grants**

Brenda notes error in typing and that balance available is $4960, not $4,190.

One application is in and committee will discuss in near term.

**Legislative Updates**

John Laney had to leave call. John Brewer and Doug Habermann update all on most recent bills in legislature that affect tourism and encourage all to be informed. Chip asks if there are any motions to take a position on a specific bill. There are none.

John details Tourism Matters and how it works, lobbying for the industry. Chip asks for a motion to contribute $1,000 of unrestricted to support Tourism Matters. Dennis Kopitzke moves. Jeff Ewelt seconds. No Discussion. Motion approved.

**Billings Chamber Annual Breakfast**

SEMT invites board members to purchase table to attend. Chip calls for a motion to use unrestricted funds to purchase tickets for SEMT Board members who wish to attend. Mona Mader moves to approve purchase. Dan seconds. No Discussion Motion passed.

Board meeting schedule is noted along with possibility of moving to Big Horn County Museum rather than Little Bighorn Battlefield and June 15th meeting will be in Miles City.

Chip calls for final comments and concerns.

Meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.