

**Visit Southeast Montana**

**Board of Directors**

**Meeting Minutes, June 15, 2017 – 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

**Sleep Inn, Conference Room**

**1006 S. Haynes Ave., Miles City, MT**

Board Members in Attendance:, Nicole Borner, Lyn Ohl, Mona Madler, Leslie Janshen, Christine Whitlatch, Chip Watts, Dale Galland, Peggy Iba, John Laney, Dianna Murnion, Dennis Kopitzke; Chris Dantic (standing in for Doug Habermann)

Staff Present: John Brewer, Brenda Maas and Aly Murnion

Guests: Davey Madison (Governor’s office); Sandy Watts (7th Ranch and RV); Jan Stoddard (MOTBD); Tracy Baker (MCAEDC); Beth Epley (EPEDC); Shyla Goettemoeller (Baker Chamber of Commerce); Mark Jacobsen (BLM); Jim McGowan, Erika McGowan, Kyle McGowan, Megan Richter and Tommy the Intern (Windfall); Dee Abbott (Camp 21, Miles City); Ralph Spence (Billings Community Foundation)

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Welcome and Introductions**
Leslie Janshen introduced Tracy Baker, who welcomed group to Miles City. Davey Madison from Governor Bullock’s office was also introduced and welcomed all. Introductions made around the room.

**Public comments**

Chip Watts called for public comment. No public comments

**Approval of April 13, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

John Laney moved to approve the April 13 minutes. Mona seconds. No discussion. Motion passed.

**Financial Overview**

John Brewer presented April – May, 2017 variance report and financials. Peggy Iba moved to approve. Dale Galland seconds. No discussion and motion passed.

**FY17 and Proposed FY18 Administrative Budget**

John Brewer presented administrative budget for FY18 and FY17, noting that the maximum allowed is 20% of revenue. FY17 projected to be $1,500 short; FY18 could be $15,000 short, mainly due to 11% increase in health insurance/benefits for staff and professional salaries.

John Laney proposed transferring $1,500 of unrestricted funds for FY17 shortage, if necessary.

Christine Whitlatch moved to approve. John Laney seconds. During discussion John Laney noted that shortage will need to be addressed in near future. Chip Watts said that new Agency of Record, Windfall (guests at meeting) works with Glacier Country to generate private funds via the travel guide and Board will look to their ideas, too. Motion approved.

**Proposed FY18 Non-bed Tax Funds**

John Brewer presented the non-bed tax (private) funds budget, noting that in good shape but need to look at options to generate more private funds.

John Laney moved to table decision and form committee that includes Windfall to develop plan to back-fill the possible $15,000 admin budget shortage that could happen in FY18, returning to next meeting with a recommendation to address the potential shortfall. Christine Whitlatch seconds. No further discussion. Motion passed.

**STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS:**

**FY18 Marketing Plan & Budget**

Brenda noted that marketing plan and budget presentation at TAC meeting went well and was approved. She showed the *Fresh Tracks* video (topic: how to find public places to hunt in Southeast Montana), which was also part of the TAC presentation. John Brewer noted that he thought the SEMT presentation was best of all six regions and that he heard positive comments about how well SEMT collaborates with CVBs in the region.

**Presentation from Jan Stoddard of Sales and Constituent Services**

Jan Stoddard of MOTBD’s Sales and Constituents Services Bureau gave presentation about what the Bureau does and how it relates to Visit Southeast Montana. Jan also talked about TAC (Tourism Advisory Council), noting that there will open positions and those interested in applying should do so prior to Sept. 1. Steve Wahrlich, current TAC member and owner of Best Western ClockTower Inn, Billings, summarized TAC mission, history and accomplishments, and shared his role and experiences. Jan, Steve and John Brewer all emphasized need for applicants from SEMT so that Eastern Montana is represented.

LUNCH BREAK

**Presentation on Billings Community Foundation**

Ralph Spence gave a short presentation on Billings Community Foundation, noting that BCF covers more than Billings including Yellowstone, Carbon, Stillwater, Big Horn, Treasure, Rosebud, Custer and Musselshell Counties. BCF promotes philanthropy and charitable giving, donating via Yellowstone Valley Gives. For more information see BillingsCommunityFoundation.org

**STRATEGIC GOALS**

**Produce Quality Marketing Initiatives**

Brenda Maas and Aly Murnion give update on marketing efforts, including attendance at International Pow Wow, RUI post-fam, media fams and *Fresh Tracks* sponsorship. Brenda introduces new Agency of Record (AOR), Windfall, Inc., including the staff present (see Guest List above).

**Develop Marketing Partnerships…outside the region**

Brenda Maas gave brief update on long-standing Dino Trail partnership, noting that attendance numbers continue to increase. VDino Trail maps were updated and printed in May, the group will submit a grant proposal to MOTBD for an upgraded website and SEMT will commit joint venture funds in support. MOTBD retiree Victor Bjornberg heads this group as a volunteer; Brenda shared her appreciation for his efforts.

**Grow In-Region Partnerships…to connect to constituents**

Dee Abbott gave presentation about Camp 21, which includes Tusler Guest House, event center and by-appointment bus tours. Camp 21 is the location of General Custer’s 21st campsite of 1876, located on the Yellowstone Jewel property and is available for private bookings.

Brenda invites Partners to provide input on what they would like to see in off-season workshops around the region.

**Support Tourism Product Development**

Custer Loop - Dennis Kopitzke noted that Custer Loop is near completion; 17 signs should be installed by end of July. He requested marketing help from SEMT.

Brenda Maas noted Belle Fouche, SD, Chamber president reached out to her regarding a potential earned media opportunity for the Warrior Trail. John Brewer updated group on American Airlines direct flights into Billings and the upcoming Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site project, which is near completion.

**Committee/Task Force and Board Reports**

**Executive Committee**

Chip Watts presented by-laws changes (as presented in board packets). John Laney moved to approve. Peggy Iba seconds. No discussion and motion passed.

John Brewer noted that we still have a few who need to sign and submit Conflict of Interest and Whistle-blower policies. Brenda handed out and later collected completed documents to be filed.

**Nominating Committee**

**Officers and Terms**

John Brewer presented recommendations for Offices from Nominating Committee (see board packet).

Christine Whitlatch moved to accept Officers as slated and second terms for board members. Mona Madler seconded. No Discussion. Motion passed.

Two members have termed out: John Laney and Mona Madler. This is their last meeting and all offer big thanks for service. No action required.

**Appointment of New Board Members**

John Laney stays as an ex-officio non-voting member. Mona will also stay on as an ex-officio. Accepted by both.

Beth Epley and Shyla Goettemoeller are interested in positions on the board from Fallon County. The committee recommends them pending their formal applications.

Ruth Zangara has resigned. Doug Gardner has resigned. Brenda also has interest from Sabre Moore, of Carter County Museum (Carter County).

Dale Galland moved to accept all members of board, pending applications: Sabre Moore, Beth Epley and Shyla Goettemoeller. Christine Whitlatch seconds. No discussion and motion passed.

John Brewer explained the position of Ex-officio with the Chamber of Commerce. Doug Miles of KULR will serve as the new ex-officio.

**Marketing Grants**

Dale Galland updated all on cooperative marketing grant – most recent is a small grant to Carter County Museum for Shin Dig marketing. At this point, Brenda noted that no more grants will be awarded because of budget concerns. Recommendations for new grant application language are not yet available. Brenda reminded that cooperative marketing grants are not in the FY18 budget, unless revenues come in higher than expected.

**Legislative Update**

Legislative Committee Development

John Laney gave update on legislative session with input from Jan Stoddard: Tribal Tourism will receive $100,000 to work with TAC and develop a plan; Calgary office bill did not pass; budget bill revolves around general fund.

John Laney also explained that Voices is an educational group while Tourism Matters is a lobbying group and asks for Boards cooperation with lobbying. John Brewer noted that Board would like to develop a legislative policy for SEMT and asked for volunteers.

The following offered: John Laney; Nicole Borner (requests phone conferences); Peggy Iba suggests Glendive mayor; Beth Epley; and Sandy Watts.

**Updates from around the region**

John Laney presented new video for Miles City promotion.

Brenda and Aly mentioned USA Today’s Readers’ Choice Awards, noting that 4 nominees are from SEMT. Encouraged all to vote.

John Brewer reminded that LiNK, visitor guides and Yellowstone Kelly coloring books for all to take as needed, plus noted upcoming Young Professional Summit.

Peggy Iba mentioned Miss Montana scholarship program. Invited all to attend. Cape Air now offers $29 flights to Glendive. Peggy also mentioned the Bridger bronze sculpture project.

Dianna Murnion mentioned the Quigley Rifle Shoot.

Meeting adjourns at 2:42

All encouraged to attend a brief tour of the Agricultural Advancement Center at Miles City Community College (340 I 94 Business Loop).