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**Executive Committee Minutes**

Tuesday, December 5, 2017, 10 a.m.

Called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Members on the call: Chip Watts; Jeff Ewelt; Dale Galland and Dan Austin

Staff on the call: John Brewer; Brenda Maas & Dan Brooks

**Legislative Planning Update**

Dan Brooks shared update on Governor’s special session.

Special Session began Monday November 13th and concluded Thursday, November 16th. Approximately a dozen bills were passed to address the $227 million revenue shortfall and included:

* $94 million in fund transfers
* $76 million in budget cuts
* $60 million in fees/furloughs/prison funds (below)
  + $30 million fee to certain State Fund accounts (State Fund filed suit)
  + $15 million mandatory furloughs (Governor vetoed)
  + $15 million from private prison (w/ option to take up to $30 million)

Dan testified at the hearing on lodging and rental car tax increases and distributed the letter from SEMT stating favorability to a 1% increase to lodging and rental car taxes, with the additional provisions:

* tax increase is temporary, ending by Dec 31, 2019
* earmarks additional revenue specifically to cover firefighting costs
* prompts Dept. of Revenue to enforce lodging tax remittance from Airbnb
* honors existing contracts established by vendors

The lodging and rental car tax increase bill was tabled in committee.

Dan also updated all on the Legislative Committee call, with focus on 1) defending lodging tax and 2) supporting state park infrastructure throughout SEMT. Other issues: rural telecommunications; TBID (defend the law and ability to create a TBID); wayfinding signage; and, workforce training.

**Budget Update**

Brenda updated all on what 5-10% Q3 reduction means: translates into potential $15-20,000. She suggested holding on VIC ($15,000) and Opportunity ($5,000) funding.

Brenda asked to send letters to each VIC and copy the county’s representative (I.E. Amy Morin and Chip Watts for Big Horn County).

Board to revisit VIC and Opportunity funding at April meeting.

**Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument General Management Plan**

Call to be held Dec. 14; Brenda will “attend.” Dan to draft and submit letter, advocating for improvements including returning artifacts to LBBNM in Montana. Dan to create advocacy platform and Brenda to send eblast to Tourism Partners to drive engagement.

**Input on Board Meeting**

Brenda notes that Dax Schieffer/Voices of Tourism and Pat Doyle/MT State Parks will present at January meeting.

John asks if we want to take time at January to re-examine where we are in terms of strategy. Jeff Ewelt notes that we do not want to get too comfortable. Chip feels we should not fix what isn’t broken, but possibly look for more data. Dan thinks previous research has been a waste of money. Jeff commented that we need to use the expertise that is on the Board.

Additional Notes:

April meeting conflicts with the Governor’s Conference; Brenda proposes April 24 at date. This date works for Chip, Jeff and Dale. Dan and John have potential conflict. Date will be changed to April 24 (in Billings or Laurel).

Meeting adjourned.

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