**Meeting Minutes for**

**Visit Southeast Montana Board of Directors**

The **MISSION** of Visit Southeast Montana is to increase visitors to Southeast Montana by increasing awareness of our region, showcasing our cultural heritage, developing memorable experiences and educating our residents about the economic benefits of tourism. [www.SoutheastMontana.com](http://www.SoutheastMontana.com)

**April 17, 2019 – 10:00 a.m. – 2:20 p.m.**

**First United Methodist Church**

**319 1st Street West**

**Roundup, MT 59072**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Chip Watts, Jeff Ewelt, Dale Galland, Beth Epley, Glenn Heitz, Diane Murnion, Leslie Janshen, Peggy Iba (via phone), Sabre Moore, Randy Schoppe, Mike Tranel, Chris Dantic, Aly Murnion, Doug Miles, Mindy Kohn

**Staff Present:**

John Brewer, Brenda Maas, Michele Flanagan, Megan Stevenson

**Guests:**

Kristen Sackett (Windfall Studio), Steve Wahrlich (Best Western Clock Tower Inn), Dale Alger (First United Methodist Church), Terry Steiner (Yellowstone County Museum), Gay Kepple (Huntley Project Museum), Chelsey Beck (Friends of Pompeys Pillar), Neal Gunnels (Friends of Pompeys Pillar), Jennifer Hall (Carter County Museum), Shawn Dutton (First Security Bank of Roundup) Theresa Doumitt (Roundup Chamber of Commerce)

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Meeting called to order at 10:05 a.m. Attendance and introductions made. Dale Alger welcomed the group and gave a short overview of Roundup.

**Public Comments:**

Theresa Doumitt spoke about the revitalization of the Main Street Project in Roundup and John Brewer gifted Yellowstone Kelly prints to each board member. John also provided update on the 406 Impacts District bill, the draft legislation that would have created the financial tools to kick-start Billings' One Big Sky District, which failed to advance in Legislature. The Billings Chamber of Commerce will continue to advocate and educate the public on the importance and need for new economic development tools.

**Approval of January 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes:**

Sabre Moore moved to approve, Beth Epley seconds. No Discussion. Motion passed.

**Financial Overview:**

Megan Stevenson gave financial overview, noting revenue over expenses is $19,775 over budget. No discussion. Jeff Ewelt moved to approve, Diane Murnion seconds. Motion passed.

**Strategic Discussion:**

**Update on Legislative, TAC and Governors Conference (moved up for timing issues)**

John Brewer gave legislative update and encouraged all to follow and support SB 24. Steve Wahrlich reported that updated TAC rules and regulations are a move in the right direction and Governor’s conference was successful.

**Marketing Update**

Brenda reviewed the quarterly dashboard noting protocol change to call center inquiries. Due to budget, an email will be sent to top market inquires offering guide information if wanted vs. blind sending guides to every inquiry. Top state inquiries stayed consistent: Texas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, California and Florida. Social media numbers are up, most likely due to paid social which has in turn boosted organic content. She also provided updates on TBEX, advertising, creative, and how to order travel guides.

**Presentation of FY20 Marketing Plan & Budget**

Brenda presented proposed FY20 marketing plan & budget, noting Crisis Communication Plan budget line and the need for it. Also suggested a future Board Retreat/Strategy Session. Board agreed with both. Chip Watts moved to approve, Lesley Janshen seconds. Motion passed.

**Strategic Goals:**

**Produce Quality Marketing Initiatives**

Kristen from Windfall gave update on media buys, travel guides, website and partner website. She encouraged feedback in regards to recently launched partner site and noted that all FY20 guides have been delivered to respective distribution centers. Kristen also presented the SEMT final video which was very well received.

BREAK FOR LUNCH

**Develop Marketing Partnerships…Outside the Region**

**Montana Dinosaur Trail**

Sabre Moore shared that the Montana Dinosaur Trail has 50% increase in visitation. Jenn Hall presented the MT Dino Trail Poster Design Project, a joint venture with MOTBD and Carter County Museum, noting all posters are available on RedBubble in various forms of merchandise.

**Montana Heritage Foundation**

Christine Whitlatch will present at next board meeting in June

**Eastern Montana Tourism Partner Initiative**

Brenda provided brief update on the initial meetings and noted that the geographic area lies from Lewistown to Billings and east. The regions were broken into zones, base on spending by county. As part of this initiative MOTBD purchased Arrivalist data for each county. The initial meetings were listening session. Next meetings will roll-out marketing strategy, to be implemented this warm season. Next meetings will be held in early June, with wrap-up in the fall.

**Grow In-Region Partnerships…to Connect to Constituents**

**Marketing Workshops**

Brenda reported that March’s marketing workshops were successful with 45 attendees between the 2 sessions and encourages board to share *semtpartner.com* with their communities.

**Letters of Support**

Dale noted the two letters of support from SEMT on pages 9-10, and encouraged all to reach out if in need of letter of support.

**National Park Service**

Mike Tranel, Superintendent of Powder River Group spoke about MT and WY working together to promote Fort Laramie National Historic Site, Devils Tower National Monument, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument and Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. A historian was suggested to aid in future itineraries to connect the four sites. Mike also expressed the need for commercial services and improvements to Bighorn Canyon.

**Update on Legislative, TAC and Governor’s Conference**

Presented earlier for timing, was part of Strategic Discussion.

**Support Tourism Product Development**

Nothing new to report.

**Committee/Task Force and Board Reports:**

**Legislative Update**

John Brewer presented earlier, as noted above.

**Grants Committee**

Chip Watts updated that 3 cooperative marketing grant applications have been approved: 1) RIDE, 2) Powder River County, 3) Carter County Museum. The committee encouraged Friends of Pompeys Pillar to re-apply. Next deadline is June 1, with $6,000 remaining funds.

**Other Announcements**

* Leslie Janshen: Miles City Bucking Horse sale is this May and Keep Miles City Beautiful is in full swing.
* Diane Murnion: States the Matthew Quigley Buffalo Rifle Match is June 15 & 16.
* Aly Murnion: Reports Visit Billings is busy with TBEX and getting ready for warm season.
* Chris Dantic: Makoshika State Park Buzzard Day is June 8 and Visit Glendive produced a new brochure, Glendive Dinosaur Consortium.
* Beth Epley: June 21 Baker Lake will have a ribbon cutting and will showcase a series of 3 new signs that show the lake’s evolution. MEDA Spring Conference will be held in Glendive May 20-22.
* Glenn Heitz: Prairie County Museum and Evelyn Cameron Gallery will open Memorial Day. Also encourages support for Prairie County’s rifle range on public land.
* Jeff Ewelt: The new bison exhibit has been very successful, winter attendance was up, and ZooMontana has applied for AZA accreditation.
* Chip Watts: Nothing new to report.
* Dale Galland: Encourages all to attend the Prairie County 4th of July rodeo, and also expresses support for the rifle range on public land.
* Randy Schoppe: Little Big Horn Days will be June 20-23 with expanded family focused activities.
* Mile Tranel: National Park Week is April 20-28.
* Mindy Kohn: Colstrip Days will be June 21-23.
* Doug Miles: The Billings Chamber will continue to be involved in trails, legislative candidates, and will have board member openings.
* Sabre Moore: Discussed several successful grants, Carter County Museum is getting ready for accreditation, and educating students with new star lab. Dark Skies Program will hold first event on June 18.
* Dale Algers: Musselshell County Museum will open May 4.
* Brenda Maas: Encourages all to apply for MOTBD Events grants.

Meeting adjourned 2:20 p.m.

**Board Meeting Schedule**

All meetings 10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted. All times subject to change.

June 19 (Ekalaka)

Group was invited to visit Coila Evans’ Gallery.