



Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 30, 2022
Hot Springs Hotel & Spa, Thermopolis WY

Tourism Board Members Present: Anna Olson (Vice Chairman), Budd Betts, Quintin Blair, John Johnson, Ken Barkey, Mark Tesoro, Shawn, Parker.

Staff Members Present: Diane Shober, Lisa Osvold, Kristy Simola, Dionne Roccaforte, Michell Howard, Brittany Campbell, Charles Lammers, and James Scoon.

Guests Present: Chris Brown, Wyoming Hospitality and Travel Coalition (WHTC); Patrick Harrington, Outdoor Recreation; Forrest Lamminga, Wyoming State Trails; Jackie Dorothy, Hot Springs Lodging and Tax Board.

- I. Vice Chairman, Anna Olson, called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m
- II. The meeting minutes from June 20, 2022 were presented for approval. Shawn Parker motioned to approve the minutes; Budd Betts seconded; motion passed unanimously.

III. **Financials**

- A. **Year to Date Budget Summary** - Accounting Manager, Dionne Roccaforte, presented the year to date financials as of July 31, 2022. Mark Tesoro motioned to approve the financials as presented; Shawn Parker seconded; motion passed unanimously.
- B. **Statewide Lodging Tax Collections** - Accounting Manager, Dionne Roccaforte, presented the Statewide Lodging Tax Collections report as of July 31, 2022. Ken Barkey motioned to approve; Shawn Parker seconded; motion passed unanimously.

IV. **Contracts**

A. **College Cowboy Marketing Program**

1. Casper College
2. Central Wyoming College
3. Eastern Wyoming College
4. Laramie County Community College
5. Gillette Community College District - Gillette
6. Northern Wyoming Community College - Sheridan
7. Northwest Community College
8. University of Wyoming

The purpose of this contract is sponsorship for operations and scholarship opportunities for eight Wyoming College Rodeo Programs for the 2022/2023 school year. This is a \$10,000 annual increase. Shawn Parker motioned to approve; Budd Betts seconded; motion passed unanimously. This is a budgeted item in Business Operations.

B. Information Only

1. **Elisabeth Brentano - Influencer** - The purpose of this contract is for the influencer to provide content for TravelWyoming.com and Travel Wyoming social media channels, plus content shared to the influencer's social media. Contract amount will not exceed \$15,600 and is fully executed through July 31, 2023. This is a budgeted item in Brand Studio.
2. **Adaptive & Co Limited** - The purpose of this contract is for the agency to provide the Google Analytics 4 (GA4) upgrade and develop a comprehensive audit and assessment of Tourism's digital analytics, from the point of data collection to processing and presentation within reports. Contract amount will not exceed \$35,200 and is fully executed through July 31, 2023. This is a budgeted item in Brand Studio.

V. Director's Reports

A. Business Operations

1. Director of Strategy Business Operations, Lisa Osvold, introduced herself and shared her 90 day plan for her team and Wyoming Office of Tourism (WOT) Business Operations. The board introduced themselves to Lisa and welcomed her to WOT and the Tourism Board.

B. Brand Studio

1. Staffing Updates - Senior Director of Brand Studio, Michell Howard, announced that Brand Studio has recently promoted two staff members; Piper Singer is the new Communications Senior Manager, and Lexi Mitchell is the new Content Manager. WOT is still recruiting for the Public Relations Manager position in Brand Studio.
2. Destination Listings Program - Brand Studio has partnered with Miles to create the Destination Listings Program. The purpose of this program is to help DMO's and businesses in their communities elevate their online presence, and to keep their Google listings up to date with accurate information and location.
3. Wyoming Content Coverage - Every year Brand Studio reviews their content investments to determine where content is being covered; new itineraries, PR and article content creation, etc. This is done to ensure WOT is covering as many areas of the state as possible.
4. In-state Hospitality Campaign - The purpose of this campaign is to stimulate workforce by attracting people to the Tourism industry. It will target students in hospitality programs, as well as individuals wanting to relocate and work in the hospitality industry.

C. Global Partnerships

1. Staffing Updates - Director of Global Partnerships, James Scoon, announced Sarah Reed as the new Global Partnerships Senior Coordinator as of August 1, 2022.
2. Howdy Neighbor Video Series - The concept of this new video series is meant to take people around Wyoming to show a realistic experience of what traveling through the state would look like. Four videos have been filmed so far, and the last one is scheduled to be filmed in Yellowstone this winter. The original target of this series was the international audience but the team is looking to expand it to be used across WOT's platforms for the domestic market as well.

3. Destination Development Program - James Scoon reviewed the three-tier system in which the counties sit. Teton County will sit alone in tier A1. The next steps involve working with the Attorney General's office to get approval for distribution, finalize dollar amounts, create a landing page, and finalize a distribution method.
4. Travel Trade Update - Global Partnerships has been working with the Great American West Partnership and Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours on how to best work with an international audience. For the first time in approximately eight years, international in-market representatives will come to Wyoming. There will be a week-long familiarization (FAM) tour focused on some of Wyoming's lesser known areas. This is a great opportunity to educate the tour operators.

VI. **Executive Director's Report**

- A. Supplemental Budget - Executive Director, Diane Shoher, updated the board on the supplemental budget. During the 23/24 budget year, WOT had requested \$400,000 for the ongoing maintenance on the Northeast and Southeast Wyoming Welcome Centers; however, the request was denied. Due to the ongoing need and increased costs for maintenance, WOT is working with Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) and the Governor's Office to put forth a supplemental budget request of \$600,000.
- B. Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Culteral Resources (TRWCR) Committee Meeting -
 1. Executive Director, Diane Shoher stated that she, Michell Howard and James Scoon will provide a budget and program overview for the TRWCR committee meeting.
 2. Creative Assets Manager, Charles Lammers, presented a chart reviewing a multi-tier approach for the film production rebate that is to be presented at the TRW Meeting. Since Wyoming does not have a film incentive program and is surrounded by states that do, there is concern about missed production opportunities. The proposed film production incentive will include a 2-tier system for providing 15% - 30% rebate on qualified Wyoming expenditures incurred while on location on Wyoming.

VII. **Board Development** - Vice Chairman, Anna Olson, announced her resignation from the Tourism Board, which leaves the board without a Vice Chairman and an open seat for District 6. On behalf of Chairman Keller, Executive Director, Diane Shoher, thanked Anna for her years in the Tourism industry, friendship and support.

VIII. **Old Business** - There was no old business to discuss.

IX. **New Business**

A. Wyoming Hospitality and Tourism Coalition (WHTC); Industry Updates, Fall Summit -

1. Executive Director of WHTC, Chris Brown, stated that in order to better support Wyoming hospitality and tourism, the Wyoming Lodging and Restaurant Association (WLRA), and the Wyoming Travel Industry Coalition (WTIC), have been combined into one organization. Chris is looking forward to rolling out the brand as they move forward. On behalf of WHTC, Chris plans to present to the TRWCR committee meeting August 31, 2022.
2. Upcoming Events - Fall Summit will be held in Casper this year, on October 19th and 20th at the Ramkota; the Governor's Conference will be held in Cheyenne at Little America, January

29-30, 2023.

3. Legislative Update - Chris Brown with WHTC, gave a legislative update. Chris discussed some significant topics including Wyoming liquor licenses, and the lodging tax statute.

B. Winter Access via Yellowstone National Park NE Entrance - "Plowing the Plug" - Board Member Quintin Blair with Blair Hotels, and Forrest Kamminga with Wyoming State Trails, discussed a trail that goes through Yellowstone National Park (YNP) and Cook City, Montana. During the winter months this trail remains unplowed, providing for winter recreation and snowmobiling. The trail map, accessible here, <https://wyo.evtrails.com/#>, which highlights the 15.8 mile path, was reviewed. A local Cody working group has been created, aimed to explore over the road access to Yellowstone National Park. The winter access could provide a substantial economic benefit. Questions regarding how snowmobiling traffic would be rerouted if the road is plowed, and how this endeavor would be funded, will need to be resolved. The board was encouraged to stay informed of this ongoing discussion.

C. Outdoor Recreation Grant Program

1. Manager of Outdoor Recreation, Patrick Harrington, shared the development of the Pathfinder Program, which provides concierge level services to visitors, residents, local businesses and organizations by providing accurate and detailed information in regard to outdoor recreation and activities. This is especially useful in emergency situations such as the recent flooding in YNP.
2. During the last legislative session, the Outdoor Recreation office received two million dollars, which was matched by the American Rescue Plan (ARPA), to develop outdoor recreation granting programs intended to be used for state park development. The office received an additional 10 million to build the granting program, which so far has 25 million in applications, and 10 million in matching funds. This effort is to demonstrate the need for outdoor recreation across Wyoming. Patrick shared his appreciation to WOT for the support of the Pathfinder Program.

X. **Public Comments** - There were no public comments.

XI. **Executive Session** - There was no executive session.

XII. **Adjourn** - Upon conclusion of the meeting, Mark Tesoro motioned; Shawn Parker seconded to adjourn at 4:10 p.m.; the motion passed unanimously.