

WHITEFISH

• MONTANA •

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 10, 2025

2:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Location: Whitefish City Hall

1. Call to Order

- Time: 2:32 pm
- Chairperson: Jessie Farnes

2. Attendance

- **Board Members Present:**
Jessie Farnes, Rhonda Fitzgerald, Matt Gebo, Kent Taylor, Edna White, Lauren Oscilowski, Erica Terrell, Kim Worman
- **Explore Whitefish Staff/Partners-Agencies/Guests and/or Non-members Present:**
Zak Anderson, Lilian Bassett, Brian Schott- PR, Mary Angelo (DVA)
- **Community Member(s) in Attendance:** None
- **Absent:** Mariah Joos, Julie Mullins, Nicole Schmid
- **Quorum** met with 8 out of 9

3. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

- **Motion to Approve:** Matt G
- **Seconded by:** Rhonda F
- **Approved (Y/N):** Y

4. Public Comment: None

5. Reports

A. Agency Reports

- **Public Relations:** Presented by Brian Schott
Summary: Presented Slides
Publicity Highlights. Powder Mag article hit the internet, article on Spotted Bear Spirits.
Meltwater Coverage Report
Green Business Awards, open for applicants to end of March. Community Survey going out, get updated data for tourism sentiment. Matt Gebo new chair of STMP committee

Press Trip - Feb 26 - March 2nd. Glacier Country Helped with cost
King 5 Morning Show host coming from Seattle in the fall. \$5,000 this FY, \$5,000 for next FY

Board Comments:

Rhonda: Nice to have Glacier Country to help out. Is this a change of heart from Glacier Country?

Brian: Glacier Country was open to allocating \$8,000-\$10,000 to Whitefish, which helps.

Rhonda: Question about Green Business awards

Brian: Businesses that are best practices, one selected winner

- **DVA Agency Report:** Presented by Mary Angelo

Summary: Presented Slides

Spring/Secret Season Planning timeframe discussed

Staff review of Spring/Secret Season then it will go to Marketing Committee

Board Comments:

Rhonda: Attribution for programmatic. How do you arrive at those confirmed travelers

Mary: We are using either mobile IDs or bookings, each programmatic is different. Mary confirms that she is pretty positive it's mobile IDs.

Rhonda: Struck by visits by DMA, Seattle is off the chart. Curious about what was used, so just confirming that it's mobile ID

Mary: Seattle definitely shows up as #1 market in spend and visitation compared to other markets. Many ads get served to Seattle. When she saw that Seattle was such a huge percentage, she asked Luke if we are getting an unfair spend going to Seattle - looking at now to see if it's being unfairly skewed

Rhonda: It seems skewed towards young men

Mary: That could be who is easier to track due to Mobile IDs. As long as we're seeing things are fairly even, generally speaking data isn't getting too skewed.

Rhonda: Confirmed travelers and economic impact, should that number be bigger?

Mary: Understating the amount of economic impact

Rhonda: Used to get a report during these meetings of what campaign is top performing.

Mary: Luke puts the top three campaigns on the slides

Rhonda: Screenshot of the snowmobiling but it says skiing. It would be nice to know exactly which is the best performing campaign. It would be nice to know the top pages each month, wondering if we can see those again. Curious about webcams, it would be nice to know that info

Mary: Can definitely add those for future meetings

Matt: Book now cities. Ashburn is on there, is that Virginia

Mary: We can only exclude so many cities in the report, we always end up with something, in this case, it's a location of a data center. Other weird places show up, that we know aren't real, but limits what they can report on. Not contributing to traffic in a real way

Rhonda: Is that why we got Englewood all the time?

Mary: Yes, that and other weird places

Kent: If you look at Canadian numbers, 2024 vs. 2025, geographic breakdown, a significant change from last year to this year. Is that happening on the mountain, Matt?

Matt: Yes, we are seeing that happen at the mountain. First half of the season has been positive

Brian: Radio host wants to interview about impact of tariffs, we said it's too soon to dive into it

Rhonda: We used to market to them a lot, but it didn't move the needle as much as wanted for how much we were targeting them.

Matt: EW is advertising in Calgary.

Edna: We separated the flight market from the drive market

Post Meeting UPDATES/FOLLOW UP:

- DVA added slide 5, top website pages
- DVA was finally able to remove Ashburn from the book now breakdown markets on slide 7 (Luke was able to find a way to remove more than one market!)
- Slides 11 and 12 do show the top performing ads, which is now also noted on the slides

B. Staff Reports

- **Marketing Manager:** Presented by Lilian Bassett
Summary: Presented Slides. Talked about social stats. Covered the DAM, exciting value add for 1% members, lodge members, gold retail members. Launched today, getting responses already. Talked about canceling the Jeff Thomas Creative for this year.

Board Comments:

Happy to have this as a value add.

Rhonda wondered if we were able to reallocate funds due to Jeff Thomas Creative cancelation. We're working with DVA for spring skiing deals/offers.

- **Executive Director:** Presented by Zak Anderson
Summary: Presented Slides. Occupancy not looking great, but there is a trend of last minute booking. Talked membership renewals. Talked about the community guide from chamber. Travel guide hold up with machinery to bind them together, Nicole working with Jen and printer to get it figured out.

Board Comments:

Rhonda: Asked Matt how much the previous year low snow year is affecting ADR

Matt: That's not reflecting the same on the mtn. Feb and March are looking better than last year, Jan was off 2%.

AirDNA changed their reporting completely, which is frustrating

Rhonda: Short term rentals look to be up from the slides, occupancy is down. But based on AirDNA it seems short-term rentals are down, because the city is enforcing the short term rental laws

Business in town seems to be up, accommodations in town seem down, mountain is seeing good accommodation levels.

- **Director, Member Relations:** Presented by Zak Anderson
Summary: Presented slides. New member business. Restaurant Week

Board Comments:

Rhonda wants to be sure that when Larch House starts taking reservations, they will indeed pay the CSF, not when they open their doors. Zak will confirm that is the case.

Talked about the Special Event "loophole," need to be careful here. For Great Northern, the special events would be any closed-door event (music, tournaments, anything that requires a bouncer)

Lauren said that right before restaurant week is the Distillers Fest, Zak is going to chat with her about making that the kick off

Talked about Julie's return.

Discussed a board meeting in March, extended meeting to cover strategic plan. Long meeting, would provide food. Nicole will send out an email to get insight on availability

Board member terms are up. Edna, Matt, Jessie. All plan on re-upping their term. Matt's was a carryover from Nick.

C. Committee Reports:

- **Finance Committee:** Presented by Rhonda Fitzgerald
Summary: Presented slides, csf collections. Financial slides. Ahead of the game. Talked about retained earnings. Wants to talk budget for next year. Talked private funds and retained earnings. The money needs to be used for marketing. Public funds spend was a little over half. Talked taxes. Once approved, we will file it. Talked about webcams, do we fix these?

Budget discussion. Doing really well with CSF collection, ahead of 2019/2020.

Related to budget. Do we go higher, or be conservative, with CSF collections? Hard to know what's going to happen, a lot up in the air.

Rhonda would propose taking leftover money from this year into next year

Board Comments:

Edna points out the GNP seasonal employee news, may affect the summer visitation.

Jessie brings up escalation with Canada news. Unknown if Canadian

Matt would advocate budgeting flat. Inflation was tough last year, impacts will exist in travel. Flat to what we are going to end up with CSF wise.

Board feels as though we should reallocate funds to spring budget. Reallocate money within the budget, bring more in from retained

We should do more webcam research. The board agrees that these webcams are worth fixing and having, people love them, just need cost information before making a motion and approval.

Discussions between Matt, Lilian, Mary, co-op money between WMR and EW will be reallocated for spring ski

Approval of Financial Reports: _____ Erica T _____ motioned to approve the January, 2024 financial reports as presented. Motions was seconded by: _____ Matt G _____, motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Reviewed and Approval of Fiscal Year 2024 Tax Return. ___ Erica T ___ (1) Motion was seconded by: ___ Edna W ___ (2), motion passed unanimously.

5. Old Business:

6. New Business:

7. Announcements

- State of MT is collecting video assets locally in Flathead for next winter campaign, Whitefish and Blacktail. Also went to Lodge at WF lake for some social media video
- State 8% hotel bed tax, how it's split, and if a percentage of it can be spent in Whitefish. Discussion of State Senate and SB90

8. Adjournment

- **Next Meeting Date:** The next WCVB board meeting will be held on Monday, March 10, 2025. Location & Time: Whitefish City Hall, 2:30pm - 4:30pm.

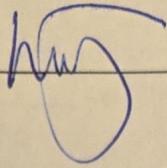
Motion to Adjourn: ___ Matt G ___

Seconded by: ___ Lauren O ___

Time: _4: 16 ___

Approved (Y/N): ___ Y ___

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'W' or 'M' shape followed by a large, circular flourish.

Date: _____

3/10/25