

Tourism Walla Walla Board Minutes, November 18, 2010

Meeting called to order at 3:32 pm.

Present: Dave Woolson, Justin Wylie, Jeffrey Townsend, Mark Hess, Nancy Mitchell, Ron Anderson, James Payne, Shane Laib, Michele Rennie, Michael Davidson, Skip Cundiff, Jay Brodt, Kay Wessel, Rick Standard, Jennifer Skogland, and Andrew Holt.

Absent: Cory Hewitt

Approval of minutes: correction made to Treasurer's report regarding income percentage.

Minutes approved with corrections.

Yearly Indicators --Michael

September numbers showed strong room tax revenue, room occupancy, and room revenue. We will receive additional money at the end of the year because our revenue is above what was budgeted. Michael figured out reservation booking discrepancy: the report is only recording 1 booking for multiple nights. The Visitor Center number is up 20%.

Treasurer's report -- Jay

At the end of October our Net Income was \$12,885. Total revenue is 105 % of what was budgeted. We expect to end the year with a bit of a surplus.

James moved to accept the report; Mark seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Nominating committee – Michele

The Nominating Committee which consisted of Michele Rennie, Mark Hess, Shane Laib and Nancy Mitchell met and has submitted the following recommendation:

For the three 3 year term, expiring in 2013:

Skip Cundiff (Falkenberg's Jewelers)

Jeffrey Townsend (PC Studios)

Michele Rennie (Girasol)

Kay Wessel (Best Western)

Zachery Frazier (WW Sweets).

For a one (1) year term, expiring in 2011:

Andrae Bopp (Andrae's Kitchen)

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For the Executive Board:

Michele Rennie – Chair
Nancy Mitchell – Vice Chair
Jay Brodt – Treasurer
Mark Hess – Immediate Past Chair.

The nominations were passed unanimously.

Michael says someone from the Wine Alliance will fill a seat in the near future.

Marketing – Michele

Update on Mynorthwest.com – A training session was held; 4 hotels attended; the other 5 have been contacted with the necessary information, except the Budget Inn. The launch date has been delayed to December 1st due to backend issues. Not many hotels have tried to post promotions. The City page has been established.

Update on Focus Groups -- Gibson came back with some recommendations. They suggest term “college town” be incorporated into the branding because it brings sophistication and distinguishes WW from other small towns. The word “vintage” also will be part of the message. In Seattle, the awareness of wine has risen 42% from five years ago. Portland needs a lot of work. The collected information proved the benefit of doing focus groups in Portland and Seattle.

In 2011 we are looking for more integration marketing / PR program and will be working with Gibson and Maxwell PR to achieve this goal.

Regional signage – Michael

Merje, the hired firm, was in town from November 15 -17 and met with over 50 stakeholders in the valley including the steering committee. They also met with officials in Dayton and M-F, and a couple of lodging properties. This is not a signage program; it is a marketing program. Merje will be back in early January for a 2nd round of meetings with all stakeholders and the public. Merje will submit a final plan with possible funding programs no later than early February.

Matching Funds Committee – Shane

The Matching Funds committee which consisted of James Payne, Kay Wessel and Shane Laib meet and has the following recommendation for the 2011 grant program

\$4,000 for Downtown Foundation - Feast Walla Walla, Wine & Dine Guide and Wheelin’ Walla Walla Weekend

\$2,000 For Kirkman House Museum - Sweet Home Walla Walla Home Tour and SweetHome Walla Walla Barn Tour.

\$500 Tour of Walla Walla

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\$3,000 Shakespeare Uncork'd

\$2,000 Chamber Music Festival

\$500 Quilt Festival

In addition the committee recommended that we support the production of the ArtWalk map (\$300) and the Walla Walla Farm Map (\$500) with funds from the 2011 printing line item

Jeffrey moved to pass the Matching Fund Program recommendations. Mark seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Aviary update – Shane

The Senior Center has stepped up to fund it for 1 year with the stipulation that the city has to find a permanent funding source.

President's Report - Michael

We will be distributing the TWW Wine Maps by the end of the month in advance of Barrel Tasting Weekend. The PDF will be downloadable and can be updated easily. The first run will be 10,000 of each sheet.

We're doing a 2nd printing of the Bike Map with some new advertisers before the end of the year.

Arts Meeting – There were over 40 people from the arts community. They did a lot of analysis but provided no answers. It was an assessment of assets and comparison to towns of same size. Next meeting will be December 7th.

TPA – Kay

TPA is still collecting money. TPA and TWW will have reciprocal board members.

Michael – TWW has made an offer on who would be board members -- still not heard back from TPA.

Michele read a statement regarding the TWW Executive Board's position on charging the TPA a management fee. In sum, TWW should not absorb all the costs of additional administrative work required from the TPA. To not charge a management fee is not sound fiscal policy nor builds a healthy business relationship between the two organizations. We propose a fee of 1 penny per one dollar spent on this program. This translates to about 1% of the TPA budget.

Discussion followed as to the nature of the disagreement regarding the management fee and whether the executive board's position is supported by the rest of board. Shane noted that the TPA is subject to a yearly audit so he would not like to co-mingle funds. He added that the TPA will pay an administrative fee for the audit and for the city's line-item approval, regardless.

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Ron stated that the sports commission will be a separate non-profit with a commissioner who will solely market sports. It will have its own board, so, this person would not be an employee of TWW.

Mark moved that the TWW Board approve the TPA contract without a management fee as long it does not require the hiring of additional staff to achieve the hoteliers' goals (sports commission). Jeffrey seconded the motion.

James moved to add a friendly amendment that the TPA will pay for an audit. Jay seconded the motion.

The Friendly Amendment was passed unanimously.

The initial motion was passed unanimously.

Michael's Review

Board went into Executive Session to review Michael's 2011 performance

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm